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EDUCATION INQUIRY

Education Inquiry is an international on-line, peer-reviewed journal with free access in the field of Educational Sciences and Teacher Education. It publishes original empirical and theoretical studies from a wide variety of academic disciplines. As the name of the journal suggests, one of its aims is to challenge established conventions and taken-for-granted perceptions within these fields.

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Dancing at the Edge: Writing for the Academic Marketplace

David Hamilton* & Gaby Weiner**

Abstract
Drawing on our experience of working in Sweden and seeking to help colleagues enter the prestigious culture of Anglophone academic text production, this article explores the landscape of academic writing and publishing. We first provide an account of the birth of academic writing and the gradual emergence of its present forms. We then explore academic writing as it is practised in the first decade of the 2000s; and finally, we consider the future of journal publishing and what it might mean for academic authors. We consciously introduce monetary or commercial imagery to underline the impact of exchange or market relationships in the world of academic publishing, arguing that texts need to be reworked until they become responsive to the branding and marketing requirements of specific academic journals.

Key words: academic writing, academic journals, marketisation, Anglophone literary genres, discourse communities.

In 1998, we left England and moved to Umeå University in the north of Sweden, remaining there for over seven years. In the eyes of our new colleagues, the added value of our presence had both linguistic and cultural dimensions. In the first instance, we were useful in helping them to write in English; in the second, we could smooth their entry into the prestigious culture of Anglophone academic text production. The first part was relatively easy to achieve. Acting as language assistants, we sought to convey the nuances of Anglophone academic writing and to enable arguments to flow. We soon realised, however, that attention to words and their meanings was not the only issue that needed addressing, and that writing is more than just stringing words together.

Written communication is a sophisticated medium, and not based simply on a succession of words and clauses. Rather, it is configured in the juxtaposition of words, and in the way ideas and phrases are ordered. These features of writing, sometimes known as the paratext, help to communicate writing’s overall message and meaning. Thus, our task was not to help colleagues mechanically translate their Swedish writing into English but to enable them to become authors in a particular genre - academic writing – that is distinguishable from other genres such as writing an obituary, composing a love letter or preparing a speech for a disputation party.

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As we began to understand our task more fully, we were forced to focus on the genre aspects of academic writing. We sought to identify, for instance, the defining features of successful texts constructed within the Anglophone academic culture. To do so, we reflected on our own experience of academic writing, not only as authors and editors but also, in the case of Gaby Weiner, as a researcher into the culture and practices of academic journals. We gradually gathered appropriate ideas, and shared them with doctoral candidates, and other colleagues and audiences.

Meanwhile, the academic climate which had led to our appointment underwent key changes. New assumptions about the role of science in the so-called knowledge economy underpinned the perception that university science should be more of a productive than a deliberative or critical endeavour. Universities were no longer to be regarded as an independent bulwark against an alien military-industrial complex – a prominent shibboleth in the 1960s. Instead, they were to be judged on the basis of their productivity in terms of value-for-money standards and criteria.

Productivity could be assessed both externally and internally. External audits are associated with comparative league tables, and typically measure productivity in terms of monetary value (e.g. size of research grants), prestigious awards (e.g. Nobel prizes), or market penetration (e.g. extent of media attention). Internal audits are more individualised, augmenting institutional data with individualised information about performance such as the number of publications accepted in refereed journals and/or conference papers presented.

Insofar as these reforms have been implemented, twenty-first century university life has changed dramatically. Dialogue and evidence-based reflection have given way to competition over grants, publications and citations. Like our peers who were recruited into higher education in earlier decades, we were obliged to acknowledge that the academic game was changing, with the application of new rules, boundaries and criteria. Some colleagues chose to leave the game altogether and, instead, took up new positions elsewhere or on the sidelines, for instance, as university administrators or student counsellors. Doctoral candidates were also caught up in these changes. Doctoral theses based on published work began to spread from the natural sciences and medicine to the social sciences and humanities as candidates became aware of the new choices that confronted them. Should they follow established practice and prepare a monograph dedicated to developing a single extended argument? Or should they assemble a collection of research papers which had already been externally and positively reviewed? Further decisions involved language. Should they write in English, in Swedish or perhaps in both; and should they aspire to reach international as well as national audiences?

Each choice had different implications for the form and progress of their work. For example, whatever a candidate’s aspirations and home discipline, there are certain advantages in producing a collection of papers in English. First, there is likely to be a larger pool of well qualified opponents for their disputation (doctoral examina-
More important, having a collection of externally-reviewed papers might give them an advantage when applying for post-doctoral positions and research grants. Above all, by choosing to write in English, they would signify their wish to trade in an internationally-recognised currency.

Our choice of monetary or commercial imagery is conscious and deliberate, and underlines the increasing domination of the academic publishing world by exchange or market relationships. To meet the requirements of this market culture, prospective members not only need to write texts, they need also to author them. That is, to rework texts until they become products that are responsive to the branding and marketing requirements of specific academic journals. To extend this commercial imagery, such products may be seen as commodities that, to gain advantage in the marketplace, have to compete with equivalent products. While monographs may be judged on their individual merits, journal articles require additional qualities that give them a competitive edge over rival products. Given our accumulated experience as authors and editors, one of our tasks on arrival in Sweden was thus to foster the academic careers of colleagues by enabling them to produce commodities with exchange value in the international academic market place.

Accordingly, in order to convey our stance, we devote the rest of this article to explore the landscape of academic writing and publishing. First, we provide an account of the birth of academic writing and the gradual emergence of its present forms; second, we consider academic writing as it is practised in the first decade of the 2000s; and finally, we consider the future of journal publishing and what it might mean for academic authors.

The Origins of Academic Writing

Scientific journals as we now know them emerged in the 1600s, taking their label from the French word (journal) for a day-book or diary. The French Academy’s Journal des Sçavans and the Royal Society of London’s Philosophical Transactions both first appeared in the same year, 1655, and were based on letters submitted to the two associations, often drawing on personal diaries. These early scientific contributions were written in the first person - the convention in letter-writing; and the aim of their authors was to contribute to conversations between, or colloquia for, philosophes (literal meaning: lovers of knowledge). These procedures for the sharing of ideas also helped to form the genre of scholarly writing. Notably, they fostered the growth of invisible colleges, discourse communities, based on the circulation of ideas which are repeatedly exposed to revision via peer responses.

The circulation of such scientific texts helped in the creation and validation of procedures for advancing and clarifying scientific knowledge. Publication was usually based on the provision of sufficient detail so that readers could carry out similar investigations on their own or in front of an audience. Indeed, international replication, based on accounts in established journals, became central to the advancement
of knowledge, an idea popularised by Francis Bacon (1561-1626). Written accounts of experiments were often long and full of illustrations, designed to convince readers of their truthfulness.

Contributions to Royal Society of London’s *Philosophical Transactions* in its first hundred years of existence were mainly empirical. Reports were devoted to natural phenomena such as earthquakes, or to anatomical observations arising from dissections of animals, plants and humans. Gradually, however, the scientist’s relationship with nature changed. The view that nature was easily revealed by direct observation and description was replaced by the view that phenomena also required to be *explained*, a view that sought to follow the powerful precedent of Newton’s theory of gravity. By the end of the 1700s (viz. the period of the Enlightenment), surface, descriptive knowledge was joined by more speculative forms of thinking. Journals accommodating these intellectual developments advanced secular paradigms to account for the origins of life, the earth and the human mind, paradigms which, in their turn, gave rise to the disciplines of biology, geology and psychology.

Meanwhile, another pathway to the creation of scholarly texts emerged, as journals were modelled on the political and historical scholarship pioneered by Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886). Although often remembered for his advocacy of source-based research, Ranke also founded and edited the *Historisch-Politische Zeitschrift*, dating from 1831, as a meeting place for debates about the course of European history. Such scholarly, university-based publications served not only to bring coherence to disciplines, but continued to communicate knowledge among like-minded scholars. At that time, ideological and political commitment was considered congruent with scholarship. Rankean historians believed that research could provide answers to political questions (e.g. verifying the superiority of Prussian over French politics and cultures). It was only following the Nazi era that journals like *Historische Zeitschrift* (founded, 1859), a forerunner of the French *Revue Historique* (founded, 1876), the *English Historical Review* (founded, 1886) and the *American Historical Review* (founded, 1895) broke with the historical-political past by promoting rigorous, empirical and interpretative research.

The legacy of these two traditions, of science and the humanities, still remains, causing considerable insecurity among those seeking to find a form of expression for their research. How do newcomers demonstrate their competence and willingness to join a discipline? What voice and format should they use in the preparation of reports on their research? What does it mean to behave in a scholarly manner? And how, in their writing, are they able to demonstrate their commitment to the advancement of knowledge?

During the twentieth century, the purpose of science underwent another fundamental change as scientists struggled with the debates surrounding positivism and its variants. The argument was made that the advancement of knowledge could not be reduced to simple truths. Rather, truth is an unobtainable goal, always *provisional* and *contextual* rather than objective and final. If this claim is supported, then the
advancement of knowledge can build only on claims that are provisional. And, by the same token, authorship in research is necessarily about creating claims which are justified not on the basis that they are true but that they are defensible. Thus, writing an academic text becomes the preparation of something that first and foremost is able to withstand criticism.

**Academic Journals Today**

The twentieth century saw the scope of academic publishing widen to embrace a variety of forms: books of varying lengths written by one or more authors; collections of edited articles; monographs or reports; undergraduate and postgraduate texts; vanity (i.e. self-financed) volumes; articles in regular or special issues of journals; and, more recently, web- as well as paper-based publications. In all these cases, what defines publication is that the product is placed in the public domain. The Academic journals, however, is distinctive because, typically, it is associated with particular forms of organisation involving academic editors, editorial boards, referees, prescribed formats and regular publication cycles. Significantly, web-based versions of existing journals have generally retained the same features and formats as their paper equivalents.

Academic journals, moreover, function in three main ways: first, as sites for the dissemination and exchange of academic knowledge; secondly, as a basis for ranking scholarship; and thirdly, in decisions concerning appointments and promotions. At their core, academic journals embody social, economic and academic relationships which together foreshadow a choreography of production which, in turn, shapes the performance of authorship. The dancer cannot be separated from the dance; neither can the author be separated from the chosen form of text production. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that these relationships are neither prescribed nor fixed. Nor are they uniform or stable in their impact on publishing. Indeed, the most important source of instability is human agency, including the wish of authors to challenge existing relationships. In some cases an author’s (or editor’s) intervention can interrupt earlier relationships and, in the process, create new relationships (or controversies) that persist for decades if not centuries.

The fact that academic journals are so fluid indicates that differences between academic journals and their associated choreographies are transient. At any given time, however, each journal also represents a distinct discourse community, membership of which demands that contributors take account of its structure and form. Would-be contributors need to understand a journal’s position in the knowledge hierarchy, its specific language practices, its espoused goals, and its policies governing communication between its authors, reviewers and editors. Despite any shared values, policies and practices, aspiring authors also need to appreciate, as mentioned, the instability of discourse communities as human systems. In fact, internal disagreements may become so great that break-away movements are created that, in their turn, generate new disciplines, discourse communities and journals.
Nevertheless, the power to shape and confirm the production of certain kinds of knowledge conditions the ethos and membership of each journal’s discourse community. At any given time, outsider or unofficial knowledge can be easily disqualified and dismissed as non-rigorous, undisciplined and, therefore, unsuitable for inclusion. This does not mean, however, that oppositional viewpoints are automatically rejected. Rather, contrasting and even challenging viewpoints may be tolerated if they underwrite the discourse’s claimed perspective on the advancement of knowledge. Nevertheless, such conditional acceptances delineate the boundaries and limitations of what knowledge may be advanced.

**Joining a Discourse Community**

Entry into a discourse community is a journey from outside to inside. Success is indicated in various ways, usually when prospective members receive a token marking this transition (e.g. a journal acceptance letter or an invitation to participate in a conference symposium). Publication in a refereed journal offers more visible and secure recognition. In all cases, an exchange takes place, with the prospective member offering a new text and established members of the community offering recognition in return. Understanding such exchanges is important to new researchers since markets are segmented and, therefore, sensitive to minor product variations.

What, in practice, does this mean? Prospective authors enter the market place with something to sell; but they need also to demonstrate their willingness to respond to the advice of brokers (supervisors) who will have more sophisticated market information. They will also need to respond to reviewers and editors of their products. Such practices will differ from those who write monographs since this latter group will necessarily need to give less attention to marketisation and branding. Both groups have paratextual issues to address; but will do so in different ways and with different goals.

Supervisors, we suggest, have a duty to familiarise their doctoral candidates with marketisation issues, even if they also recognise the counter arguments of colleagues at the edge, i.e. those who choose to resist such forces. Equally, some doctoral candidates may already have been made aware of marketisation issues in their pre-doctoral programmes and made early choices, for instance, regarding the marketability of their ideas. Our experience, however, is that this rarely happens. Consequently, much effort with our doctoral candidates was devoted to genre and marketisation issues as they apply to writing for publication. In seeking to clarify their intentions we asked them, for instance, whether they regarded the production of their dissertation as the commencement of their research career or as its endpoint. An English-language collection would be better for the former. Similarly, if they were uncomfortable about writing in English, might a period spent overseas in an Anglophone setting be worthwhile? And if they were committed to writing a monograph in Swedish, might it be better to aim it simultaneously at a popular as well as an academic audience - thereby en-
hancing their performance audit? Nevertheless, we accepted candidates’ decisions about whether to write a monograph or a collection of articles, and did our best to steer their work accordingly.

For us, such decisions are paramount, given our awareness of changing assumptions about the advancement of knowledge (a Renaissance idea), and our awareness of other influences, such as Renaissance ideas about the civilising role of the humanities; the role of agencies such as L’Academie Française (founded 1635), in pioneering the use of vernacular languages in scientific reporting; the role of idealism (e.g. Bildung) in steering German unification in the early nineteenth century; and, not least, the role of pragmatism and positivism in shaping social research in North America during the twentieth century.

All of these ideas remain part of our intellectual baggage. Hence, our interest in late-twentieth century ideas about marketisation should not be viewed as naïve, a-historical or unthinking. Rather, we considered we had a responsibility to raise awareness among our doctoral candidates and younger research colleagues about the different career pathways that may be opened up (or closed off) by changes in higher education. How, then, did our younger colleagues respond? In the main, they took on board what we were trying to say; that anyone wishing to pursue a research career has to pay attention to the regulatory frameworks associated with the Anglophone research culture. What might this mean in practice? How, then, does an article work?

Creating a Product

In its simplest form, the journal article has three elements: a beginning, middle and end. This may seem a trivial point, but it is sensitive to the fact that genres vary considerably in the way they begin, develop and round off their texts. Beginnings, like endings, establish the integrity of a text, offering a sense of its content and purpose. They are as much part of the marketing process as the design of a book cover.

Just as library readers are attracted to books by the titles on their spines, so journal readers (and, initially, their reviewers) are looking for clues to help them decide whether to read beyond the title. The title is thus immensely important. First, it should be keyword- and google-sensitive, and offer a concise description of the contents and stance of the article. In addition, the title should be seductive. It should catch readers’ curiosity and draw them into the argument. However, it may be difficult to combine these aspects in the words of a title and seductive titles usually come late in the writing process. Our preference is to start with a descriptive working title, in the case of this article Writing for Journals, in the hope that something more enchanting will emerge as the text takes shape. If seduction cannot be achieved in the title, another approach is to find a suitably seductive epigraph. For this article, we might have used the words of Albert Einstein: ‘Imagination is more important than knowledge’ or Oscar Wilde’s lament: ‘I spent all morning deciding to insert a comma: and all afternoon deciding to take it out’. In one respect, an epigraph may be viewed merely a decorative symbol;
but, as suggested, its symbolism has a more profound value if it catches the attention of the random or outside reader.

The opening part of the article (including the title) has a scene-setting function. Fully-enrolled members of the community (or active market traders) may be able to grasp an argument quickly since they are familiar with keywords in the field. But the introduction of an article can also serve to catch the attention of prospective members of the community who, perhaps, require a more gradual or informative introduction. Ultimately, the opening part of an article not only sets the scene but also serves as an invitation to participants – reader, seminar member and, perhaps, future author - in its chosen discourse.

The boundary between the opening and middle sections of an article is conventionally marked by certain features: for example, a change in voice (e.g. a shift from first to third person), use of numerical markers in the centre of the page, and/or insertion of a subheading.

For the middle section of an article, a crucial concern is to distinguish between the central theme and peripheral ideas. A characteristic of inexperienced authors is that, allowed the opportunity to write, they feel compelled to pack their writing with ideas and information. This proliferation of ideas, however, may prove indigestible to readers who, as a result, abandon the text. We have found the Swedish image of the red thread valuable as an orienteering device which helps each author to mark out a particular journey. Thus, the author’s main responsibility is to lead the reader into the text and clear the way so that the main argument can be followed.

At the same time, the red thread should avoid following the same route as earlier authors but, rather, offer an alternative pathway across a field of study and, as a result, offer a new perspective. Such a trajectory enables the re-configuration of the field and, in the process, moves the associated community of practice in a new direction. In turn, the market place is remodelled, insofar as an author’s leadership changes the existing balance within the community, for example, by attracting new followers. A red thread, therefore, creates not just a tight and fluent argument, but a new orientation from the many options available. The author thus composes the text, in much the same way as a multiplicity of tunes can be composed from the twelve notes of the musical scale. Indeed, the pitch, key and volume of a text have already been signalled in the initial sections – title, abstract, epigraph and opening paragraph.

Thereafter, a key requirement for the main section is that the argument flows smoothly from claim to claim. Tempting side-tracks should be avoided because, as noted, they create tangles in the red thread and, as a result, in the minds of readers. The flow of the middle section of an article should thus be without turbulence. Subheadings, accordingly, should be seen as signposts, not as breaks or interruptions in the text, and the number of levels used to structure an article should be kept to a minimum. Thus, for clarity it is best to stick with a main heading (the title) and a series of subheadings.
Recapitulating the Argument

The end-stage of an article is no less important than the opening and middle sections. It requires recapitulation rather than repetition, and should serve as a consolidation of what has already been said, but in a new way. It should leave readers with positive feelings not only about the evidence produced and the consequent argument, but also about the author. It is often assumed that the final section of an article should constitute the conclusion to an argument or research report. We suspect that this concept has been inherited from an era when research reports were based on formalist protocols (e.g. methods, results, conclusions). It is doubtful, however, whether twenty-first century articles are able to achieve this kind of closure – especially if they are seen primarily as contributions to long-standing and enduring controversies. The label conclusion may still be appropriate for articles which report the results of scientific experiments. Such a label, however, is less suited to the dialogic practices currently prevalent in the educational sciences – where, as already noted, unambiguous conclusions are generally unreachable. Although we have used the heading Conclusion occasionally in our own work, open-ended headings seem more appropriate, such as Further Reflections, A Reprise, Discussion, Coda and Unfinished Business...

The simplest approach to composing a final section is to revisit the ideas raised in the course of the article. This strategy, however, requires particular sensitivity as there is a risk that prospective readers will become bored by the repetition of earlier words and phrases. In contrast, recapitulation entails seeking out fresh words and phrases which cast new light on what has already been said. The aim is to revisit an existing debate and concisely indicate its strengths, and weaknesses and highlights.

This leads to a general issue in the late stages of the composition process: does the product conform to what is claimed on the packaging (i.e. in the title and abstract)? This is important since it entails giving careful attention to the argument and, above all, to the identification of gaps and weaknesses. Until these lacunae are plugged or bridged, the author is vulnerable to the accusation that the work is not finished and that, therefore, further fine-tuning is needed. The standard practice, and one that has been followed for centuries, is for authors to use rhetorical devices to bridge or gloss over textual weaknesses. The relatively high arts of composing – logic and rhetoric – are used to conceal the inadequacies in the relatively lower art of writing (stringing words together). The author’s hope is that the defensibility of the text will be strengthened through the use of persuasive words and phrases that overcome readers’ resistance. Yet, persuasion is a subtle goal that easily fails. For example, the fraudulent status of hyperbole or exaggeration is usually apparent, even to the most forgiving reader. In summary, the text should respond to readers’ interests, and enable gate-keepers (editors, reviewers) and customers (readers) to feel comfortable with the argument.

A similarly reflexive approach is to draw attention to the unfinished quality of the text by including suggestions for further work. The final part of the text thus seeks...
to identify pathways which draw readers’ attention to new horizons, new investigations, new territory and new possibilities. This format is especially useful for articles combined into a single volume (viz. a doctoral dissertation) since the different lines of argument contained in individual articles can complement each other. The start of each article thus looks back to earlier work; and the end of each article foreshadows the text that follows.

By this stage in the writing process, something substantial will have been created. However the publishing cycle is not yet complete. What still has to be done is to ensure that the text is reader- and journal-friendly, as much as it is author-originated. An article rarely exists fully-formed in the mind of the author, and indeed, the reverse is often the case. Ideas originating in the author’s mind tend to be disorganised, with many emergent red threads. Gradually, however, a stream of words is assembled which, subsequently, is remoulded into a form that, potentially, appeals to other members of the intellectual community, whether long-standing or newcomers.

At this stage in the production process – the transition from an author-friendly to reader-friendly text, field-testing becomes important. This procedure offers authors the opportunity to assess audience reaction, including the views of senior members of their discourse community. It initially draws on the views of supervisors, immediate colleagues (e.g. those who use the same photocopier) as well as the reactions of conference audiences, nationally and internationally. Field-testing invariably leads to further revisions of the text to clarify inconsistencies and shaky lines of argument.

When the text is able to withstand the criticism of close colleagues, the time has come for its submission to a journal. It is at this stage that there is a requirement for word-by-word and line-by-line scrutiny. Often termed copy editing, this fine-grained work of authors (and later, editors) is aimed at finalising the format, style, and accuracy of a text. Copy-editing is an iterative and time-consuming process, although at times also a rewarding activity. What might appear as a minor change may have a knock-on effect throughout the text, including sections that have already been fine-tuned. Gradually, however, the cycle of these iterations diminishes, with successive textual versions completed in less and less time. When such iteration cycles reduce to zero, the article is ready to be placed in the public domain.

Submission of the article constitutes the final stage of production. The author has already created and field-tested the product but, even so, this does not guarantee publication. Deciding whether an article is ready for submission may be the most important judgment in the marketisation process. If a paper is submitted too early, it risks rejection. If too much time is spent on polishing the text, submission may be too late since the debate has already moved on.

While authors may hope and dream that their work will be accepted without changes, this rarely happens. The market is too competitive. Outright rejection or invitation to resubmit after substantial amendment frequently generates feelings of frustration, irritation and even anger. But such responses are generally temporary
and transient. Reviewers serve as potential customers in the market of ideas, so their views, however negative, should not be summarily dismissed. If the text is not rejected outright, the most likely response from the journal editor is a good rejection - an invitation to resubmit the paper in a revised form. This means taking into account the advice of editors and reviewers who usually offer formative comments that are reasonable, specific and readily incorporated into the text. The production task enters its final phase as these adjustments are made to the text. At times, the weaknesses identified by reviewers cannot be overcome, in which case the text may be offered to another section of the market place, i.e. to a different journal. But if the comments and criticisms can be met, the paper is usually accepted for publication in a future issue of the journal.

Following acceptance, authors are required by the receiving journal to check that page numbering, acronyms, spelling and capitalisation conform to the journal’s guidelines for authors. This attention is best given while the source materials (e.g. details of page numbers, references and quotations) are still available on the author’s desk and have not yet been tidied away. Thus after repeated revisions and multiple checks – the article you are reading has gone through at least 10 drafts – authors’ efforts enter the public domain with the hope that their work will be cited, quoted and anthologised. Meanwhile, academic production continues with the emergence of new ideas, new arguments, new discourses and new markets.

The Future

So far in this article we have shown how academic journals emerged as a means of communication among scientists and briefly also how print media served the scientific community for over 300 years. We have also sought to delineate the market-led nature of much current academic writing and the relationships that have to be cultivated if a text is to be successfully published. In recent years, however, the academic market place has shifted in three interrelated respects: the emergence of the Internet, the growth of on-line publishing, and an increasing awareness of the corruption that has arisen from marketisation (e.g. the use of ghost writers by drug companies in medical publishing). At the time of writing (2010), the academic market place has begun to acknowledge these new phenomena in a number of ways.

For example, one move has been the rise of author-driven publishing, namely, the creation of intellectual commodities that are placed directly in the public domain. This practice is exemplified in conference proceedings published on-line, conference articles stored on international data bases, and articles that appear on social networking sites. A parallel move has been the creation of open access resources available to anyone connected to the Internet. Such openness has become a threat to global publishing companies that otherwise dominate the academic market place. International publishers have moved to compensate for these new publishing threats, by putting their products online, and later, by securing payment by producing paywall-protected
online versions of their printed journals. In exchange they provide data about number of downloads for each paper and, thus, the relative popularity of authors, ideas, and journal brands. Likewise, attempts have been made by internal auditors to find new ways to assess the productivity associated with these new forms of publication, often drawing on data provided by the publishing companies.

However, efforts to protect or reconfigure the authority of organisations, whether of publishers or universities, have been undermined to some extent by the return of author- and reader-power. The creation of personal websites, for example, has allowed individual academics to defy the forms of publishing imposed on them from outside. An interesting case is provided by the online display of PowerPoint presentations. Is a PowerPoint presentation published online, a publication, pre-publication or extended abstract? Does this matter, so long as it is widely accessible? And what of websites, including those of journals, that invite readers to add their own reviews? Does this mean that authors should change their texts in the light of these reactions? If so, does this mean that the era of the final draft, like the achievement of a conclusion, has passed its sell-by date? If so, what might this mean for knowledge and how we understand its advancement?

Our view, which we have sought to defend in this article, is that academic publishing is a form of public communication always subject to change. And though we have provided suggestions for how it may be developed at the present time, we acknowledge that form or genre will continue to change as writers, composers, editors and readers take up new positions in relation to their field, the advancement of knowledge and the publication spaces available. Future, doctoral candidates (and their supervisors) will need to consider these new relationships and develop new choreographic moves pertinent to their chosen fields and communities of practice. All we can say is - Welcome to the Dance.

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