

Mission

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Statement was wrong, and it was not an accurate rendition of the original. I feel strongly that what we write today is tomorrow's historical record, and that the ability to set the record straight should not be limited to students and faculty at elite institutions or those who can pay AAA membership dues to access this record through AnthroSource. The historical record should be open and everyone should have access.

Open access is a goal and principle that should guide the future of AAA publishing programs. The Long Rang Planning Committee should make this an explicit priority. It is not only the right thing to do, it's in our association's best

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interest to get ahead of this inevitable trend as quickly as possible. It will, however, take time.

As chair of the allocations subcommittee of the Committee on the Future of Print and Electronic

Publishing, and a member of the recently retired Governance Commission, I must emphasize "the future of AAA publishing" because I realize, in mind-numbing detail, that currently, sections and the AAA are dependent upon revenue generated through AAA's publishing programs. It is a complex issue that will take creative and forward thinking. It is also an issue that will require strong, and inclusive leadership. Opening access to our anthropological knowledge is needed and necessary. We must develop bold goals, create sustainable strategies, and set strict time-tables. Open access is an important goal worth working toward. ☐

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Organizing for Access

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To access articles digitally instead of (or in addition to) in already bound journals may by now seem rather mundane and expected. Similarly, the AAA's transition of its publications into a digital environment with the deployment of AnthroSource may seem a simple matter of moving from one format to another. In reality, however, this move has had convulsive effects on the association particularly as felt by the sections grappling with a significantly changed financial context. As Jason Cross suggests (this issue), the short-term financial benefits of the Wiley-Blackwell contract crystallize a valuable opportunity to step back and reconsider the nature and structure of AAA as a member organization, and in particular the role of the publication program within the association.



Melissa Cefkin

Specifically, I see in sharp relief a basic question: What is the nature of these things we call "publications"? Are they products, produced by the labor (much unpaid though perhaps otherwise compensated by reputation

COMMENTARY

and status) of staff and scholars, owned by the association, and now disseminated by way of a digital channel? Or are they components of and vehicles for services, knowledge and community services that constitute the fabric of the work of anthropologists and scholars more broadly? Should AnthroSource be thought of as a product-supply channel or a service-provisioning platform?

Products and Services

Although in many ways overly simplistic, as a tool to think with, the product-service dichotomy is instructive. Consider the telephone. The hardware of a telephone, the product, quickly became commoditized because what really mattered was the service it enabled—the ability to communicate in real time across distances. Even in the day of star product (aka the iPhone), what distin-

guishes the product, the phone, in many ways is the range and variety of services it allows you to access and integrate. Indeed, many mobile service providers give the phone away to get you to subscribe to their service.

Now clearly scholarly articles are not cell phones (being both of greater and lesser significance). But I think this case is illustrative for the following reasons. A focus on service means focusing not on the thing itself but that which the thing enables. A focus on services

technical and economic dynamics are driving participation in many different forms of knowledge production and exchange, and these dynamics do not stop at the boundaries of a single organization such as AAA. (See, eg, Golub's Dec 2005 AN piece, "AnthroSource—Actually Useful?" 46[9]:12-14.) Dedication to open access (OA) itself opens up a range of questions, as Kelty describes in this issue. Choices about how to direct our efforts with AnthroSource and other AAA digital presences are

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also encourages that we recognize the user-provider relationship necessary to coproduce the service value.

To ask whether our publications are more products or services is in many ways purely a rhetorical question, for the answers are not fully ours to decide. Social,

about *how*, not *whether*, we play in these worlds.

The application of a product—or a services-based philosophy has some very real and potentially immediate implications, crossing both operational boundaries, such as how to link and integrate across technical architectures

and functionalities, and strategic choices, raising questions of ownership and governance.

Publishing and Organizational Governance

What would it mean to re-envision the publication program, and with it AAA at large, as a service-providing rather than product-producing program? How might this re-envisioning help us address questions of how “open” an organization we can manage to be? I propose that the question of financing OA should be approached not through the narrow lens of publications financing but through a comprehensive reexamination of publishing and other services within AAA at large.

One place to start is to rethink our role as members. Consider sec-

tion selection. Like others, I have on occasion been guilty of selecting my sections on the basis of my current mood or a search for the lowest cost when renewing my membership. We thus cast ourselves as *consumers* of the products of AAA. Might our relationship to the association be organized instead in ways that position us more as partners than as consumers? For instance, what if we were to redesign our membership model (and the reallocation model with it) from one in which we select among variably priced, competitively member-seeking sections to a model in which all sections charge the same basic membership rate (perhaps a minimal \$10 or \$15 encouraging membership in multiple sections)? Or what would happen if the cost of a basic

AAA membership was raised (preserving the sliding scale options) but was automatically inclusive of three section memberships?

My aim is not to advocate for these particular models. Indeed, anticipating the potential impact would require that someone perform well-informed financial projections. However, even if we were to arrive back at place close to where we began, I believe such an exercise could help catalyze a re-envisioning of AAA as a member organization. My intention is to prompt an exploration of ways to rebalance the association's heavy reliance on the financial structures of the publishing program and with it to open the door toward more fruitful discussions about OA. A service-oriented model does not dictate

that we adopt an OA model. That is for us to choose. But it does require that we consid-

er what kind of service organization we have been and would like to become. By broadening the lens to consider financial frameworks beyond those bounded by the publications program, and by revisiting models of membership pay structures, we would be better positioned to engage members as partners in formulating accountable stances in determining which content and services could and should be OA. ■

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The State of Open Access Anthropology

CHRISTOPHER KELTY
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Much of the recent debate about open access (OA) in anthropology has centered around whether or not AAA (or any scholarly society) should go OA.



Christopher Kelty

But OA is happening, whether or not scholarly societies are promoting it. Individual scholars are self-archiving on their websites and in institutional repositories (such as the recently announced Mana'o project). Workshops, conferences and meetings are increasingly placing talks and papers online. Presses (such as the Australian National University Epress) are going OA. Our new contractor for publication, Wiley-Blackwell, allows authors to pay for an article to be available OA. AAA section publications are experimenting with OA, such as through *American Ethnologist's* book reviews and *Cultural Anthropology's* recent “Coke

Complex” issue. Primary sources are going OA, such as the anthropological papers of the American Museum of Natural History. There are distinctions between the definition of OA in all these cases, but they generally include free, unrestricted availability of research. The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), which hews to a purist line of OA, lists some 60+ OA journals relevant to anthropology and ethnology—at least 80% of which are non-English and non-US.

What does this mean?

The first thing it means is that scholarly societies (and scholarly publishers) no longer have a monopoly on making research available. We have reached a point with information technology, the Internet and the applications we use daily where it is possible to publish something—and potentially reach a huge audience—literally by pushing one button. Welcome to the age of 1-Click publishing.

But such a click hardly counts as publication. Indeed, putting something on the Internet doesn't make it good (sometimes it means the opposite). But the fact that we can publish this way,

and the fact that we are doing so, opens up an opportunity to rethink the meaning of publication and the role of scholarly societies in the process. One of the spurious criticisms made of OA is that it threatens peer review. The logic behind this argument is related to 1-click publishing—that OA means bypassing the

vice that often goes unnoticed, unremunerated and underappreciated: they instigate, provoke, encourage, thematize, edit, facilitate, fund, promote, network, market, copyedit, talk about, hold conferences about and otherwise *give life* to our research. The value in what they do comes not from the fact that they make research

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entire infrastructure of publishing, which includes much more than just making something available. However, no OA advocate would ever support this claim; OA is supposed to be about making *really good* research really widely available.

What, then, is that “infrastructure” of publishing, and how can we understand where the costs and the value come from? Scholarly societies like AAA and especially its sections do an incredible ser-

available but because of all the human labor they provide *making our research better and making it thrive.*

It should therefore be clear why the publication issue and the governance and sustainability issues facing AAA are one and the same. If members perceive that they pay membership fees only to receive their own research (wheth-

See *State of OA* on page 10