

The Silent Continent

***Research publication policy in Africa
and the global knowledge divide***



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African knowledge for Africa

For our continent to take its rightful place in the history of humanity ... we need to undertake, with a degree of urgency, a process of reclamation and assertion. We must contest the colonial denial of our history and we must initiate our own conversations and dialogues about our past. We need our own historians and our own scholars to interpret the history of our continent.

President Thabo Mbeki – launching the Timbuktu Library Project



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A scholarly publisher's credo

There is a fundamental need to develop policies and strategies that could grow the output and effective dissemination of Africa-based research in and from Africa, for African development, in the most appropriate media and formats.

This is happening in a rapidly changing environment..



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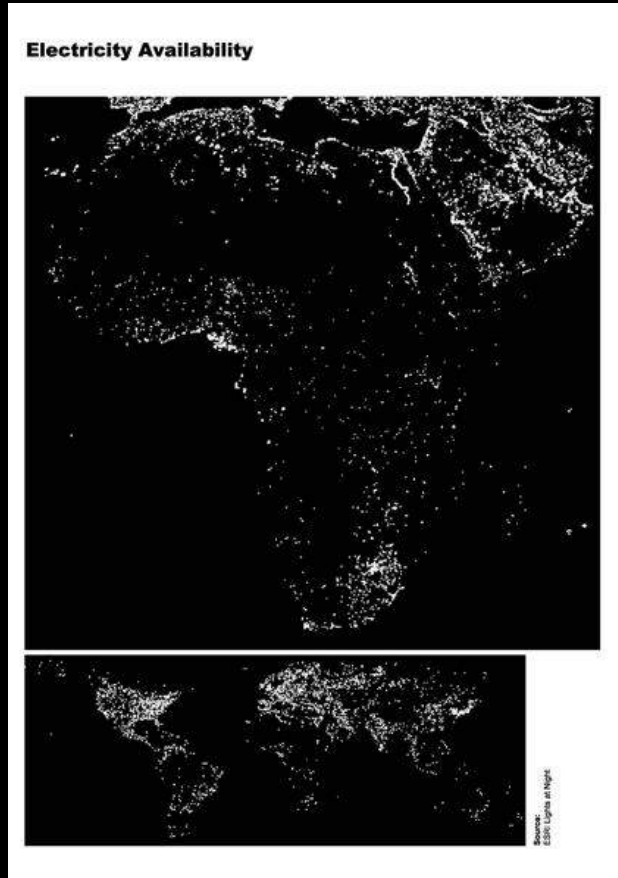
The Impact of print publications



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The marginalisation of African knowledge



- Africa produces around 3% of books published, but consumes around 12%.
- Africa produced 0.4% of online content in 2002 – if South Africa is excluded, 0.02%.



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The marginalisation of African research output

- The major Northern scholarly journals account for 80% of articles in the Thomson indexes. 163 developing countries produce just 2.5%.
- 65% of African research is in local, non-indexed journals
- in 2005 there were 22 African journals out of 3,730 journals in the Thomson Scientific indexes. 20 of these were from South Africa



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The journal rating system

- The 'core journal' philosophy that underlies the international citation indexes by its very nature marginalises those on the periphery
- Social science and humanities journals do not feature in the indexes
- The system works against collaborative effort
- Developing country journals struggle to get citations
- The system works to create a 'club' that excludes outsiders through its selection processes and value criteria



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A proprietary model of intellectual property rights



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The body count



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The importance of dissemination

The benefits of research are derived principally from access to research results. To the extent that the dissemination of research results is less than might be from given resources, we can argue that the welfare of society is sub-optimal. Currently access to research is restricted and the means to gain access is determined by a market in which a number of publishers have a dominant position.

Wellcome Trust 2006



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Dissemination – a neglected area worldwide

' [D]espite billions of dollars being spent by governments on R&D every year, relatively little policy attention has yet been paid to the dissemination of the results of that research through scientific and scholarly publishing'

Australian Government report 2006



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African research policy at centre stage



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A strategic approach

- Governments want to see return on investment for research funding
- Government research policy demands research contribution to development
- Research publication is a powerful way of demonstrating research effectiveness
- Effective publishing for national needs could profile African research globally



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The challenge of policy formulation



Policy-makers need to discern, based on their expert knowledge, the future trajectories of the subject and the interventions that might improve its development ...

(NEPAD 2005)



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What will the future look like?

Every generation thinks it is unique, but there are nonetheless objective reasons to believe that we are witnessing an essential change in the way information is accessed, the way it is communicated to and from the general public, and among research professionals – fundamental methodological changes that will lead to a terrain 10-20 years from now more different than in any comparable time period.

Paul Ginsparg, Cornell University



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Starting points – Research and the information society



'The ability to maximise the use of information is now considered to be the single most important factor in deciding the competitiveness of countries as well as their ability to empower their citizens through enhanced access to information.'

White Paper on Science and Technology: Preparing for the 21st century



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Scholarly publishing in the networked age

- New opportunities for disseminating scientific information and for democratising access to research knowledge.
- There are changes in the way science is being carried out – and hence the need for new capabilities.
- It is not only dissemination that is changing, but the way that scientific research is conducted



The networked information economy

The change wrought by the networked information economy is deep. A series of changes in the technologies, economic organisation and social practices of production in this environment has created new opportunities for how we make and exchange information, knowledge and culture. **These changes have increased the role of non-market and non-proprietary production, both by individuals alone and by cooperative efforts in a wide range of loosely or tightly woven collaborations.**

Yochai Brenkler, *The Wealth of Networks* (2006)



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A Southern African perspective

Political power tended to be localized, boundaries fluid and vague, and the authority of chiefs highly variable. The political landscape was both homogeneous and kaleidoscopic, with widely dispersed material and symbolic resources and constantly changing political domains. Even at moments of relative stasis domains of authority very frequently overlapped. Political identities were multiple, with the fluidity of identities generally increasing with geographical distance from any given center of power... There were multiple nodes and overlapping domains of authority....

Crais 2002 Custom and the Politics of Sovereignty in South Africa Africa. *Journal of Social History* 39 (3).



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Open and collaborative copyright models



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The ethos of Open Access

- Builds on collaboration and a tradition of collegiality
- Depends upon sharing rather than proprietorship, access rather than protection
- Efficiencies and economies of collaborative development
- Networked rather than hierarchical structures
- The publication can be seen as work in progress rather than the final and definitive word



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South African research policy – a case study



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Research policies for national development

Within the national policy framework there are forward-looking policies for development-focused research, collaborative approaches and the use of new technologies.



S&T and Innovation Policy

- Research must impact on national development needs
- Collaborative approaches within multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary research programmes
- The creation of an equitable information order, nationally, regionally and internationally
- The importance of ICT development and new modes of knowledge development



But...

- Mechanical counts of journal articles and patents are the measures for effective research dissemination
- The 'information revolution' appears to apply only to the technological vehicle, not its contents – little attention to content development and dissemination



Research Publication Policy

- Talks of the need to promote research to meet development goals
- Identifies the importance of the social sciences as mediators of research knowledge
- Talks about the 'changing modes of disseminating research and output'



But...

- A 'publish or perish' reward system and publishing by numbers
- 'Originality' and personal advancement are the dominant values
- Reward system based on journal publication
- International citation indexes are the measure
- Print-based journals are the standard



South Africa – new approaches to scholarly publishing

Some case studies



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The Academy of Science of South Africa

- The growth of local journals, using an Open Access model
- Quality management and audits of journals
- A federation of institutional repositories with national harvesting
- SA involvement in the development of an expanded, more inclusive listing and indexing system



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Doing it differently – the HSRC Press

HSRC Press - Mozilla Firefox

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http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/

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Opening access to quality social science in Africa

BROWSE ALL TITLES

BROWSE BY CATEGORY

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- Arts & Culture
- Corporate Information
- Development Studies
- Disability Studies
- Dispute Resolution
- Economics & Labour Market Studies
- Education
- Environmental Studies
- Gender Studies
- Geography, Urban Planning & Demography
- History
- Human Resource Development
- Innovation Studies & Knowledge Management
- Media Studies
- Philosophy
- Politics & International Relations
- Psychology & Family Studies
- Public Health
- Public Opinion Surveys

representation & reality

LEARNING TO TEACH IN SOUTH AFRICA

MONITORING CHILD WELL-BEING

HSRC Press is South Africa's open access publisher committed to the dissemination of high quality social science research based publications, in print and electronic form. The Press publishes the research output of the Human Science Research Council and externally authored works. A formal peer-review process guarantees the highest academic quality and the Press has a very active local and international marketing programme, in addition to collaborating with foreign publishers on specific titles.

NEW TITLES

A baseline study on psychosocial support of orphans and vulnerable children in two villages in Botswana
GN Tsheko, K Bainame, LW Odinle, M Segwabe
ISBN 13: 978-0-7969-2178-9
August 2007
R90.00

FORTHCOMING TITLES

The Meanings of Timbuktu
Shamil Jeppie (eds), Souleymane Bachir Diagne (eds)
ISBN 13: 978-0-7969-2204-5
November 2007
R290.00

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Where are we headed for?



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Do we risk losing our younger scholars?

[T]he research community is ripe for a revolution in scientific communications and the current generation of scientists will be the ones to push it forward. These scientists...have grown up with cyberinfrastructure as part of their daily lives, not just a specialised aspect of their profession. They..can feel quite limited by the traditional format of publication. Perhaps, most importantly, they appreciate that the sheer amount of data and the number of publications is prohibitive to the traditional methods of keeping current with the literature.

J Lynn Fink, University of California. CTWatch Quarterly Aug. 2007



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What is needed?

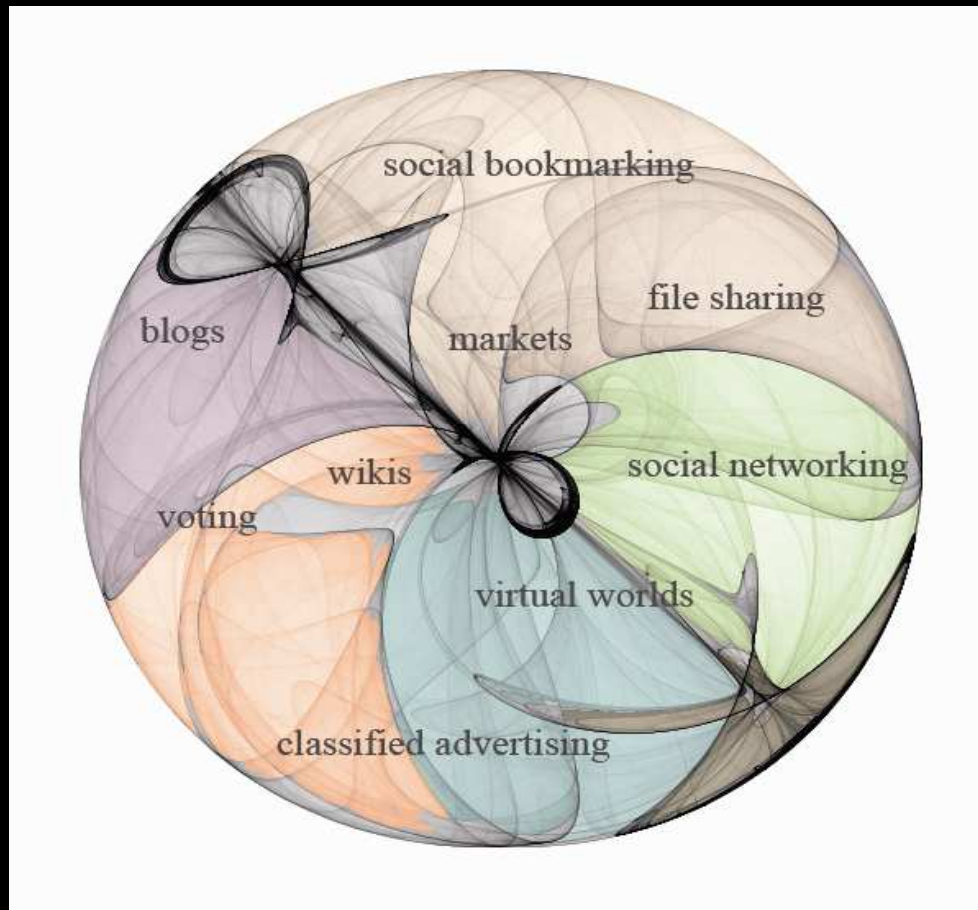
- Recognise the importance of investing in dissemination and publication
- Support infrastructure for digital distribution
- Provide rewards for a wider range of published products for wider audiences
- Create reward systems for academics that support them in producing outputs in support of national research policy goals



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In the digital world, everything is integrated



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What is needed...

- Recognise the importance of nationally-focused publication in a variety of formats and media and to a variety of audiences
- Mandate open access for publicly funded research
- Build infrastructure across institutions to support publication – management, academics and libraries



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The Office of Scholarly Communication - UC

The Office of Scholarly Communication - Mozilla Firefox

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http://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/

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Reshaping Scholarly Communication

[Publisher and Journal Profiles](#) [Model Copyright Clauses](#)

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Regain Control of Scholarly Communication

The University of California's scholars and their partners across the academy are reshaping scholarly communication. Understand the challenges, the crises they have produced, and opportunities to address them.

[View a summary...](#)

Current News & Issues

- [Survey of UC Faculty attitudes & behavior](#)
- [Reviews of proposed UC Open Access Policy](#)
- [Other recent UC-related news](#)

The Facts

Current scholarly publishing models are not economically sustainable. Researchers and students have access to a diminishing fraction of relevant scholarship. But remedies and alternatives are being developed and tested. Learn about:

- [The economics of publishing](#)
- [Alternatives for scholarly communication](#)

UC Responses



UC's eScholarship Repository can be seen as a call to action, challenging scholars to use its services to regain control over the distribution of their work.

Keith Yamamoto
Professor of Cellular and Molecular Pharmacology, UC San Francisco

TAKE ACTION

Scholars: influence the scholarly communication system to increase the impact and benefit of your scholarship.

- [Review and discuss the UC Open Access Policy proposal](#)
- [Manage your Intellectual property](#)
 - [Retain certain copyrights](#)
 - [Maximize the reach and impact of your work](#)
- [Use alternative forms of publishing](#)
 - [Deposit your work in open access repositories](#)
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