



# Goldilocks and the Three (or Four) Books: Reconceptualizing a Role for Digital Media Scholarship in an Age of Digital Scholarship

a review webtext by Cheryl E. Ball on  
(1) Borgman's "Scholarship in a Digital Age" (2007)  
(2) Willinsky's "The Access Principle" (2006),  
(3) Fitzpatrick's "Planned Obsolescence" (2009ish), and  
(4) O'Gorman's "E-Crit" (2007).

## This is The Story...

of one Goldilocks scholar, teacher, and editor searching for the perfect book about digital scholarship -- one that acknowledges and provides insight about that peculiar brand of digital scholarship: the scholarly, multimodal webtext of the variety that Kairos and other digital media journals publish. As editor of Kairos, I obviously have a stake in seeing discussion of digital media within digital scholarship research, and it colors my review of all these texts (for good and ill) in ways that other digital writing scholars may find troubling. This review is about my search for digital media scholarship in books I thought might have something to do with that topic. The Goldilocks factor came in wildly varied: too broad and sciencty, too narrow, too linear, too literary, and, finally, just-about-right. In the end, most of these books did not speak about digital media scholarship in order to make their arguments. Perhaps because of this, I provide my thoughts on where \*I\* might have taken the argument if writing for an audience of digital media enthusiasts, and those comments are in the margins of this webtext. So, even though I was not the primary audience for most of the books, the journey of searching proved to be altogether a productive one for me and my future digital (media) scholarship.

## Audiences & Purposes (an overview)

To introduce the individual reviews, I should start with my conclusion: Most of these books aren't for us. As I finished writing the reviews for each book—having drafted Borgman's, Willinsky's, and part of O'Gorman's within the Prezi interface, and then transitioning,  ironically, to drafting the review of Fitzpatrick's online-only book in Microsoft Word—I began to frame my response to all four books based on something that struck me in Chapters Two (Authors) and Three (Texts) of Fitzpatrick's text: She advocates for a form of collaborative writing and review that is already prominent in Kairos, if not in rhetoric and composition as a whole. She assumes—rightly so given the individualistic attitudes towards writing that I've heard expressed from traditional (and nontraditional) literature, history, and other humanities scholars—that the writers she hopes to convince don't already buy into collaboration or writing as a social behavior. It's safe to say, however, that readers of Kairos DO believe in collaboration and writing (and reviewing) as social practices, and we've been working that way for years. Fitzpatrick's argument is important, game-changing even, and it will be revolutionary for some readers (primarily those still solely invested in the book as the gold standard in scholarly publishing)—it's just not an

 argument that will be new to rhet/comp scholars, especially digital writing studies scholars. I discuss in Fitzpatrick's individual review above how her book can be of use to writing studies scholars, because here the point is not about her book (which allowed me to synthesize what I was seeing in all of the books—and that's actually what makes Fitzpatrick's ideal: she synthesizes the entire state of digital (print) scholarship in remarkably clear and easy to read fashion), but about the message that these books are collectively saying about the state and function of scholarship in a digital age and, in particular, to whom. So I want to turn to the bigger picture.

If my review of these texts sounds at all regretful, it is because—in Goldilocks' fashion—I realized that they are written for some other audience. Borgman, Willinsky, and Fitzpatrick are speaking to a collective that would (or should) buy in to the issues of cyberinfrastructure, open access, and digital book publishing. These are not issues that can be tackled on an individual basis. Changing one person's mind won't change the bigger picture of (digital) scholarly publishing. Borgman and Fitzpatrick offer terminology and technology that the collective should be aware of, and Willinsky and Fitzpatrick (to a lesser extent) offer how-tos for creating that communal publishing base (using particular kinds of technologies). Only O'Gorman offers both an individual (pedagogical and scholarly) approach and a collective (by way of curricular) approach that includes a terminology and a how-to. But he's not speaking to humanists or academics broadly construed, as the other authors are; he's speaking, essentially, to English professors in a language (and literature review) that English professors will get. I think that's why his book speaks to me the most, out of the four: Not because of the disciplinary thing, but because he's speaking to \*me\* as an individual within a broken, siloed, academic and publishing system and, from within that system, he proposes breaking out by creating media-intensive projects. That is a solution I can relate to and one that I prefer over the alphanumeric options the other authors propose. I can readily implement his ideas in my classroom, my local curriculum, and (in a collective way) for the journal. Working with the collective isn't a bad thing, and several collaborators and I are working towards this kind of large-scale integration. But what I'm saying in response to these four books, which speaks to the audiences and purposes with which they are written, is that there's a different call to action in O'Gorman's book that more closely speaks to my personal, pedagogical, and scholarly interests. Borgman, Willinsky, and Fitzpatrick, on the other hand, speak to my interests in serving the field.

And there it is: the split between Research/Teaching and Service (despite the fact that my national service is intimately tied to my research and teaching interests). It's the difference between the always-related interests of the local versus the global. O'Gorman presents the individual and local as a possibility for global curricular and scholarly change while Borgman, Willinsky, and Fitzpatrick present the global picture of using digital tools to assist scholarship as a possibility for enacting change at the local, community, or disciplinary level. All four share the same topic—desiring change in the values we assign to different kinds of scholarly knowledge production and distribution—though from two different perspectives, and interest in any four of these books will depend on your own Teaching, Research and Service.

## INDIVIDUAL REVIEWS

**Borgman, Christine. (2007). Scholarship in a digital age: Information, infrastructure, and the Internet. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (336 pp.)**

### Contents

- Chapter 1, "Scholarship at a Crossroads," reminds readers that the Internet has changed the way we deliver scholarship due to the exponential growth of data.
- Chapter 2, "Building the Scholarly Infrastructure," defines the Internet, WWW, the Grid, digital libraries, infrastructure, and all things "e-" in several global contexts. 
- Chapter 3, "Embedded Everywhere," defines what "information" is and how research is conducted using information.
- Chapter 4, "The Continuity of Scholarly Communication," outlines the print-centric "sociotechnical system" in which scholarship gets made and communicated, including how this system remains intact when print scholarship moves to digital spaces. 
- Chapter 5, "The Discontinuity of Scholarly Publishing," extends Chapter 4 into the digital realm, touching on hot-button issues such as trust, legitimization, access and preservation, open-access, intellectual property, copyright, economics, and more. 
- Chapter 6, "Data: Input and Output of Scholarship," defines and puts intellectual value on data as a growth area in scholarly communication. 
- Chapter 7, "Building an Infrastructure for Information," discusses the disciplinary practices of searching for and using data and scholarship, including collaboration and data sharing.
- Chapter 8, "Disciplines, Documents, and Data," outlines the kinds of documents and data shared among researchers in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, and the benefits and disincentives of doing so.
- Chapter 9, "The View From Here," outlines the need for a cyberinfrastructure for information, which speaks to stakeholders involved in building this network (publishers, universities, funding agencies).

### Review

\*Scholarship in a Digital Age\* aims to "characterize what is going on today [in regards to scholarship], and to set those developments in social, historical, and technological contexts" (p. 245). Scholarship, Borgman implies, refers to traditional forms of scholarly output such as peer-reviewed articles, but also refers to new kinds of scholarly work, such as the large amounts of data that the sciences, in particular, are producing thanks to new digital tools and infrastructures. This book defines the processes inherent to scholarly

production, defines, these new scholarly outputs due to digital technologies, and subtly argues (so much so that I missed the point of the book for the first several chapters) for more and better cyberinfrastructure to support them.

On first opening Christine Borgman's "Scholarship in a Digital Age," readers sense that the table of contents listed above is highly abbreviated. The Detailed Contents for this book includes a listing of 214 headings and subheadings and spans seven pages. In these 214 sections, the book addresses scholarly minutiae such as "Informal and Formal Purposes of Conferences" in content blocks that average a page in length. What the brevity of topic coverage signals is an encyclopedic-like approach to all issues relating to, as the subtitle says, the information and infrastructure of digital scholarship.

In each chapter, Borgman's impartial reporting of facts about "digital scholarship" feel more like Wikipedia entries than a scholarly book that speaks to the current issues in the field(s). That is, in an attempt to remain impartial (the reason for which becomes clear at the end of the book), Borgman's book on digital scholarship has little discernible argument, at least not in the way that rhetoricians would easily recognize. By listing and defining items related to the convoluted context of digital scholarship within the academy, but without putting those items into conversation within the book, Borgman succeeds at providing a mostly thorough (especially for the sciences) reference guide for administrators (and perhaps librarians and academics) who want a primer on current terms and issues with digital scholarship. Her approach is particularly "sciency," as evidenced by her reliance on the term "E-Research," which she indicates is borne out of the tendency in "Europe, Asia, Australia, and elsewhere" to use the term "E-Science" (p. 19). "E-Research," she says, "has begun to encompass scholarly infrastructure for all disciplines" (p. 20), which was news to me as a digital scholarship specialist.

Borgman begins to lay out her argument in Chapter 7, but it isn't until the last chapter that she most clearly states her argument: "We are currently in the early stages of inventing an e-Research infrastructure for scholarship in the digital age" (p. 254). And she's right.  Because we're in the early stages of building such an infrastructure (one which she argues we should pay more attention to), her infuriating impartiality on important topics in digital scholarship makes sense. This book isn't about staking claim to any particular view of digital scholarship; it simply defines the terms that stakeholders have to pay attention to as they move forward in creating this e-Research infrastructure. But, don't be taken in by assuming that "scholarship in a digital age" gives equal treatment to the humanities, let alone our particularly quirky niche of digital writing studies.  Borgman is almost exclusively talking about the ways that scientists and social scientists distribute their pre-print and published work in repositories, the need for more collective repositories that will house data (as opposed to scholarship about that data), and (in very short treatment) the way humanities scholars can benefit from the needed infrastructure for their "digitization" efforts. However, I suppose she gives about as much treatment to the literary-critical digital humanities (which has a much stronger national and international presence than digital media scholarship does) in comparison to the much larger investment and presence that the social sciences and sciences have in digital scholarship.

## Audiences & Uses

- Stakeholders interested in building large-scale repositories of e-Research. To include funding leaders, academic administrators in charge of Information Technology on campus, and digital librarians.
  - Individual academics from across the Big Three disciplines (sciences, social sciences, and humanities) that plan on working with any of the above to build this infrastructure (keep in mind that Borgman doesn't think individual academics should do it themselves; it's too big a project).
  - Individual academics across the Big Three who want to better understand the basic terms used when experts discuss digital scholarship.
  - WAC scholars who are interested in seeing how scholarship works in the other Big Two disciplines (sciences, social sciences). For the most part, you can stick with Chapters 4 and 5, although you can clearly skim the other sections according to the headers Borgman provides in the Detailed Table of Contents.
  - Methodology scholars who relish the thought of a whole chapter that defines "data."
  - Digital journal editors in the humanities who want to see how our processes are and are not (mostly the latter) represented in Borgman's otherwise detailed view of how scholarship works in the Big Three.
  - Only sparingly with undergraduates in a Digital Publishing class, to help get them up to speed on terms that academics use every day without thinking about them (e.g., peer-review, Internet vs. WWW, etc.).
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**Willinsky, John. (2005). The access principle: The case for open access to research and scholarship. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (307pp.)**

## Contents

- Chapter 1, "Opening," starts in 2003 when the Public Library of Science launched \*PLoS Biology,\* which is open access and publishes top papers in the field. Willinsky introduces some of the hot-buttonest issues in the open-access movement (economics, intellectual value, etc.).
- Chapter 2, "Access," describes the problem with the current economic model of (closed) access by providing multiple case studies, statistics, and stories. 
- Chapter 3, "Copyright," connects copyright, plagiarism, editorial honor, and pay for editorial work to show the intricate and inextricable complications that exist within the realm of closed- and open-access publishing. 
- Chapter 4, "Associations," pitches a publishing model in which institutions can make money by going open-access while also acknowledging the difficulties.
- Chapter 5 on "Economics" is where Willinsky introduces Open Journal Systems (OJS) as a model for on-the-cheap open-access publishing. He outlines 10 kinds of open-access in Appendix A.

- Chapter 6 on "Cooperatives" discusses repositories like JSTOR as access models and their usefulness in the humanities and social sciences, in particular.
- Chapter 7, "Development," argues for the global imperative for open access as a fundamental freedom, using A. Suresh Canagarajah's "plurality of rhetorics" to remind authors that they can't be let off the hook when deciding where to publish.
- Chapter 8, "Public," advocates for the general interest that research holds for the public (made most evident in the naming of his foundation, the Public Knowledge Project, out of which OJS was created).
- Chapter 9, "Politics," takes politicians (particularly of the Bush era) to task for not using more peer-reviewed research to inform their decisions while acknowledging that public readers have trouble understanding that scholarship isn't Truth.
- Chapter 10, "Rights" opens bluntly: "I may be taking a step too far...by suggesting that the excessive increase in journal prices over the last two decades is a human-rights issue" (p. 143). Willinsky addresses self-teaching (through after-class access) as a pedagogical necessity.
- Chapter 11, "Reading," addresses the readability and usability of online journals when both reading habits and what's possible to publish within digital works (e.g., images, multimedia) have changed.
- Chapter 12, "Indexing," discusses the use and importance of metadata in helping scholars keep track of all this open-access work.
- Chapter 13, "History," traces the similarities between transitions in the history of print publishing and digital publishing. This chapter is presented last to avoid assumptions "that open access is simply another chapter in the unfolding story of scientific communication" (p. 190).

## Review

The introduction to Willinsky's \*The Access Principle: The Case for Open Access to Research and Scholarship\* starts with a narrative. He relays the story of the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), which in the very recent past could only afford five journal subscriptions, none of which were leading journals in the institute's research area of tropical diseases. In 2001, he says, the World Health Organization convinced six corporate publishers to open their online stacks to developing nations, which significantly increased access to the medical literature for institutes like KEMRI, even though they only had one computer with Internet access (with more on the way by the time Willinsky visited in 2003). In the same year, he notes that the top New Yorker story on educational testing could not have been possible without writer Malcolm Gladwell finding a key study published in an open-access journal. Willinsky argues that stories such as these, about open



access to research and scholarship, can be the tipping point (harkening to Gladwell's other work) that changes the way we produce and consume scholarship.

For Willinsky, the change he wanted to create was made manifest in an open-access publishing project he spearheaded: the widely adopted Open Journal Systems (OJS). OJS is an open-source application for starting or maintaining an open-access (or closed-access, if one must) journal in an online environment. It automates the entire workflow of a print-like journal, from submission to review to copy-editing to publication and indexing. For open-access, and especially independent (non-affiliated) journal editors, OJS has been a godsend. (As of January 2010, the OJS website reports that there are over 5,000 digital journals who use the system. See <http://pkp.sfu.ca/ojs-journals>). \*The Access Principle\* lays out the reasons to buy into open-access distribution of scholarship and draws on Open Journal Systems as a model that enacts those principles. Willinsky's book offers a balance between argumentation and strategy without schilling the free program.

For readers of Kairos, which has always been open access, Willinsky's principle of open access probably already resonates. But if it doesn't stir your scholarly motivations, you should definitely read Willinsky's book, as it will probably convince you to take a second look at open access publication. Like Borgman's book, the chapters in Willinsky's \*The Access Principle\* are rather brief (the average is 16 pages), and a good portion of the page count includes six useful resources in the appendixes, including Appendix A, which includes "ten flavors of open access to journal articles." (Kairos is "Subsidized," but not in a way that most readers would recognize.) Also, unlike Borgman's book, Willinsky's narrative style makes for an engaging read. Each chapter is full of examples, statistics, and stories that provide both qualitative and quantitative evidence for the need, nay right, of open access to scholarship. As an editor of an open-access journal myself, there's practically nothing I didn't like about Willinsky's book, although I will admit that if a scholar has little interest in how scholarly publishing works, then this book will only provide a case study for how their area of interest (economics, copyright, global social networks) might be played out through academic publishing. Each chapter can be read on its own, and I won't go into further detail (see Contents above) on those chapters, other than to recommend all of them, especially the Appendices for those interested in practicalities and numbers.

Since publication of his book in 2005, Willinsky has produced several other studies and scholarly works that address the beneficial impact of Open Journal Systems on the field of publishing, which I also recommend. All are freely available (some in pre-print form) on his or the OJS website. Again, as an editor of an open-access journal, I knew I was going to buy into this book from the beginning, which is (in part) why it wasn't originally part of this review. However, I wanted to include it to show it as a comparison in style and content to Fitzpatrick's work and as a contrast to Borgman's work. I used these three textbooks in the digital publishing class, hoping to progress from the basics, as Borgman's book outlined, to more sophisticated arguments for open-access and, finally, interactive multimedia (which none of these three books address in any detail).

I also address Willinsky's book here because I need to point out one tiny flaw in the OJS system and, thus, the book. While all (but one) of the online journals in rhet/comp that

employ digital media are open access, they also all use homegrown (or home-tweaked) systems to manage the submission, review, editing, publishing, and indexing of that work. Such systems are not economically sustainable for a host of reasons, but (being humanities scholars with little time and expertise for building large-scale systems from scratch) we continue to use them, clunky as they might be, because we have no other choice right now. Neither Willinsky's book nor his Open Journal Systems software account for the unique infrastructural needs (to use Borgman's words) of multimedia publishing. This is a perennial problem for digital media scholarship, but it's at least one that Kairos and others might be in the position to change in the near future, thanks to the opened (access) doors that Willinsky's, Fitzpatrick's, and Borgman's books have provided with funding agencies. (These books certainly seem to be known entities at NEH's Office of Digital Humanities, for example.) Without a system like OJS, built on Willinsky's open-access principles, we'd be a lot farther away from change.

## Audiences & Uses

- Stakeholders (at any level) in building open-access repositories for scholarship (e.g., librarians, IT administrators, etc.)
- Print journal editors who need convincing that online, open-access versions (or partial-access versions) of their journals can be sustainable. (I would personally like to give a copy to each print journal editor on the Council of Editors of Learned Journals listserv when they complain about "the digital" ruining publishing.) 
- Digital editors who need support for arguments about why open access is awesome.
- Journal editors who need to see examples of moving from closed or partial access to some, or all, open access. (The Appendixes will be of most use to you.)
- Scholars who are considering starting a new journal (either print or digital).
- Students in publishing studies who need to see a broader array of publishing than print.
- Education, economics, writing, sociology, anthropology, and other scholars interested in global knowledge-building issues, particularly how a U.S or European-centric view of scholarship (in authoring or publishing) can negatively hinder the creation of new knowledge in developing countries through inaccessibility. The access principle is also about reciprocally speaking to and with these nations in and through scholarship. 

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Fitzpatrick, Kathleen. (2009/forthcoming). *Planned obsolescence: Publishing, technology, and the future of academe*. MediaCommonsPress/NYU Press.

[http://mediacommmons.futureofthebook.org/mcpres/plannedobsolescence/ \(n.p.\)](http://mediacommmons.futureofthebook.org/mcpres/plannedobsolescence/ (n.p.))

## Contents

In the "Introduction" to \*Planned Obsolescence,\* Kathleen Fitzpatrick sets the scene for the "crisis in scholarly publishing" by telling the ironic story about trying to publish her first book, which was a commentary on the vitality of books and other cultural artifacts in an

age of screen-based media. It was rejected by the press solely for economic reasons, at which point she began to reposition her own argument on books, not as dead vs. alive, but as “undead” (/undead/). She posits that neither the content nor the form of an academic book is the problem, but the “system surrounding its production and dissemination” (/undead/). From this position, Fitzpatrick has helped spearhead several projects that could change the broken academic-publishing system, including MediaCommonsPress, in which this version of her book was published in digital form. Like Willinsky does with Open Journal Systems in \*The Access Principle,\* Fitzpatrick describes projects like MediaCommons, its press, and related projects like CommentPress (more below) to advocate for large-scale rethinking of academic publishing and tenure systems: “We must collectively consider what new technologies have to offer not us, not just in terms of the cost of publishing or access to publications, but in the ways we research, the ways we write, and the ways we review” (/overview/).

Chapter One, on “Peer Review,” details the history and current-future of peer review. The history of peer review predates scholarly journals, which Willinsky also discusses in his final chapter, and possible futures are demonstrated through current uses of nontraditional peer-review systems like the pre-print venue ArXiv and the open-review experiment (that really wasn’t all that open) that \*Nature\* conducted in 2008. Although Borgman and Willinsky address many of these same examples, Fitzpatrick’s focus on them through the lens of peer review is different and serves to build the case that peer review is (for the most part) an inherently flawed system. Peer review isn’t a bad thing, Fitzpatrick notes: “The problem is in the implementation of that notion as an exercise in gatekeeping, and its subsequent transformation into a means of creating authority in and of itself” (/credentialing/). Her recommendation, which she explains in the latter half of this chapter, is to separate credentialing from the publishing process and create a community-based, peer-to-peer-review system that filters content, like Digg and Slashdot, through reviews of reviewers.

In Chapter Two, Fitzpatrick begins by address the conflicting theories of “The Author,” connecting the shift between the author’s often-heralded rise and death to the moves that are required for scholarly work to continue successfully in the digital age. In many ways, this discussion will be familiar to readers of Kairos: There are quotes from Barthes, Bolter, Landow, etc., with a move into topics such as product to process, individual to collaborative, originality to remix, and intellectual property to gift economy. These moves provide a theoretical and practical foundation on which the field of digital writing studies has been built, but it’s necessary, given Fitzpatrick’s audience of literary and media studies scholars, to address these issues here. What’s more, it’s necessary for digital writing scholars to re-see our traditional theories (some of which are originally crossovers from media studies, such as remix) through Fitzpatrick’s lens. The key here is that she’s not putting these theories to use with student texts produced in classes, as our field has a tendency to do. Instead, she is pointing out scholars’ double standard about authorship in regards to our scholarship, particularly scholarship as it can reside in and change within digital networks. We believe in teaching collaboration, remix, process, and a gift economy; we just don’t want to take the chance to practice that kind of authorship ourselves. And when we do take the chance, the outcomes aren’t always successful. Fitzpatrick

acknowledges the stickiness of each of these issues but encourages readers to attend to them because they are necessary shifts to understanding and authoring scholarship in a digital age. She ends the chapter with a section called “from text to... something more,” where she brings up the possibility of writing multimodally and with code as ways scholars can rethink their assumptions about authorship. (Again, something digital writing scholars have already done, but remember that we are not her primary audience.)

As if she had heard my silent qualms from the previous chapter, Fitzpatrick starts Chapter Three on “Texts,” by mentioning the multimodal scholarly journals Kairos and Vectors, but only in passing, as Fitzpatrick is quick to point out that while these are valid projects, “our attention in this project needs to remain on the book, as it is, to some extent, the endangered species we hope to save” ([/three-texts/](#)). This chapter examines how the forms that digital writing studies know and can produce and critique all too well—ebooks, pages, hypertext, e-archives, etc.—offer limited ability to readers and authors to rethink book-publishing opportunities. That is, none of these genres or tools provides the kind of author-reader community that Fitzpatrick suggests can and should exist if we are to rethink the print book in the digital age. She concludes this chapter by describing CommentPress, a WordPress theme that allows paragraph-by-paragraph and whole-book commenting alongside the main text. CommentPress is certainly one way of introducing community discussion and review into one’s in-progress works, and it is the application in which this version of Fitzpatrick’s book is distributed. (See, e.g., my comment on *Enacting Her Argument*, above-right.)

In Chapter Four on “Preservation,” Fitzpatrick discusses three important issues to those working in digital scholarship: using appropriate markup standards, including metadata and locators, and providing continued access to and availability of digital texts. ([/four-preservation/](#)) For those working on any kind of web-scale (or even just large) digital project, these issues, and the examples Fitzpatrick provides, won’t be new. But for those who are just embarking on digital anything, she provides brief, engaging summaries about the most widely used standards for access and preservation. Her histories on the Text Encoding Initiative, metadata used in HTML documents, and preservation standards reinforce Borgman’s and Willinsky’s takes on these issues, while also pinpointing their drawbacks (e.g., TEI is primarily meant for digitized text, not “born-digital” texts).

Chapter Five, on “The University” reiterates some of the arguments that Borgman and Willinsky made regarding the need for large-scale cyberinfrastructure and open-access for scholarship. Fitzpatrick goes one step beyond by speculating on the ways universities can impact scholarly publishing by building their own presses or publishing centers. She argues that “Publishing the work of its faculty must be reconceived as central to the university’s mission” ([/new-institutional-structures/](#)) and offers examples from the history of university presses to show that this model is a return to the original university press system, not a new, crazy, self-serving idea ([/the-history-of-the-university-press/](#)). Fitzpatrick suggests that university presses take on the role of mentors, helping faculty members at their own institutions produce and publish work in the school’s own press or publishing endeavor. While she addresses drawbacks to this model (not including the fact that every university or consortial group would need to hire a press director who has to

coordinate this mentoring and publishing effort), it does pose a provocative model of access and distribution of scholarly works across several campus constituents such as the library and IT administrators. She concludes by suggesting that such ventures can be paid for through the services they'd offer to authors: editorial mentoring, marketing, etc., 

## Audience & Uses

- Traditional scholars (mostly literary and media studies scholars) who believe that writing can be done in solitary confinement and could use a foundation on the social value of writing, which nearly always incorporates technological mediation these days. For these scholars, this book will be an introduction to these rhetorical ideas through a literary lens.
- Digital writing scholars and digital humanists who already know that writing is a social practice—happening through Facebook notes, blog posts, Twitter, hallway conversations (if we're lucky), and conference presentations, which are rarely (unlike literature conferences) presented by reading a whole, finely polished paper. This book adds the component of taking those social-scholarly conversations and turning them into books. 
- University and scholarly press directors and editors. Peer-to-peer review and, soon enough, audience-interactive scholarly books will become one norm in academic publishing. If NYU Press (via Fitzpatrick's book) and Johns Hopkins University Press (via Shakespeare Quarterly's recent open-review experiment) is attempting it, others will likely follow.
- I would use this book again in my Digital Publishing class. (I'd probably ditch Borgman's book, but keep Willinsky's partnered with this one, which we'd likely read first.) \*Planned Obsolescence\* would make a great introduction for students who don't know anything about digital publishing, especially since the ones who enter ISU's publishing program do so primarily out of literary-print interests. In that respect, I think Fitzpatrick's book will speak to them perfectly.
- Finally, this book has a big-picture use that I address with the other books in the conclusion to this review.

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**O'Gorman, Marcel. (2007). E-Crit: Digital media, critical theory, and the humanities. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. (141 pp.)**

## Contents & Review

O'Gorman outlines his agenda in the "Introduction": He is proposing (and testing) a new model for humanities research, pedagogy, and curriculum in light of digital technology and the predominance of the visual. The tone here and throughout the short book is provocative, and the argument is supported with Ulmeristic theories, taking readers through rhizomatic paths of iconic and linguistic evidence. His style is not unlike Geoffrey Sirc's work, with more puns and less subtle disdain for the traditional, scholarly elitism of literary-critical academics, as represented by this quote: "I think it's time to take a harder look at how disciplines rooted in the study and preservation of printed texts can remain

relevant and viable in a digital, picture-oriented culture" (p. xiv). To make these attacks, he draws on John Guillory's "fetishization of 'rigor'" and Terry Eagleton's claims that "the end of the 'age of theory' [is] upon us" (p. xiv). O'Gorman's way out of this new crisis for the humanities is

to create a new method of scholarly research -- which I have dubbed  
\*hyperconomy\* -- that is more suitable to a picture-oriented, digital-centric culture.  
... \*E-Crit\* is a glimpse at what 'knowledge production' might look like, after  
deconstruction, in an age of computer-mediated communication. ... [It] covers a  
wide range of sites for potential revolution, from scholarly discourse, to pedagogical  
practice, to curricular structure... (pp. xvi-xvii)

which, O'Gorman rightly says, makes his book unique within new media circles. No other single-authored book gives equal weight to all three of these areas (scholarship, pedagogy, and curriculum) with as much power and style that O'Gorman's sustained case study provides in \*E-Crit.\* Additionally, it is obvious that (unlike the other three books in this review, and any others that I know about) O'Gorman's focus is on the kind of work digital writing scholars might call scholarly multimedia, new media scholarship, digital media scholarship, and so on. In other words, the Introduction of \*E-Crit\* has set me up to hope for a book that understands the uniqueness and usefulness of the kind of work that Kairos publishes, a promise that the book keeps. Goldilocks has found her book. 

Chapter 1, "The Canon, the Archive, and the Remainder: Reimagining Scholarly Discourse," challenges the typical methods of scholarly production in the humanities and digital humanities. O'Gorman uses Jean-Jacque Lecercle's notion of 'the remainder' of language, which O'Gorman defines as "the 'other' of academic or scholarly language," "nonsense or rubbish," "monstrous," and "hidden or repressed" (p. 4). The remainder is useful to confront conventional discourse and invent new knowledge, even as "those who seek to liberate the remainder  will face political resistance, ideological dismissal, and even personal denigration" (pp. 4-5). Quoting Guillory, O'Gorman says the remainder confronts the ideology of literary tradition that is "always 'a history of writers and not of writing'" (63) (p. 5). In other words, the remainder is revolutionary and rhetorical. O'Gorman provides an example of the remainder confronting and illuminating the limited use of traditional scholarship: his solicited submission of a hypertextual essay to an online journal that was not accepted for publication because  its hypertextual qualities. He uses key phrases from the reviews of his rejected piece  to outline three kinds of remainder writing -- structural, material,  and representational -- discussing how each works. These three kinds of remainder writing, he argues, would help the humanities draw more on Ulmer's heuretics and away from "the hermeneutic circle" (p. 12) and, more boldly, teach students "the fluidity of creative thought" so they can work within a "mode of discourse more suitable to our culture of information overload" (p. 14). O'Gorman concludes this chapter by relating the remainder to Deleuze's notion of sense, or rather, "an overproduction of sense," which is 'nonsense' and argues that new media is a perfect instantiation of the remaindered/nonsensical because it refuses "to lay out a single path for all things" (p. 14).

Chapter 2, "The Search for Exemplars: Discourse Networks and the Pictorial Turn," includes six sections that build towards O'Gorman's aim in this chapter to provide "the reader with a series of exemplars for constructing a new mode of academic discourse" (p. 19). This chapter makes three moves that enact the book's argument: First, O'Gorman begins to use visuals that, second, he analyzes as a way to introduce and model his visual methodology of hyperconomy. Third, he implements a chapter-design strategy that uses a tightly cropped version of the main visual example and an epigram to head each chapter. The combination of visual-quote and text-quote reinforce each chapter's main point. In each of these moves, O'Gorman exemplifies his hypereconomic methodology, which invokes images as "discursive inlets and outlets" (p. 19) that scholars should use to write \*with\* instead of \*about\* image-texts. He focuses on the avant-garde, which is ripe for hypereconomic scholarship, and points to exemplary studies of image and text (e.g., Mitchell, Gombrich, and McGann) and names Barthes, Foucault's study of Magritte's work, Johanna Drucker, and Rosalind Krauss as exemplars of image-text creation and critique. He argues that such artists' work can help us deprogram our typical thinking about art or scholarship, suggesting that "if the mode of representation in critical discourse is to be rendered more graphic, or if the image-text would come to be respected as a scholarly mode of presentation, such a change would require, or at least metonymically imply, some sort of structural change in the disciplinary system of higher education" (p. 36). It is at moments like these that this book provides a cool breath of air for me. That is, O'Gorman—practically in an aside, but that is never pitched as less important—quickly takes us from the big picture of Picture Theory (in this case) to the curricular imperative of digital scholarship pedagogy and back again, with a reminder that the whole book is a lead-in to his final chapter on curricular implementation of hyperconomy.

In Chapter 3, "The Hypericonic De-Vise: Peter Ramus Meets William Blake," O'Gorman puts the hypereconomic methodology he laid out in Chapter 2 to further use-justification by diving deep into one image-text exemplar, William Blake, whose work O'Gorman suggests is the perfect precursor to the contemporary avant-garde's fight against The Republic of Scholars' traditionalism. This historical examination starts with a discussion that pits 16th century theorists Thomas Murner (advocate of pictorial logic) and Peter Ramus (advocate of tree-like/dichotomous, linear logic) against each other. Readers easily sense that O'Gorman leans toward Murner's strategy in his own hypereconomic method and takes pains to show that Ramus' method, which espoused efficiency over anything perceived as arbitrary (e.g., images), has led to a critically bankrupt model of higher education. O'Gorman suggests that Ramus' beheading is a significant mnemonic device (a remainder strategy!) to remind us of the limited usefulness of print-centric logic. Although he cautions that Murner's logic wasn't all that great either, despite its use of visual logic. William Blake, on the other hand, was a better pedagogue of hypereconomic methods, which O'Gorman shows through a close reading of Blake's 'Nurse's Song' from \*Songs of Experience.\* His summarization of Blake's importance is analogous to digital (media) scholarship's usefulness: Blake's "work compels us to react in ways that might altogether change the way in which we \*see\* and experience the world" (p. 57). It is worthwhile to note that O'Gorman focuses on how media needs to be inserted into the digital scholarly arena. Otherwise we end up with lackluster digitization efforts, which he says is "a praxis of 'division' that Blake strived to denounce through his 'chaosthetics'" (p.

58) and attention to the materiality (form::content) of his texts (p. 61). O’Gorman concludes this chapter by denouncing both traditional scholarship \*and\* traditional digital scholarship in favor of hyperconomy, which he likens to a graphic version of Ulmer’s mystery.

In Chapter 4, “Nonsense and Play: The Figure/Ground Shift in New Media Discourse,” O’Gorman begins by offering a series of studies on enhanced intelligence, creativity and visual-logic learning that the field of digital writing has become familiar with in the last few years (concomitant to O’Gorman’s book being published). He sums up these theories with a pedagogical imperative to shift the way we teach to accommodate these changes. He acknowledges that such shifts are not simple to make, but he offers three section-length, pedagogically useful examples: (1) the artwork of surrealist painter Max Ernst, in which he “toys with the figure/ground distinction” (as discussed by Krauss in her book *\*The Optical Unconscious\**) (p. 78); (2) Children’s Literature (and games and TV shows), which makes room for the inclusion of nonsense, a fundamental component of remainder writing; and (3) digital media, which “offers us a forum, a material space, in which we can build our own models” to disrupt the “figure/ground shift that will short-circuit the discourse of the Republic of Scholars” (p. 82). His fourth example offers a specific digital media example that takes readers from the possible to the practical, leading us into the final, pedagogical chapter.

Chapter 5, “From Ecriture to E-Crit: On Postmodern Curriculum,” brings the book to its close by offering a specific hypereconomic assignment that O’Gorman tested at multiple schools (with both failure and success) as well as the case study of an overall curriculum that relies on digital, hypereconomic methods. Here, O’Gorman shortens the name of his hypereconomic curriculum to *\*electronic critique,\** or E-Crit, from which the book’s name derives. This E-Crit curriculum was implemented at the University of Detroit–Mercy when O’Gorman worked there, with the help of several colleagues. (He describes part of that highly political process in some detail, which is always an interesting read for digital writing scholars who are often also administrators of writing programs and labs.) He provides an outline of the entire curriculum as it stood at the time of printing and is quick to point out that such a radical and necessary shift for the humanities should breach disciplinary boundaries and student rank. That is, an E-Crit curriculum should be fluid, transdisciplinary, and open to undergraduate as well as graduate students. O’Gorman’s book ends by acknowledging that this kind of postmodern curriculum isn’t always feasible and wonders whether the humanities can sustain this kind of change. He seems hopeful while, at the same time, defeated from the constant pressure to argue and defend this kind of work. Making such large-scale change in the humanities will never be easy, but I hope he knows that his book has instilled in at least one more digital media scholar the courage to keep trying.

## HAPPILY EVER AFTER?

Unlike Borgman’s book, which is geared toward the infrastructural workers of the university (IT, admin, librarians), Willinsky, Fitzpatrick, and O’Gorman speak to humanities-based workers. Willinsky speaks mostly about open-access journal articles (with strong support in the sciences for similar work) while Fitzpatrick speaks mostly

about books (and the process of publishing long written texts that may take on a new form for the book), which appeals primarily to literary-critical humanists. O'Gorman speaks mostly about the process of creating new kinds of humanities scholarship, so it's much different in scope than the other three. Borgman's book has the widest scope on scholarship (and thus the least appeal, for my needs), but she also defines lots of the terms that Willinsky and Fitzpatrick discuss in more detail in relation to the broad and narrow humanities, respectively. All of these authors, however, are talking about the movement of print to online venues, which is the predominant culture of digital scholarship right now. So these books are good for helping digital writing scholars like myself to think outside our own field, see and remember what other fields do, while reminding ourselves that the work we do is different on the face but underneath, the code is the same.

Although I was disappointed while reading most of these books—because I wanted to expand my thinking on my own work in digital media scholarship, a thread that was missing from the first three books--in retrospect, I learned something about the direction my own work was taking due to the way such books treated digital media scholarship. There's a reason why media is missing from the discussion, and there's a reason (several, really) why digitized, archival, and print-on-screen work is so prominently discussed not just here but in any digital humanities conference sessions, grant outcomes, and (of course) at places like the Modern Language Association. What I'd been gearing up to do in my own work was to challenge those assumptions, but the way I'd been doing it wasn't ever going to work. The lesson I take away from the first three books is that digital writing would do well to learn from these broader humanities, sciences, and info-sciences fields. What they've done well is to create consortia that work together to build standards that were originally unique to their interests but that have become useful outside of those narrow interests. (OJS, TEI, and Dublin Core are three perfect examples.)

Digital media journals in rhetoric and composition, such as Kairos, have just barely begun implementing any of these standards, which speaks to three issues that seem prevalent in our field—issues that, I believe, have inhibited us from moving outside of our siloed home in computers and composition. First, we have a DIY mentality that isn't always productive. Although DIY has served the field well in creating new theories, pedagogies, and technologies, in many cases decades before other fields have come to them, sometimes we fail to recognize when we are reinventing the wheel. Second, although many in digital writing studies learned code a long time ago, we have left it to very few voices to remind us that -- especially in the landscape of burgeoning Web 2.0 content -- we have to think about making that work accessible, findable, and usable in the \*process\* of composing, not  retrofitting the wheel after the fact. Third, if we know that wheel was built in someone else's disciplinary silo (typically for some purpose other than rhetorical), we would rather ignore it or tear it down than figure out how to hack it for our own purposes. (Again: OJS, TEI, and Dublin Core are three perfect examples.)

An important fourth point: Borgman, Willinsky, and Fitzpatrick speak to their communities in ways that allow non-digitally interested colleagues into the discussion. O'Gorman, always the outlier in this review, speaks to his community as well, although I'm not sure how successful he is at reaching non-digitally interested colleagues. That's not bad; it just

sets his work dramatically apart from the other books discussed here. To use O'Gorman's phrasing, he—and we (digital writing studies)—remain firmly positioned as people who work exclusively with and in the digital (media) while Borgman, Willinsky, and Fitzpatrick work through, or perhaps on top of, the digital. This is the difference between reconceptualization and facilitation, which is also the fundamental difference, I believe, between what technorhetoricians do and what Digital Humanities scholars do respectively. Reconceptualization is great work, and digital writing scholars are remarkably successful at it, but what we're not great at is facilitating that work in an ongoing, sustainable, or promotable way. Thus, this is an area where we could learn a lot from Digital Humanists, including Borgman's, Willinsky's, and Fitzpatrick's books. If these three books are all telling us the same things and showing us exemplary projects outside of our field that enact successful ways that digital technology can facilitate scholarship—particularly through creation of shared cyberinfrastructures, more and better usage of metadata standards, community partnerships, access and preservation provisions, and attention to the ways scholarship will change in the coming years—then we should pay attention. If these needs are useful for digitized scholarship, it's probable that they will be useful for digital media scholarship in some ways, and we should take the time to explore those options.

This is not to discount the amazing work that Kairos and other scholarly multimedia venues have been doing in these areas for the last 15 years but to say that more work is always needed and, in some ways, we have some catching up to do. None of these books talk about digital media scholarship in any scalable, organized way that a journal would find useful, and that's the facilitation part that online rhet/comp journals have been missing. We have bootstrapped and DIYed ourselves into a proverbial corner, and so our next move is to get ourselves back out into the room so we can take part in the larger discussion. I hope that Kairos always publishes authors that build fantastic, speculative work that is situated somewhere on the spectrum of DIY and standards-compliance, because that's what its mission and purpose is: that's what it does best. But I also want the journal and others like it to be sustainable far into the future, and that's where this review now needs to turn. I conclude by offering brief descriptions of some projects that Kairos has been involved in over the last year, all of which are in service of putting our skills at reconceptualizing digital media scholarship and teaching towards facilitating the bigger publishing picture. If you have ideas about any of these projects, or want to help in some way, please contact me at cball at ilstu dot edu.

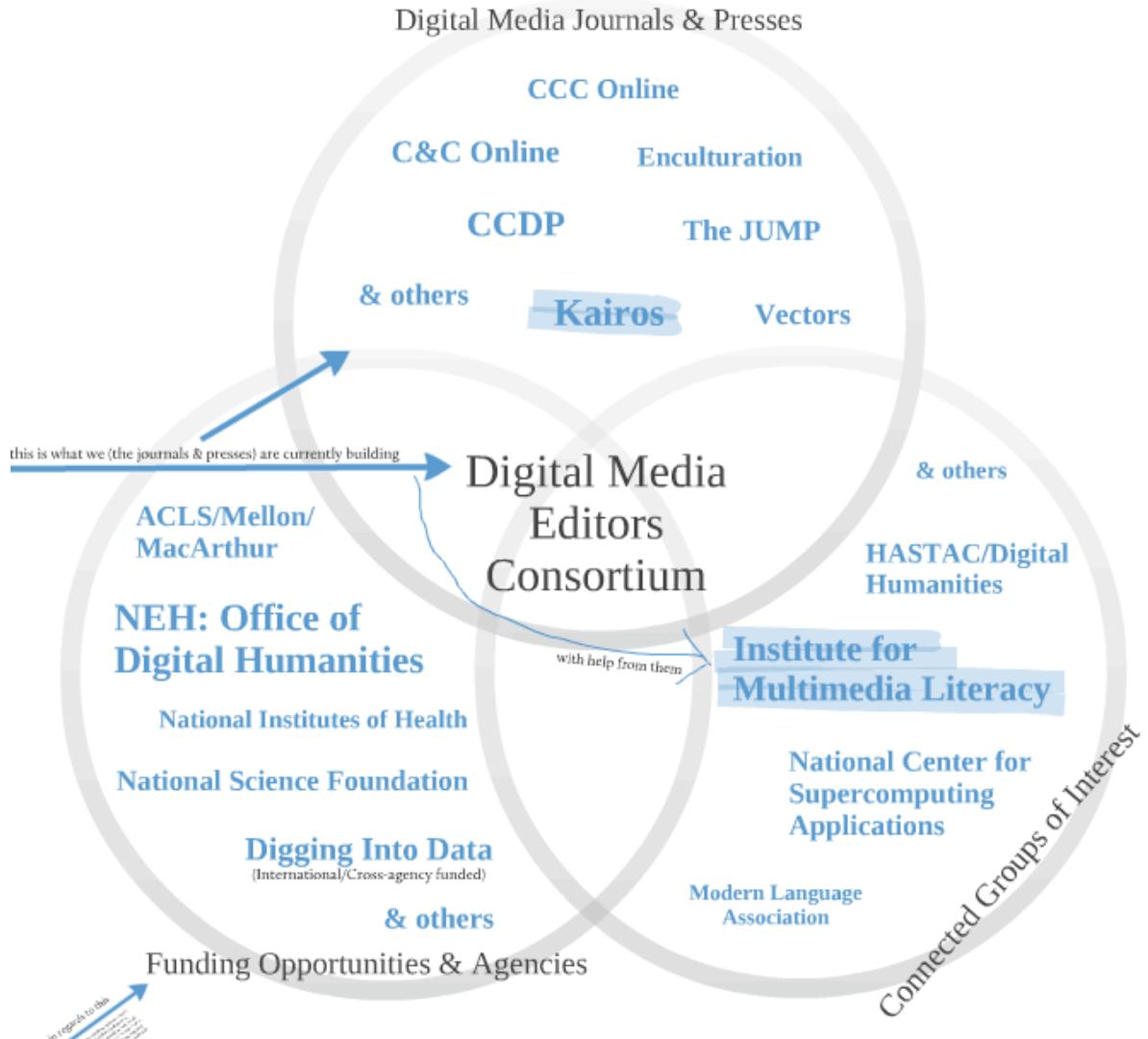


Figure 1: Venn diagram showing my conceptual relationship between Kairos and other digital media journals, funding agencies, and other groups interested in digital (media) scholarship.

## Projects

Above, I've laid out in Venn-diagram style, my take on the positions of different actors that I (in articulation with Kairos) have been working with and towards over the last year. This is a fairly speculative diagram, as some of the connections don't yet exist (but are hoped for) and some are just in the beginning stages as of this writing in mid-2010. The projects listed below include brief sketches of outcomes we hope will beneficially impact the Kairos community in the coming years:

- Humanistic Algorithms: For this project, led by Virginia Kuhn, a group of digital writing scholars met at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) in Urbana-Champaign (in March 2008) to discuss ways that computer

scientists could collaborate with humanities scholars. The goal was to create plans to harness supercomputing applications for the benefit of scholarly multimedia venues. The outcome was a project statement and future collaborations that would help us build algorithms to mine metadata and create visualizations from all the different media assets in the 100s of scholarly webtexts on the Web. Within a year of the first meeting, the Humanistic Algorithms project was part of a larger collection of digital humanities projects put together by Kevin Franklin, Executive Director for the Institute for Computing in Humanities, Arts and Social Science (ICHASS) at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The larger collection of projects received NEH funding under the Institute for Advanced Topics in Digital Humanities program. Our mission was to travel to three supercomputing sites in the U.S. (with a hope to aim internationally in another round of funding), learn what strengths each site had that might work for our projects (e.g., parallel processing, large-scale storage, and GPU/graphics processing), and collaborate on future grant applications to complete the projects. (What I thought would be a fun visit to UIUC to see some big computers turned into my post-tenure research agenda. Cool.)

- Kairos redesign: This project, which (since 2004) has gone through several iterations and project leaders due to its scope, is still underway. As Karl Stolley -- past Interface Editor and lead designer on the reader interface introduced in August 2008 -- said about the design, it's only one phase in the larger redesign plans for the journal. Those plans include creating an editorial system, like Open Journal Systems, that would allow every section of the journal to keep track of submissions, reviews, responses, and publications. Kathie Gossett, project manager for the redesign team, interviewed nearly every Kairos staff member in 2007 to figure out a system that would best accommodate our unusual editorial practices (most of which have to do with the multimedia nature of the submissions and our collaborative review process). We thought, at the time, that OJS wouldn't work for our needs because it's built to only handle print-based scholarship that traverses through a fairly linear workflow, one that (as one example) doesn't account for our unique practice of design-editing a webtext for usability and accessibility. However, after this portion of the redesign stalled for a year due to a lack of volunteer staff that had programming knowledge, we discovered that OJS might -- with some serious hacks, in the form of PHP plug-ins -- work for us after all, so we wouldn't have to build the system from scratch.
- "Building a Better Back-End: Editor, Author, and Reader Tools for Scholarly Multimedia" is the title of a Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant that Doug Eyman,  Kathie Gossett, and I (along with PHP programmer, Steven Potts) submitted this past March (2010) to the National Endowment for the Humanities. This grant would pay for dedicated project management time, programming, usability testing, and implementation of plug-ins for Open Journal Systems so that the system can be modified for use in scholarly multimedia publications. One set of plug-ins we propose building are for synchronous (and possibly open, peer-to-peer) reviewing of submissions in a way that will allow multiple reviewers to comment on the webtext, "like" comments of others, and add sticky notes to the interface design

while also adding game-like functionality to the review system, which would (in some ways) accommodate Fitzpatrick's argument for reviewing the reviewers. The benefits of this project (as outlined in our grant narrative) include the strength and sustainability of building into the already existing, widely-used, and open-source infrastructure of OJS, which has a growing plug-in gallery that we can add to, thereby making our products available to any online journal that wants to  implement scholarly multimedia into their publications or repositories.

- Digital Media Editors Consortium: Following the lines of wider humanities outreach aimed for in the Humanistic Algorithms and "Building a Better Back-End" projects, Virginia, Doug, and I met recently in Washington, DC, to follow up with Kevin Franklin's teams from the supercomputing site visits. There were two major outcomes from that wrap-up meeting: (1) The humanities, as Borgman argued (though not specifically about the humanities), \*needs\* cyberinfrastructure to complete the kinds of digital projects that are here and on the horizon. Large-scale cyberinfrastructure isn't just an issue for the sciences anymore. The problem is that no one with money in the humanities has funding for that scale of work. (Brett Bobley, Director of the Office of Digital Humanities, was there to assure us, reticently, of that fact.) We'd have to start thinking \*even larger\*, which I didn't think was possible, and apply for funding through agencies like the NIH and NSF. (Deep breathes. Okay.) (2) We'd never succeed in getting that scale of funding from anyone without a larger group of scholars who could all share in the creation and outcome of such an infrastructure. So, in our attempt to begin thinking \*even larger,\* our team decided that the first step would be to create a consortium of digital media stakeholders, built primarily on a group of journal and press editors that had convened just four days before, via  Skype. The previous Saturday afternoon, eight editors of similar publications talked passionately about the problems, joys, and collective issues we face in publishing scholarly multimedia. It was an exciting, fortuitous, long-overdue conversation, punctuated by a powerfully loud thunderstorm that called the meeting short, even though we all knew there was much more to talk about. A week later, after the trip to DC where Virginia and Doug suggested taking the editors' meeting even bigger, we had a GoogleGroup and a growing consortium of independent digital-media-publication editors and stakeholders.

The last of these projects is less than three weeks old, and while it may seem premature to announce, it's also not something we should sit on. We're still working out the details on inviting stakeholders, coming up with projects, and moving forward with funding opportunities, but it's an exciting time for digital media scholarship and for Kairos in particular, this being our 15th year of publication and all. Join us as we move and shake some more, create some necessary infrastructure, work on some best practices documents, and make the journal and the field even better in the coming 15 years!