



National
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Humanities and Social Science (HSS) Scholarly Journal Publishing Study Released

Data from Eight Scholarly Societies Reveal a Range of Business Models

In December 2006, the National Humanities Alliance (NHA) charged a Task Force with developing projects to assist NHA members in exploring issues related to scholarly journal publishing in humanities and social science (HSS) associations.

The Task Force needed current business data on HSS journal publishing, and it approached several larger humanities and social science societies to participate in a pilot study that would produce comparable data on HSS journal publishing and financing. The study set out to enable society publishers to better understand their business models over time, to make relevant comparisons with models employed in other disciplines, and to assess potential changes in their models that would help them deliver journal content to the widest possible audience on an economically sustainable basis. The participating societies are: the American Academy of Religion, American Anthropological Association, American Economic Association, American Historical Association, American Political Science Association, American Sociological Association, American Statistical Association, and the Modern Language Association.

With generous support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through a grant to the American Anthropological Association, the eight scholarly societies engaged the professional guidance of Mary Waltham, an independent consultant with recognized expertise in the publishing field who had conducted a similar study of scientific, technical and medical (STM) journals for the UK's Joint Information Systems Committee. Waltham developed the data collection templates, and gathered detailed cost and revenue information on the flagship journals of the participating HSS societies for a three-year period, 2005- 2007. Waltham's report on the study, "The Future of Scholarly Journals Publishing among Social Science and Humanities Associations," provides a detailed account of her findings, analysis and methodology. The report is available at <http://www.nhalliance.org/bm~doc/hssreport.pdf>.

"Journals in different disciplines are as distinct as the cultures of the communities that support them," said Waltham. "This report uses eight flagship titles as the initial basis for a detailed review that takes us closer to an articulation of the business issues affecting HSS journals. The results will be helpful to those considering the future of their publishing programs in the changing world of scholarly journal publishing and in the context of a need for sustainable publishing models."

"The National Humanities Alliance is pleased to facilitate discussion among scholarly associations, the library community, and other stakeholders on the question of the future of scholarly journal publishing in the humanities and social sciences," said NHA Executive Director, Jessica Jones Irons. "We hope to promote informed conversations based on the new data, so that the widest possible audience can have access to the peer-reviewed content in HSS journals, and so that publishers can provide this access in financially sustainable ways."

Founded in 1981, the National Humanities Alliance is a coalition of more than one hundred national, state and local member organizations and institutions, dedicated to the advancement of humanities education, research, preservation, and public programs.