Southern Spaces: A Collaborative Model for Open Source Scholarly Publishing

Katherine Skinner, Emory University

DLF Spring Forum
San Diego, California
April 14, 2005
Presentation Overview

• The “roots” of Southern Spaces
• Problems with print publications
• Benefits of online publishing
• Why Open Access?
• Why publish within a library?
  – Feasible?
  – Sustainable?
The Roots of *Southern Spaces*

**MetaScholar Initiative** ([www.metascholar.org](http://www.metascholar.org))

- Seeks to provide improved means of sharing information about research collections through
  - metadata aggregation networks (OAI-PMH)
  - new forms of peer-reviewed scholarship using digital media
  - frameworks for cooperative digital library services distributed across multiple universities
- Also strives to create a new model for online scholarship
  - Scholarly Design Team
  - need for modular pieces that suit the new media
Problems with Print Publications
(as identified by the MetaScholar Scholarly Design Team)

The SDT pointed to the following problems in humanities-based scholarly print publishing:

- Expense (increasingly shoudered by scholars and libraries)
- Static
- Backlog
- Limited to text/black and white images
- Narrow audience
Problems in Scholarly Publishing  
(as identified more broadly)

With the advent of the internet, new problems have been introduced for scholarly publishing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-profit model:</th>
<th>For-profit model:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Societies, University Presses)</td>
<td>(Elsevier, Bertelsmann)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars develop ideas, and give them to publishers at little/no charge</td>
<td>Scholars develop ideas, and are charged for their publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishers sell the scholars’ works back to the scholarly community</td>
<td>Publishers sell the scholars’ works back to scholars at escalated cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries pay subscription fees to obtain permanent copies of journals</td>
<td>Libraries often pay subscriptions for access only, not for keeps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Benefits of Internet Publications
(as identified by the MetaScholar SDT)

The Scholarly Design Team pointed to the following benefits in *open access* web-based publishing:

- Scholarly innovation
- Encourages collaboration
- Broader access
- No expense to readers
Southern Spaces seeks to expand the capabilities of scholarly publication in two seminal ways:

– First, by reexamining the relationship between form and content, moving scholarship toward new multimedia explorations of topics that cannot be managed in traditional print formats.
– Second, by exploring the possibility of the library taking on a new role as a publishing center for scholarly work.
Southern Spaces addresses several important needs in academic publishing:

- Few existing models for web-based journals that treat the medium as more than an inexpensive text publishing tool
  - PostModern Culture: [http://www.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/](http://www.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/)
- Editorial Board recommended that Southern Spaces distinguish itself in part by seeking to make full use of the medium
PMC  Founded in 1990 as an experiment in scholarly publishing on the Internet, Postmodern Culture has become the leading electronic journal of interdisciplinary thought on contemporary cultures, publishing the work of such noted authors and critics as Kathy Acker, Charles Bernstein, Bruce Robbins, bell hooks, and Susan Howe. PMC combines high scholarly standards with broad appeal for non-academic readers. As an entirely web-based journal, PMC can publish still images, sound, animation, and full-motion video as well as text.

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press with support from Michigan State University and the University of Virginia.
Contents

Volume 15,
Number 1
September, 2004

In Memoriam:
Jacques Derrida, 1930-2004

Arkady Plotnitsky, The Différance of the World: Homage to Jacques Derrida

Articles

Claire Colebrook, The Sense of Space: On the Specificity of Affect in Deleuze and Guattari
The Différence of the World: Homage to Jacques Derrida

Arkady Plotnitsky
Purdue University
aplotni@sla.purdue.edu

© 2004 Arkady Plotnitsky
All rights reserved.

1. With the death of Jacques Derrida, the world has lost one of its greatest philosophers, as well as one of the most controversial and misunderstood. But then, controversy and misunderstanding are part and parcel of philosophical greatness. Plato is still controversial and misunderstood, and is still our contemporary. So are René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, to name, by way of an Einsteinian metaphor, arguably the heaviest philosophical masses that define and shape, curve, the space of modern philosophy. Derrida is no exception, especially because his work in turn transforms the fabric of this space by its own mass and by its engagement with these figures. Modern physics no longer thinks of space as ever empty but instead as a kind of fabric or, to use the Latin word, textum of energy, or (once we think of the quantum fabric of this never empty space) that of energy and chance. So one might as well use this rather Derridean idea--of a textum of energy and chance--to think of the fabric(s) of the world, of Derrida.
chance. So one might as well use this rather Derridean idea--of a textum of energy and chance--as a metaphor for the field of philosophy. The fortunes of Derrida's philosophy, or "his chances," lie partly in the controversy surrounding his work ("My Chances")

2. Derrida's greatness, like that of Plato, Descartes, Kant, and Hegel, lies in the originality and power of his ideas, his lucidity and precision in expressing them, and in the rigor of his analysis--qualities his detractors often unjustly deny him. These are the qualities that primarily define his chances, in the play "of chance and necessity in calculations without end," as Derrida said in 1967 in assessing the chances of différence, his most famous term, "neither a word nor a concept," with which he was taking considerable philosophical risks at the time (Margins of Philosophy 7; emphasis added). Derrida has been appreciated for these qualities by a great many of his readers, his admirers and his fair-minded critics alike. It would only be faithful to the spirit and the letter of Derrida's work and deconstruction to question, incessantly question his argument. But to be faithful to the spirit of true intellectual inquiry, one must do so in a fair-minded way in order, with and against Derrida, to move our thought forward.

3. Derrida's works are complex because they explore the ultimate complexity (intellectual, ethical, cultural, and political) of our world. One might even argue that a refusal to engage seriously with his thought and writing is often a refusal to confront this ultimate complexity, perhaps in particular insofar as this complexity is also that of the world that has moved from modernity to postmodernity and is defined by this transition. I would argue that, although extraordinary in many other respects, Derrida's thought reflects, and reflects on, this movement wherever it occurs in our culture. "What has seemed necessary and urgent to me, in the historical situation which is our own," Derrida said in 1971, in describing his earlier work, "is a general determination of the conditions for the emergence and the limits of philosophy, of metaphysics, of everything that carries it on and that it carries on" (Positions 51; emphasis added). Derrida's concerns and domains of investigation change and extend to literature, ethics, politics, and elsewhere, although Derrida continued the
Why Open Access?
Scho%rs reach the widest possible audi%ence

- Freely available as a publication
  The author(s) and copyright holder(s) grant(s) to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly

- Hosted with long-term intent
  A complete version of the work is published in at least one online repository that is supported by an academic institution, scholarly society, government agency, or other well-established organization that seeks to enable open access, unrestricted distribution, interoperability, and long-term archiving

Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing
(April 2003)
Southern Spaces design:
Why publish within a library?

• Various publication formats, specifically designed for this medium
  • Submissions accepted in part on the basis of their appropriateness for this medium
• Rolling publication—no volume/issue
• Permanent locations for urls (library quality publication)
• Archival quality image, sound, and video files kept at Emory
• Regular updates of content (versioning with peer review)
• Cataloging information / metadata construction
• Globally, freely, instantly accessible publication
Key Feature:

Pioneering new model for how to conduct scholarship on the web, not by simply using the web as a dissemination medium for print publications, but by using the strengths of this medium to go beyond the limitations of print.

http://www.southernspaces.org
What it took to get *Southern Spaces* up and running:

- Four year process (to date), launched one year ago
- Cultivating a committed Editorial Board
- Building relationship with systems (server space, hosting forms such as streaming media files)
- Designing the site itself
- Creating library-oriented standards, submission guidelines
- Cultivating new submissions (inertia, resistance)
Southern Spaces Credits

Katherine Skinner
Managing Editor

Martin Halbert
Principal Advisor and Sponsor

Allen Tullos
Editorial Board Chair

Steve Bransford
Digital Media Coordinator

Paul O'Grady
Woodruff Fellow

Emily Satterwhite
Copyeditor and Research Assistant

Sarah Toton
Digital Image Coordinator