
SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH AS A PUBLIC GOOD:

Identifying Research Prospects for Advancing Research
Among Academic and Non-Academic Discourse Communities

May 27, 2010

Room 301 - John Molson School of Business Building (MB) – 1450 rue Guy, Montreal
http://www.concordia.ca/documents/about/whereweare/maps/P8296_CampusMap-SGW.pdf

contact: johanne_provençal@sfu.ca

* * * * *

8:30 A.M. – 9:00 A.M. BREAKFAST

The conference organizers welcome all participants and review the workshop program.

9:00 A.M. – 9:30 A.M. OPENING ADDRESS

[John Willinsky](#)

Director, Public Knowledge Project

[Increasing the Public Status of Research and Scholarship](#)

The presentation will describe the efforts of the Public Knowledge Project to support ways of increasing the public and scholarly quality of research and scholarship, through the development of open source software systems, through the design of supportive reading environments, through the design of new economic models for scholarly publishing, and through conducting research on public uses and take-up of research in various sectors of society. The presentation will also invite collaborations among the participants in further developing a research agenda, including interventions and design experiments, to further test the limits, challenges and value of pursuing greater public standing and access for research and scholarship.

9:30 A.M. – 10:30 A.M. PANEL I: KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

[Barbara Crutchley](#)

President, Canadian Association of University Research Administrators

[Research Administration and the Changing Research Environment](#)

The presenter will discuss her involvement in the research administration field for the past 31 years. This experience has included many years assessing the changes to the research environment and to the needs of researchers and working closely with research teams involved in large initiatives involving collaborations with community partners. The presenter will also discuss the need to provide information in different ways in order to meet the priorities of the community partners. These successful initiatives have been both local and have spanned the country, adding to the complexity of orchestration. Innovative measures and new technologies need to be applied in order to capture both the qualitative and quantitative impacts of research. In the current research environment, there are consequences in passively accepting external definitions of these measures. It is timely to develop a more fully informed agenda reflecting the realities of all parties.

David Phipps

Director, Research Services & Knowledge Exchange, York University

Knowledge Mobilization: Getting the Right Information to the Right People in the Right Format at the Right Time

Knowledge mobilization (=transfer, translation, exchange, utilization...) enhances the various connections that can be made between research and public policy, social programs or professional practice. Knowledge mobilization can help non academic research stakeholders maximize the public good of research by connecting research(ers) to organizations seeking to use research or those organizations that will be affected by the outcomes of research. While we think about timing and information and audiences we often under utilize diverse formats that can enhance the connection between research and use. This brief presentation will explore the importance of combining different Kmb methods of producer push, user pull, knowledge exchange and co-production of knowledge to support effective knowledge mobilization.

* * * * *

Budd Hall

Director, Office of Community-Based Research, University of Victoria

Knowledge Mobilization and Community-Based Research

The presenter discusses knowledge mobilization as it relates to his experience as Director of the Office of Community Based Research at the University of Victoria. Community-based and participatory research methods, changes in the fields of life-long learning, and higher education and social development all have important links to current issues related to knowledge mobilization and these will be discussed.

* * * * *

Robert Greenwood

Director, Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development, Memorial University

Research, Knowledge, Public Outreach and Measures of Engagement

Since it was established in 2004, the Harris Centre has gained national and international recognition as a leader in connecting university teaching, research and outreach with regional policy and development. In this presentation, I will discuss how the Harris Centre facilitates and coordinates Memorial's activities in regional policy and development, across the full range of faculties and departments. The presentation will include lessons that The Harris Centre has learned in: (1) how to structure university outreach efforts to maximize engagement from across the university; (2) how to partner with the community to connect teaching, research and outreach from the "inside out," and to identify new issues and opportunities and broker university faculty, student and staff collaboration in designing new initiatives from the "outside in" and (3) how to develop systems and processes to manage efficient and responsive interaction, to deliver results and maximize communications.

10:30 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

GROUP DISCUSSION I: RESEARCH AS A PUBLIC GOOD

Following on the presentations of the first panel, workshop participants (either as a large group or in smaller break-out groups) generate a list of examples of social sciences and humanities research studies that would serve as models of a "public good" to help us arrive at a shared understanding of what is meant by this concept. Beyond forming a list of examples, some questions to consider:

- i) How were these activities initiated and what was required in carrying them forward?
- ii) Were there ways of identifying, demonstrating or measuring the value and consequences of the research as public good (and if so, how so)?
- iii) What were the main challenges (for the research community or otherwise) and how were these overcome (or did they remain necessary challenges of this kind of work)?
- iv) Are there other key questions about research as a public good that we should be considering here?

11:00 A.M. – 11:15 A.M. – BREAK

11:15 A.M. – 12:15 P.M. PANEL II: RESEARCH AS PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Robyn Stockand

President, Canadian Association of Special Libraries and Information Services

The Information Marketplace: Public Goods, Private Enterprise

I am a practitioner working in a corporate library. However, while pursuing my MLIS, I chose to research this topic. It was clear to me then, as now, that considering knowledge as a public good is fraught with issues, most notably the problem of the free rider. This phenomena occurs within the workplace as well as between knowledge creators and knowledge users/buyers. Knowledge creation requires resources; some one needs to pay the piper, normally at the cost the piper sets. Thus, any discussion of research, information and knowledge as public goods must include an accounting of the costs of production. Equally, valuing such goods requires recognition of the market for such goods. Finally, we must acknowledge that the ability to share such goods electronically reinforces the appearance of non rivalled and non excludable, but does not make them so.

* * * * *

Rowland Lorimer

Director, Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing, Simon Fraser University

Scholarly and Non-Scholarly Roles in the Reinvention of Scholarly Communication

Beginning with the *Transactions of the Royal Society*, scholarly journals have served as knowledge mobilizers not merely by disseminating research but also by providing a focus and outlet for intellectual energies. The current interest of academics in using technology to reinvent journal operations is providing great service as a catalyst to knowledge production and removing barriers to research dissemination. Moreover, the reorganization of the institutional market into library consortia (e.g., CRKN) shows great potential to be combined with scholar-controlled production to recapture effective and efficient flows of research results within the research community but open to the public. As these changes begin to bear fruit, it is important to retain the understanding that effective and efficient journal operations require a range of professionals. Academics reign as researchers, authors, peer reviewers, and executive editors. Publishing professionals build on that foundation. These include line editors and proofreaders, designers, marketers, managers, and publishers, each of which play an important role in the publishing process.

* * * * *

Christian Vandendorpe

VP of Research Dissemination, Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

The Double Necessity of Open Access

As vice-president, research dissemination, of a Federation that represents the largest research community in Canada with more than 70 associations, I am deeply involved in promoting Open Access, which is the best way to distribute knowledge, both from the point of view of the user and of the producer. As a user, I need to have direct access to the full body of research and I want to be able to search not only through a single text at a time but through dozens or hundreds of texts at a time, by using semantic search algorithms. As a producer of research, I want to be read by as many people as possible, not only in order to augment my rank in the citation index but also because I think that I am doing meaningful work that can help colleagues to further their own investigations.

12:15 P.M. – 12:45 P.M.

GROUP DISCUSSION II: PARTNERSHIPS

Following on the presentations of the second panel and the list of examples generated from our first discussion, workshop participants (as a large group or in smaller break-out groups) identify potential partners—among those present and including others—where partnerships could be formed in order to

extend the reach of research as a public good. When thinking of partnerships, some questions to consider are:

- i) Are there existing activities (or annual events) within your work/organization to which potential partners (among those present and including others) could be involved as first steps toward the formation of partnerships?
- ii) What would be the main challenges (for the research community or otherwise) in forming these partnerships and how could these overcome (or would they remain necessary challenges of this kind of work)?
- iii) For these potential partnership activities, are there resources or access to resources (either within individual organizations, in terms of funding envelopes, or perhaps sponsorship) that could be drawn on collectively (given that pooling of resources is looked upon favourably when requests for further resources are made).
- iv) Are there other key questions (partnership and research questions or otherwise) that we should be considering here?

12:45 P.M. – 1:30 P.M. – LUNCH

1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. PANEL III: EXTENDING THE “REACH” OF RESEARCH

Peggy Berkowitz
Editor, *University Affairs*

University Affairs: Editorial Perspectives

University Affairs, for at least five years, has been accepting more submissions from researchers and proactively encouraging Canadian faculty to write for us, as well as providing editorial assistance to researchers in preparing a piece for a general interest magazine like this one. I will introduce some of the ways faculty members and researchers have an opportunity to use the media to share knowledge with a broader community. Using examples from the magazine I edit, I'll demonstrate some channels you can use to reach readers outside your field, including story ideas, essays, opinion pieces, podcasts, video and even letters to the editor.

* * * * *

Tim Lougheed
Past-president, Canadian Science Writers' Association

Telling Tales Out of School

It is easy and tempting to assume that the communication of scientific and technological progress follows in a straightforward fashion as this work is conducted in institutions of higher learning. Yet the reality is that public awareness of such work follows what might be described as a viral path, more akin to the success of a bestselling novel, a hit song, or a popular movie. In fact, communication occurs when research can be embedded in a coherent narrative, a story populated with characters, turning points, mysteries, and vexing conclusions. All parties with an interest in this field could benefit from a heightened awareness of this simple reality.

* * * * *

Kathryn O'Hara
CTV Chair in Science Broadcast Journalism, Carleton University

Research and Knowledge as a Public Good: From Evidence to Attitudes

The presenter will discuss her knowledge interests in the way that people process evidence and form opinions, make choices and develop attitudes about their personal views on the interconnectivity of health and environment. What types of knowledge inform them and where do the disconnects in knowledge transfer occur? How much do specialist journalists contribute to understanding of complex

issues in personal and public health issues? What role does an aggregated information source like Wikipedia serve in disseminating accurate evidence-based knowledge?

* * * * *

Anthony Paré and Doreen Starke-Meyerring

Integrated Studies in Education, Faculty of Education, McGill University

Writing (in) the Knowledge Society: A Rhetorical Perspective

Writing has been central to the creation, sharing, and contestation of knowledge throughout its history. In the last few decades, with the rise of what has commonly been termed the knowledge society, however, writing has moved centre stage. Much of what counts as knowledge is created, shared, inscribed, contested, and used largely through writing. Indeed, according to some estimates, knowledge accounts for about three fourths of the value produced in the knowledge economy (Neef, 1998, p. 4, ctd. in Brandt, 2005, p. 167), rendering it “more valuable than land, equipment, or even money” (Brandt, 2005, p. 167). As Brandt (2005) observes, writing fuels the knowledge economy, with written products becoming “the chief vehicles for economic transactions and the chief ground for making profits or achieving advantage” (p. 180), so that “such high-stakes factors as corporate reputation, client base, licensing, competitive advantage, growth, and profit rely on what and how people write” (p. 174). In short, writing and writing development have become vital components of the epistemological infrastructure of knowledge-intensive organizations and societies. In Brandt’s words, writing has become “hot property” (p. 167).

* * * * *

Johanne Provençal

Research Associate, Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing

Academic reward and punishment: The zero-sum game of knowledge mobilization

SSHRC and other funding organizations in Canada and internationally are giving increased attention to extending the benefits of university-based research to governments, industry, community organizations, the media and publics. It is important to understand these groups not only as stakeholders, but also, as diverse discourse communities with distinct practices, conventions and approaches to how research and knowledge is taken up, communicated and put to use. Within these distinctions rest deeply entrenched differences about what is given currency and valued (or not) as “knowledge” and the extent to which it is “useful” and these can cause barriers to important, negotiated and shared understandings in extending the reach of research as a public good. Further, the meritocracy of academic reward (and punishment) does not encourage faculty to produce “outputs” beyond what is conventional for tenure, promotion and success in securing research funds. The result is a zero-sum game that limits the reach of research.

3:00 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.

GROUP DISCUSSION III: PROJECTS

Following the third panel, as well as our earlier discussion of examples of social sciences and humanities research as a public good and potential partnerships, in this final discussion, workshop participants (either as a group or in smaller break-out groups) are asked to identify particular partnership projects that could be carried forward. To move beyond the first step of identifying such projects, the following questions could be asked:

- i) What timelines and/or funding deadlines need to be taken into account?
- ii) What other people/organizations should be invited to be part of these projects?
- iii) What are the concrete next steps to be taken to move from the “idea” of these projects to the reality of them?
- iv) In order to move projects forward, are there other key questions that we should be considering?

3:30 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

BREAK, INFORMAL EXCHANGE, CLOSING REMARKS

Workshop participants are invited to share in refreshments and informal exchange about next steps to be taken. Workshop organizers provide closing remarks.

28 MAY 2009

ORGANIZERS INFORMAL BREAKFAST - MOVING FORWARD

Workshop organizers convene the following morning to set up timelines for action items and/or plan(s) established during the workshop.

OTHER ITEMS TO NOTE

Thanks to the following graduate student assistants who have been invited to document the discussion and break-out sessions taking place over the course of the day: Andrew Churchill and Nicole Fiore. Participants are asked to provide clarification to the graduate student research assistants as is needed to ensure that the events of the day are documented as accurately as possible.

Representatives from SSHRC have also been invited to attend.

Please be reminded that the organizers will be publishing edited proceedings of the workshop. If you wish to draw on your workshop participation and discussion to submit your work for publication, please be prepared to do so no later than June 10, 2010 (which is two weeks after the workshop date).

It is important for participants to be present for the duration of the workshop.

Please be sure to set aside the full day in your calendars.

Thank you, again, for your contributions to the success of this event.