



OpenEdition contribution to Consultation on the state of the Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) in Europe

Please indicate your position: e.g. individual researcher, representative of research institution, representative of association, and your fields of research!

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- **Revues.org** <<http://www.revues.org>>: founded in 1999, Revues.org distributes over 350 journals in all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences in fourteen languages, which represents over 100,000 articles on open access.

- **Calenda** <<http://calenda.org>> is an announcement platform for the humanities and social sciences posting announcements for seminars, conferences, calls for contributions and employment opportunities. 22000 notices have been published on Calenda since its creation in 2000.

- **Hypotheses** <<http://hypotheses.org>> is research blog for the humanities and social sciences. Hypotheses presents an innovative mode of communicating research results. The platform features all the advantages of social media and is monitored by the academic community assuring the excellence of its research credentials. It encourages interactions between researchers and society by enabling instant, two-way exchange concerning knowledge communicated in an easily appropriable format. Today Hypotheses hosts over 600 blogs publishing in over 10 languages. French-, English-, German-, Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking researchers make intensive use of the platform to exchange and distribute information about research progress or the latest developments in their field in real time.

- **OpenEdition Books** <<http://books.openedition.org>> enables the distribution of book collections on open access. Opened in February 2013, the platform hosts over thirty publishers in the humanities and university presses based in several European countries. Between now and 2020, 16,000 books will eventually be published online.

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HSS research is often conducted in discipline-defined contexts. This may be an obstacle in a problem-driven research environment (“challenges of society”). Can you give examples of how your own research area has been involved in (a) opening up to other research fields, (b) translating findings and/or methods to or from other academic fields, (c) contributing to the emergence of new, cross-disciplinary fields, and/or (d) transcending fields of academic research with its results and insights?

Over the course of the last 15 years, the development of digital publication has enabled the creation of new, exclusively online journals, very often on open access. Such editorial creation is essential to academic life in HSS disciplines as it encourages the emergence of new focuses for research, in a multidisciplinary perspective. Of the 350 journals distributed by Revues.org, over 130 are considered to be “multidisciplinary” <<http://www.openedition.org/6749>>. Very often they are journals focusing on geographical or cultural areas, exploring a region of the world via research from different disciplines. The *Nuevo Mundo* journal <<http://nuevomundo.revues.org>>, for example, deals with Latin America from several angles. The journal attracts a large readership (over 60,000 visits per month), and the journal is an important source of information for understanding this region of the world. The same applies to EJTS: *European Journal of Turkish Studies* <<http://ejts.revues.org>> but also other journals dealing with important themes or research subjects: the *Genre, Sexualité et Société* journal <<http://gss.revues.org>>, for example, combines the perspectives of sociologists, anthropologists, as well as geographers to tackle the gender issues of the French Presidential elections or the social construction of homosexuality. There are also *Midas*, <<http://midas.revues.org>>, based in Portugal, an interdisciplinary journal dealing with museums, and *Vertigo*, <<http://vertigo.revues.org>>, a Canadian journal specializing in the environment sciences.

Blogs and research notebooks provide greater fluidity as a digital publishing tool, providing lighter, faster communication abilities. Their form enables a non-academic readership to study academic research results in real time, stay abreast of the current state of their field, or instantly access explanatory elements related to a current topic. Here are some examples of blog posts related to H2020 key topics, published in french on the Hypotheses platform :

- **Food :**
[http://search.openedition.org/?q\[0\]=alimentation&op\[1\]=AND&pf=Hypotheses.org](http://search.openedition.org/?q[0]=alimentation&op[1]=AND&pf=Hypotheses.org)
- **Health:**
[http://search.openedition.org/index.php?op\[\]=AND&q\[\]=sant%C3%A9&field\[\]=All&pf=Hypotheses.org](http://search.openedition.org/index.php?op[]=AND&q[]=sant%C3%A9&field[]=All&pf=Hypotheses.org)



- **Aging:**
[http://search.openedition.org/index.php?op\[\]=AND&q\[\]=vieillesse&field\[\]=All&pf=Hypotheses.org](http://search.openedition.org/index.php?op[]=AND&q[]=vieillesse&field[]=All&pf=Hypotheses.org)
- **Climate change:**
[http://search.openedition.org/index.php?op\[\]=AND&q\[\]=changement+climatique&field\[\]=All&pf=Hypotheses.org&op\[\]=NOT&q\[\]=Dani%C3%A8le+Revel&field\[\]=Auteur](http://search.openedition.org/index.php?op[]=AND&q[]=changement+climatique&field[]=All&pf=Hypotheses.org&op[]=NOT&q[]=Dani%C3%A8le+Revel&field[]=Auteur)
- **Transport:**
[http://search.openedition.org/index.php?op\[\]=AND&q\[\]=transports&field\[\]=All&pf=Hypotheses.org](http://search.openedition.org/index.php?op[]=AND&q[]=transports&field[]=All&pf=Hypotheses.org)

The research agendas of HSS disciplines are highly varied. What are the broad research questions, new methodological or theoretical developments, or generally new approaches that are high on your own research agenda? Which ones are high on the research agenda of your field? Where do you see potential contributions to societal relevance?

The main issue facing the humanities and social sciences in the years to come is the mobilization of digital technologies in the development of research. This new research field, the “digital humanities”, has undergone exponential growth and promises to deeply change the disciplines in its field. Those involved generally agree that it is a field that is vast and presents itself in many forms¹ and affects many dimensions of research:

- the relationship to sources, which are now digitized, or natively digital. Digital technologies enable researchers to explore, exploit and represent their sources in a very different way to the past. “Distant reading”² and data visualization practices based on the development of the “big data” paradigm³ are a sign of this evolution. The digital humanities has become a new methodological proposition in the humanities and social sciences where modeling activities⁴ play a central role.

- the rapid evolution of academic communication via the social media. Traditional forms of publication, research monographs and scholarly journals are complemented and sometimes rivalled by other forms of communication, like blogs, wikis and social networks, which respond to new needs: speed, openness, and interactivity. The whole ecosystem of academic communication has been turned upside down. The development of new evaluation practices,

¹ P. Svenson, “Beyond the big tent”, in M. Gold (ed.) *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, University of Minnesota Press, 2012 <<http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/22>>

² F. Moretti. *Graphs, Maps, Trees*. London: Verso, 2005

³ Jb. Michel and al. “Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books”. *Science* 331, no. 6014 (14 January 2011): 176–182. doi:10.1126/science.1199644

⁴ W. McCarty, *Humanities Computing*, Plagrove, 2005



like open peer review, open peer commentary or altmetrics are signs of a repositioning of selection practices for the categorizing and appropriation of research results⁵.

The development of the digital humanities presents an historical opportunity for the humanities and social sciences to review their relationship to the whole of society and to bring responses to its needs: the first step here is to make available large sections of its cultural heritage on open access in the form of digital manuscripts, the photographs of historical and artistic productions, 3D representations of archaeological monuments, videos of social practices, and oral or musical corpuses⁶.

Computer analysis and modeling of large corpuses of data enables the production of new approaches to social and cultural phenomena. This knowledge can have important repercussions for industry, in linguistics for example, with the development of areas such as automatic language processing and automatic translation applications (Systran is a good example) or in sociology where the analysis of social networks has led to the development of industrial applications relating to the exploitation of Web data (Linkfluence is another one).

Finally, open access publication practices via the intermediary of online journals, blogs, wikis and other social media enables the whole of society in the diversity of its components (professional, associative, teaching, and non-academic) to benefit from the latest research results and developments in knowledge but also to contact researchers directly according to the focus of their studies. Theories relating the interpenetration of research and society have long been developed, whether in a global sense, in the sociology of science⁷, but also in a more applied way within different disciplinary fields, with public history. These decades-old theories take on a new dimension through the possibilities offered by Internet and social web practices. Supported by digital history, public history has seen rapid growth through projects as diverse as the documentary enhancement of a photographic archive dating from the Second World War⁸ or the constitution of a multimedia archive based on the 11 September attacks⁹.

“Horizon 2020” will provide new opportunities for the HSS to contribute to new research on “challenges of society”. How could your field potentially contribution to this? Please specify the “societal challenge/s” most likely to emanate from your research community, and suggest fruitful developments in this process, if possible.

⁵ F. Casati, and al.. “Liquid Publications: Scientific Publications meet the Web”. Departmental Technical Report. University of Trento, December 2007. <http://eprints.biblio.unitn.it/1313/>

⁶ “Our Cultural Commonwealth”: The report of the American Council of Learned Societies Commission on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences. (New York: ACLS, 2006)

⁷ B. Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987.

⁸ P. Peccatte, “PhotosNormandie a cinq ans – un bilan en forme de FAQ”. *Déjà vu*, 27 January 2012. <http://culturevisuelle.org/dejavu/1097>

⁹ <http://911digitalarchive.org/> For a complete panorama of public and digital history, see: Noiret, Serge. “La digital history: histoire et mémoire à la portée de tous” in Mounier, Pierre. *Read/Write Book 2 Une introduction aux humanités numériques*. Marseille OpenEdition Press, 2012. (pp. 151-177) Web. <<http://books.openedition.org/oepp/258>>.



Our sector of activity has a major contribution to play in the resolution of “major challenges of society” essentially by distributing open-access publications likely to enlighten decision makers in their actions by supplying quality information and relevant analysis. This implies significant support work in terms of software engineering, IT administration, referencing, indexing and publishing. The major challenges facing the sector are twofold:

- The construction of solid economic models for the distribution of open access publications in digital formats. While in its recent recommendation¹⁰, the European commission acknowledges the importance of open-access publications and recommends its member states to implement national policies in this area, it does not provide a specific model for implementing its recommendation in the humanities and social sciences. Indeed, most debates concerning open access in Europe and on other continents relate to the publication of STM rather than HSS articles, and there is barely any mention of HSS books. This is the case for the “Finch report”¹¹ which deliberately excludes books from its scope. Oapen’s report in March 2010¹² underlines the diversity, eclecticism and fragility of economic models in Europe. Since, experiments and initiatives have been developed, but their results are yet to be confirmed and dominant models adapted to the special situation of humanities and social sciences publishing are yet to emerge.
- The formation of academic digital libraries reaching critical mass on a European level and offering optimized access to research results by socio-economic actors working in these areas. Repository-harvesting services such as Driver have an important role to play but are insufficient to ensure the visibility of European HSS publication in an international environment. With platforms such as Jstor (over 2000 journals), the United States has a head-start over existing European platforms, ensuring an immediate advantage in terms of intensity of use and visibility in the research space. In the area of online publication, as in other fields, the network effect is powerful and reinforces itself over time. The bandwagon effect has not yet been reached, which means there is still room to manoeuvre but we must not hang around.

Do you foresee (or have you experienced) obstacles that may prevent you and your research community from making contributions to the “major challenges of society” approach? Please provide specific details.

The main obstacles come from excessive disciplinary specialization, the persistence of publication models inherited from printing and the deployment of highly restrictive evaluation systems. These three aspects are related. The list of “closed” publications, for example, (the list of journals in which an article has to be published in order for it to be taken into account) are organized along disciplinary lines, to the disadvantage of multidisciplinary journals, or

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/recommendation-access-and-preservation-scientific-information_fr.pdf

¹¹ <http://www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Finch-Group-report-FINAL-VERSION.pdf>

¹² J. Adema “Overview of Open Access models for ebooks in Humanities and social sciences” <http://project.oapen.org/index.php/news/34-new-oapen-report-overview-of-open-access-models-for-ebooks-in-the-humanities-and-social-sciences>



journals that explore a single research subject through methodologies from several disciplines. The most prestigious journals that make up the majority of these lists are also often the oldest, based on traditional publishing structures and generally dependent on print-based distribution. These publication lists, therefore, effectively “petrify” the academic publishing landscape and discourage the creation of new works. However, the emergence of new subjects for research, new approaches and new paradigms, is often channeled through new creations in the humanities and social sciences. In a flexible environment, in perpetual motion, where knowledge and skills relating to emerging issues need to be mobilized quickly, the traditional publication models, based on printing, perpetuated by prestigious established publications form an important barrier.

In order to foster a more integrative approach that would also benefit HSS research communities, what would you consider the most important incentives that “Horizon 2020” could provide?

Horizon 2020 should offer the chance to offer a “new deal” for the humanities and social sciences. Since their “golden age” in the 60s and 70s, these disciplines have been progressively marginalized to the benefit of science and technology. The humanities and social sciences are now constrained to defend their turf, pleading for the protection of their unique quality in a world governed by logic foreign to their make-up.

This sidesteps the real issue. The humanities and social sciences have a role to claim at the heart of the construction of contemporary societies. Several recently published texts relate to this claim. We might refer to the “Manifesto for Social Sciences” in Europe, published by C. Calhoun and M. Wieviorka in the new *Socio* journal¹³ but also more recently, to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences Commission on the Humanities & Social Sciences report, “The Heart of the Matter”¹⁴

Sometimes viewed as a threat to the humanities and social sciences, the digital revolution affects many areas of activity and should be considered as an opportunity for these disciplines, for at least three reasons:

- Because digital technologies release the ability these disciplines have to analyze social logic and interpret cultural logic, thus to produce new knowledge about man and society in new proportions.
- Because the development of Internet now enables them to distribute the knowledge they produce to everyone, without restrictions, and thus to influence the evolution of society itself, from the micro-social level of individual decision making to the macro-social level of public debate.
- Because the new collaborative practices enabled by these technologies lead the humanities and social sciences to implicate communities of interest in the co-production of knowledge and not only in their consumption, thus building productive, reflexive forms of interaction between the academic disciplines and society.

¹³ <http://socio.hypotheses.org/147>

¹⁴ http://www.humanitiescommission.org/pdf/hss_report.pdf



The Horizon 2020 program should provide a framework for the humanities and social sciences, under the banner of the “digital humanities”, to make this possible. To this end, three measures should be taken:

- There has to be **financing for the development of cyber-infrastructures at the European level to give research teams the means, tools and services to mobilise the digital technologies they need**. The directions laid out in the ESFRI road map should be followed and developed as a lever for the HSS.
- There has to be **financing of research programs relating to the digital humanities, which especially evaluate the epistemological impact of digital technologies on the humanities and social sciences**. Europe’s latency in this respect, especially in relation to the USA, has to be rectified, both in terms of publications and participation in associations, forums and international networks in the field.
- There has to be **support for the development of platforms with an international scope in the field of academic publication**. We should aim at providing the European community of researchers in the humanities and social sciences with leaders in the digital distribution of research results in a highly competitive area. This should entail considerable investment into R&D enabling them to offer innovative and effective academic information services. The development of long-term economic models for open-access publication should also receive support, in particular to encourage a diversity of models adapted to the specific nature of each discipline. Finally, special attention should be paid to publication languages, the diversity of which cannot be reduced by the domination of a single language, both in the multilingual European context and due to the special status that language¹⁵ possesses in the research process even in the humanities and social sciences.

¹⁵ François OST, *Traduire. Défense et illustration du multilinguisme*, Fayard « Ouvertures », 2009.

