



Journal Editorial – “Reflecting on Accessibility in Scholarly Publishing”

Franny Gaede*, Director of Digital Scholarship Services, University of Oregon Libraries

The University of Oregon and the University Libraries support six open access journals, which is enabled via our Oregon Digital partnership with Oregon State University and the digital publishing expertise within the Libraries’ Digital Scholarship Services department. The editors of these journals are faculty, staff, and students from across the disciplines, working on a variety of platforms and seeking in their own ways to disrupt and augment the scholarly conversation in their areas.

However these goals may be achieved, the primary goal is always one of accessibility, but that word contains multitudes: from the need to be usable by those using assistive technologies, to be discoverable by those seeking their content, to be available to anyone regardless of their ability to pay, and perhaps to be intelligible to anyone with an interest to read. When we say we want our journals and their contents to be accessible, what is it that we seek to accomplish?

The Editor-in-Chief of [Konturen](#), Martin Klebe, offered a few thoughts on the subject, emphasizing the international and non-academic audiences of the journal:

Since its inception, the interdisciplinary German Studies journal *Konturen*, housed in the Department of German & Scandinavian, has embraced an open-access format in the belief that thoughts and ideas about phenomena involving borders and delimitations that are developed within the academy should circulate as freely as possible. This applies both to the various disciplines from which contributors to the journal hail, as well as readers beyond the academy. The key question of access and distribution connects many of the issues we have treated in special journal issues over the years (borderlines in political theology and in psychoanalysis, the problem of borders between territories, between humans and animals, the phenomenon of migration, etc.) with the concrete form that the results of scholarship and its reception take. We all should think about--and try to act in response to--the pressing question of how important knowledge that is generated in an academic context may effectively reach audiences, rather than remaining locked away or simply being overlooked.

Massimo Lollini, Editor-in-Chief of [Humanist Studies & the Digital Age](#), suggested that access for education also plays a vital role:

Being the editor of an open-access journal such as *Humanist Studies and the Digital Age* represents an extraordinary opportunity to disseminate academic research in a timely and effective manner to the point that it can be used as a source in current educational seminars at no cost to students. Furthermore, open access favors a broad process of encounters between

*Franny Gaede joined the University of Oregon Libraries as Director of Digital Scholarship Services in August 2017. She provides leadership and support for digital scholarship, digital collections, digital preservation, scholarly communication, and library-led open access publishing. She earned her MSIS and BA in History at the University of Texas at Austin and previously worked as the Scholarly Communication Librarian for Butler University. Franny’s professional interests include open access and social justice, digital scholarship project sustainability and preservation, and applications for digital scholarship work in research and teaching.

scholars and allows to deepen the research themes by starting a dialogue that grows continuously in real-time. Our journal has been the vehicle for publishing critical international conferences on the transformations of literature in the digital world. More recently, it has hosted interviews with leading media scholars such as Pierre Lévy, who specializes in the understanding of the cognitive implications of digital technologies and the phenomenon of human collective intelligence. The forthcoming issue, *Steps Towards the Future: More-Than-Human Humanism in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, features theoretical reflections and research projects that employ innovative methods of artificial intelligence and digital technologies in studying the humanities. We intend to contribute to a better understanding of humanity and the humanities in light of the new information technologies of the past, present, and future.

As these information technologies that Dr. Lollini refers to continue to emerge, grow, and change, we must recognize our active role in these processes and ensure equity of access for all.