Major Report on Scholarly Communication Needs & Practices
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Center for Studies in Higher Education (CSHE)/Mellon study encompasses
45 research institutions across seven academic fields

Since 2005, the Center for Studies in Higher Education (CSHE), with generous funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, has been conducting research to understand the needs and practices of faculty for in-progress scholarly communication (i.e., forms of communication employed as research is being executed) as well as archival publication.

The center’s final report on this multi-year research project, Assessing the Future Landscape of Scholarly Communication: An Exploration of Faculty Values and Needs in Seven Disciplines (available at http://escholarship.org/uc/cshe_fsc), brings together the responses of 160 interviewees across 45, mostly elite, research institutions in seven selected academic fields: archaeology, astrophysics, biology, economics, history, music, and political science.

“Our premise has always been that disciplinary conventions matter and that social realities (and individual personality) will dictate how new practices, including those under the rubric of Web 2.0 or cyberinfrastructure, are adopted by scholars,” says Principal Investigator and Director, Higher Education in the Digital Age Project, Diane Harley, Ph.D. “That is, the academic values embodied in disciplinary cultures, as well as the interests of individual players, have to be considered when envisioning new schemata for the communication of scholarship at its various stages.”

The report’s executive summary concludes that scholarly communication traditions, “which rely heavily on various forms of peer review, may override the perceived ‘opportunities’ afforded by new technologies, including those falling into the Web 2.0 category.”

In addition, the report targets five key topics in the current scholarly communication system that require attention: the development of more nuanced tenure and promotion process; a reexamination of peer review; competitive high quality and affordable journals and monograph publishing platforms; new models of publication that can accommodate material of varied length, as well as rich media and embedded links to data; and support for managing and preserving new research methods and products.

Visit http://escholarship.org/uc/cshe_fsc to download or view the full report.