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Pop! Launching a Post-digital Journal in the Pandemic

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Pop! Public. Open. Participatory. is an experimental, “post-digital” journal of the public humanities that launched online in 2019 and was to appear in print in 2020 –the global pandemic pushed the latter plan aside. As a result, *Pop!* is a new scholarly venue that is operational but not fully realized; the pandemic raises some interesting questions for it and its aspirations. This article is an introduction to the idea of *Pop!* and an attempt to unpack what an “experimental, post-digital journal of the public humanities” might be.

Pop! was born in the context of the INKE (Implementing New Knowledge Environments) community, which has gathered annually over the past seven years around the evolving idea of “open social scholarship” in the humanities.¹ The INKE annual conference proceedings have traditionally been published in a series of journal special issues, gathering a collection of articles that reflect the community’s discourse.² But the idea that a traditional journal could adequately capture the cross-disciplinary, dynamic, and indeed very friendly conversations to which the INKE meetings played host seemed suspect – and especially in light of the group’s rallying call to *open social scholarship*.

The *Pop!* idea was, then, to publish a journal not just as online open-access but also *in print* – and here is where the “post-digital” comes into play. We did not have in mind the tired, mass-produced print journal format that used to be the norm before almost everything went online in the 21st century. Rather, we envisioned a beautifully produced, collectable keepsake publication designed with readers and readership in mind. We asked, what if we made a journal for people, rather than for algorithms and metrics? What can print uniquely do for a journal that being online cannot? What if we made a journal that celebrated and nurtured our community of scholarship, taking care of the discourse and working to maximize the bandwidth of that conversation rather than just its velocity?

Other publications with similar motivations certainly exist.³ Our conjecture was that publishing in print would make *Pop!* – emphatically – a journal designed to be read more than designed to be indexed (or, indeed, merely designed to be published *in*). We launched the initial issue, comprising the proceedings of the 2019 INKE winter gathering in Victoria, on 31 October 2019. That issue appeared online (<https://popjournal.ca/issue01>), and we immediately began to make plans for a print edition to be launched, and sold, at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI) in Victoria in June 2020. Unfortunately, the world changed drastically in the intervening months, and our launch plans had to be put on hold.

As I write this, our plans for the print launch of *Pop!* remain up in the air. It will come – the ideas and virtues that *Pop!* seeks to embody still make sense, and the opportunity will emerge. At the 2020 INKE gathering, I had the opportunity to deliver the *Pop!* *Manifesto* (included below), and to talk about the virtues of print and of the kind of hand-to-hand exchange that would make a publication meaningful to people. What follows is largely drawn from that talk, as well as from my presentation in June at the DHSI 2020 “Online Edition.”

A Post-digital Journal of the Public Humanities

A journal, ideally, is the durable embodiment and trace of a community of discourse. But the past two decades have shown the real world of scholarly publishing on the Internet to be increasingly concerned with metrics, measurement, and growth, often at the expense of care: for readership, for content, and indeed for the world.

In the humanities at least, we might make a virtue of a smaller, more human scale, and we might hope that qualities other than impact factors, Altmetric Attention Scores, and h-indexes can be the name of the game. Rather than quantitative measures of citations, shares, and prestige by association, which ultimately become goals unto themselves for both researchers and publications, *Pop!* seeks to foreground a different set of virtues, like interest, involvement, durability, and even beauty. After three decades of Web evolution, these still seem elusive in online environments. This is not to say that the Internet is devoid of interest, involvement, durability, and beauty, but in 2020 it might be fair to say that on the whole – and despite the aspirations of many – these are not what’s driving the bus. And so perhaps it makes sense to take a *post-digital* turn and reconsider the role of print in service of humanities scholarship.

Print, as they now say, is not dead. Nor do we think there’s a contradiction between print and open-access publishing. Print affords a kind of durability and indeed *shareability* that digital publishing, ironically, still struggles with. While ‘sharing’ might be thought of as one of the Unsworthian *primitives* of online interaction (Spiro 2008), what we primarily do online is a kind of social sifting or winnowing from an endless stream of inputs, working within ever-shrinking timeframes. By contrast, print takes up space, takes up time. Rather than competing for attention with a trillion other things, print gets passed from hand to hand, loaned, gifted, and collected – indeed these are the very measures of its worth. As magazine publishers know, a publication’s *circulation* is always exceeded by its *readership* because print copies are passed around and shared – and often in unexpected directions. They are displayed on tables and bookshelves, left behind in offices, and showcased in unusual locations. They

can circulate outside the university. This is necessarily unpredictable, and deliciously hard to measure. But it is charming, and interesting, and we think appropriate to a truly human mode of inquiry.

Pop! will not be the nasty, stark, 6x9" format of old-school printed journals, but rather designed and produced with its readership in mind. *Pop!* takes a page from niche special interest literary and cultural magazines: published just once or twice a year, in small quantities that are sold, distributed, and collected by an intrigued, and ultimately loyal, audience. This meshes well with our scholarly community. One way to think of that readership is as a coterie group, composed of individuals who are already paying attention to our scholarly discourse.⁴ But if our goal is scholarship that is open and social and actively seeking the involvement and interest of publics outside the university, then the circulation and readership – discoverability and spreadability – of print can perhaps transcend academic boundaries and attract new interest.

What does a printed journal give us that an online, OA journal doesn't? The digital OA journal is theoretically accessible to anyone with an internet connection.⁵ But the chances of that journal content actually reaching other audiences, while anecdotally tantalizing, are in fact pretty small, and limited to what Google, Twitter, and Facebook can deliver on a momentary basis. Despite talk about "network effects" where sheer interconnectedness is the cardinal virtue, in the real world of the Internet network effects may actually work against the discoverability and readability of any one journal. A smaller, more deliberate, hand-to-hand network may actually have an edge.⁶

Of course, *Pop!* is also online and open-access and has DOIs and indexable metadata. That goes without saying, in order to make it cite-able and part of the Network. But Google, Impact Factors, and Altmetrics just aren't the primary point of *Pop!*

Is there an Argument in this Prototype?

Pop! is a prototype in the sense elaborated by Alan Galey and Stan Ruecker in 2010: not only is the prototype the embodiment of a theoretical position, but also the embodiment of an argument. In this case the argument is about what is possible, practical, and desirable in a scholarly publication. *Pop!* is a prototype that makes several arguments:

- about how humanities scholarship ought to be produced and circulated;
- about appropriate scale, and why particular scale matters;
- about what really matters in terms of openness, and why;
- about the minimum viable product (MVP) of a scholarly publisher.

Pop! as prototype also argues, in effect, *against* some other prototypes. For instance, Galey & Ruecker's article highlights Kathleen Fitzpatrick's 2009–2010 work on CommentPress/MediaCommons as a way of “turning a book into a conversation” – a rhetorical move not unlike our own notion of a journal as the embodiment and trace of a community. CommentPress & MediaCommons provided a platform for incorporating the review discourse and commentary around a book into the book itself. It is an attractive idea; indeed, today Manifold Scholarship, a platform developed by the University of Minnesota Press and Cast-Iron Coding, is a similarly motivated prototype.⁷ Where Manifold Scholarship today differs from CommentPress a decade ago is in defining its boundaries more broadly and more inclusively. CommentPress sought to create an editorial or paratextual layer *within* an online book where commentary and review would naturally live. Manifold casts its net considerably wider: while it allows and encourages annotations within the book, it also pays attention to commentary and discourse outside, in social media, and makes an attempt to gather and aggregate this external discourse, capturing it (in snapshots at least) within the book.

Pop!'s conjecture is that these attempts to *capture* the discourse (however variably defined) obscure a larger point: these are layers of discourse with qualitative differences. Some of these are the things we want to enshrine, and amplify, and spotlight. Some we are prepared to let go. The difference, and discernment between these layers is a good part of the work of publishing. The impulse to capture (and, by implication, to control) the totality of the discourse is a recognizable part of the “digital” mindset of the early 21st century. By contrast, some of what we mean by “post-digital” is in letting go, in letting the ephemeral be ephemeral and thinking more closely about what is worth preserving.

Stan Ruecker went on, a few years later, to elaborate a “taxonomy of prototypes,” which include “*production-driven prototypes*, which are intended for refinement,”

“*experimental prototypes*, where the goal is [...] to produce a kind of generalized knowledge about an idea that the prototype embodies,” and, most interestingly, ‘provotypes’ or *provocative prototypes*, where the goal is “to challenge presuppositions, break down stereotypical understandings, and generally produce changes in the way people think about a particular topic or situation” (Ruecker 2015).

By these descriptions, *Pop!* operates on all three levels. It is certainly an experimental prototype, a research project in itself that will unfold as the journal evolves over its first year and beyond. We hope to better understand how humanities scholarship circulates and generates values for its readers and writers. We hope too that it is a *provocation* that

challenges presuppositions and changes the way we think. If nothing else, working against the taken-for-granted aspects of online open-access publishing serves to pop (!) those aspects into a new relief that is helpfully revealing. But on a more quotidian level, the value of the prototype in iteration and refinement is an opportunity worth embracing. It may be the case that magazine publishers are more attuned to the idea of creative iteration than journal publishers have been, the latter being interested in the establishment of a solid and reliable platform that allows one to focus on the content instead of the mechanism.

Here is where treating the publication itself as a research prototype bears fruit: in the self-reflexive consideration of publishing and its apparatus. Samuel Moore of the Radical Open Access Collective has made this identification with anthropologist Chris Kelty's idea of *recursive publics*, which are concerned with the "technical, legal, practical, and conceptual means of [their] own existence."⁸ Indeed, we have noted in recent years, in the face of massive corporate journal publishing, the emergence of a growing 'ecosystem awareness' that is manifest in the promotion of open access, open data, and indeed open infrastructure owned by the scholarly community themselves.⁹ We see *Pop!* as a particular part of this general movement, one that functionally requires taking risks with prototypes and iterating on them self-consciously and reflexively.

My colleague Juan Alperin of the Public Knowledge Project would say (indeed has said in as many words), *Why start over? Why reinvent the wheel? You' ll only end up reinventing OJS...* But the reason is provided by Galey & Ruecker's prototype thinking. Within reason, maybe it is worthwhile to start over, and to attempt to reinvent the journal. For if our end goals are different, we aren't likely to re-invent OJS (or Elsevier).

Inwardness and Outwardness: On Publishing

Samuel Moore's 2017 assessment of the history of Open Access notes an essential tension between *openness* in a neoliberal mode, where it represents disintermediation and deregulation, and the more communitarian sensibilities many of us are prone to, where openness implies a forward-looking commons.¹⁰ Moore looks back to some early formulations of OA, including this striking admonition from Bill Readings in 1994:

All of this means that we have to think very carefully about what the transition to electronic publishing implies for the scholarly community as a whole.

...information is a unit of value within the system and serves to procure advancement within the university. In this context, the increased quantity, speed, and distribution that electronic publishing brings will not simply prosthetically

improve existing practices; it promises to significantly alter the basis on which the system functions. The economic rationale is overwhelming: it remains to be seen whether academics will be capable of turning the shift to their advantage. (Readings 1994)

Earlier in this article, I defined a journal as the *embodiment and trace of a scholarly community*. But to do so is to focus inwardly, on the academy and its groups of scholars, and misses an incredibly important point about *publishing*. In one of the best definitions ever offered, Matthew Stadler defines publication as the *gathering of a public* around a text or set of otherwise embodied ideas.¹¹

We should care about gathering a public, and indeed gathering publics, plural. If the point of open social scholarship is about making scholarship matter to people beyond our coterie circles, if the so-called crisis in the humanities is about the perceived irrelevance of humanities scholarship to people outside the university, if we are concerned about the neoliberal corporatization of the university and its role in larger society, then *the gathering of publics is more than a theoretical move*. Our forms of communication, preservation, and circulation themselves are of critical importance, not just as more or less efficient mechanisms for getting scholarly work communicated and recognized. Moore's identification of scholar-led publishing with Kelty's "recursive publics" is straight to the point here: scholars' willingness to engage with the means of production and circulation is what will determine whether, in the future, the academy is merely a specialist content producer, trapped in a production/consumption (i.e. "read-and-publish") contract with commercial publishers – or if we will have real agency in the reach and relevance of our work in the wider world.

Pop! as Scholar-led: Scaling Small

Pop! takes considerable inspiration from the ScholarLed Consortium and its associated Community-led Open Publication Infrastructures for Monographs (COPIM) project, an international effort funded by Research England in 2019. While primarily a monograph-focused effort, ScholarLed opens up a space of re-negotiation more generally for scholarly communications. Samuel Moore explains the term:

It is more specific than terms like 'community-led' or 'community-controlled' that illustrate the potential of projects to reorient publishing towards the needs of researchers and away from mere market concerns. The vagueness of 'community-led' is a drawback for those arguing for a particular ethical conception of publishing: who gets to decide who the community is, how it can best be served, and who is not part of it?¹²

The ScholarLed Consortium is a collective formed by a number of UK- and US-based Open Access publishers who “share a commitment to opening up scholarly research to diverse readerships, to resisting the marketization of academic knowledge production, and to working collaboratively rather than in competition.” ¹³ Among the guiding principles of the movement are the virtues of “bibliodiversity” and “scaling small” – where preserving a plurality of voices in scholarly publishing is of critical importance in a time when corporate consolidation, standardization, and flattening seem so inevitable.¹⁴

The recently funded COPIM project seeks to develop and assemble a set of open, lightweight, distributed infrastructure components and systems that will facilitate this plurality of publishers’ sustainability over time. COPIM’s Lucy Barnes and Rupert Gatti point out that scholarly *production* “displays constant returns to scale, and so can (and does) support large numbers of publishing initiatives,” but *distribution and discovery* systems “display increasing returns to scale and so naturally [lead] to the emergence of a few large providers.” (Barnes and Gatti 2019) What we really need is not the efficiency that large-scale centralization provides, but rather an open and distributed infrastructure that can support a diversity of publishers and voices. Eileen Joy of Punctum Books (a ScholarLed member press) counters:

There is no, and never can be, just one future. Of necessity, certain futures will materialize and others will only emerge partially and still others will be suppressed, outright killed, etc. Our job in the present is to keep all options in play and to maximize what is possible over what is determined in advance (usually by the powerful) to (supposedly) not be possible.¹⁵

ScholarLed’s provocation is thus an ethical one, rooted in DIY initiative and an uncompromising commitment to quality and care.¹⁶ It is a move that looks both forward and backward, at what has been possible – and what has dominated in the past twenty years’ drive to all-encompassing digital platforms – in its assessment of what might yet be possible, and the kind of world we want to bring into being. The vision – of a multitude of publishing initiatives, scaled small and capable of being run by scholars themselves – is an inspiring one.

Pop! as Post-digital

Scholar-led publishing addresses concerns with scale and diversity, but how is *Pop!* a post-digital publication? Florian Cramer in 2015 provided perhaps the most coherent description of the *post-digital*, a term he says “sucks but is useful.” ¹⁷ While “post-digital” runs the risk of being “little more than a rerun of the 19th-century Arts and

Crafts movement, with its programme of handmade production as a means of resistance to encroaching industrialization,” Cramer points to more interesting alignments, such as a growing sense of resistance to digital media as “universal machine” that presumptively incorporates everything. David Berry similarly notes that “the post-digital is represented by and indicative of a moment when the computational has become hegemonic.” [18](#)

Most interestingly, Cramer identified the post-digital turn with a “semiotic shift to the indexical” (2015). After many years of treating digital media as a decontextualized space where content aspires to be fluid and frictionless, we have perhaps finally stumbled upon the inescapability, and indeed the real value of mediation. And so, we rediscover how print’s materiality always has stood as a representation of both itself and its published context. The medium’s claim to the message becomes once again more obvious.

On a more practical level, we at *Pop!* are fans of Alessandro Ludovico’s masterful re-reading of the fate of print in the digital era, *Post-Digital Print, The Mutation of Publishing since 1894*, and Sylvio Lorusso’s *Post-Digital Archive* (P-DPA) as pioneers of what post-digital publishing might mean.^{[19](#)} Lorusso asks, in the *P-DPA Abstract*:

In the post-digital era, where does publishing cease to be publishing? What boundaries need to be drawn in terms of media, ecosystems and practices?^{[20](#)}

Building explicitly on Lorusso’s work, Janneka Adema and Gary Hall note:

From this point of view, materiality as the physical outcome or the final representation of a work is not enough: the “post-digital attitude” extends from the examined works to the archive itself, as the material acknowledgment of the influence of digital networks.^{[21](#)}

Post-digital print is thus not a turning away from the Network, but a recovery of the idea that print is part of the Network. The interesting question is in identifying what work print can uniquely do for us. The answer we give to this question is different in a post-digital context than it would have been a generation ago.

So, what is Pop! again?

Pop! is, then, yet another reinvention of the scholarly journal. It is a blind peer-reviewed publication that will appear twice annually. *Pop!*’s issues are thematic and eventful. We publish online for the sake of OA, but *Pop!* is designed to be read in print, as a holistic

package of scholarship and related goods, with design that is intended to be attractive, readable, and collectible.

Pop! is built around a lightest-possible editorial and production workflow that minimizes the dependency on specific software tools and platforms. Simple text file formats, YAML-based metadata, and a GitHub-based deployment architecture ensure longevity, portability, and downstream re-use.²² *Pop!* is available online open access, with fully described and expressed metadata, DOIs, and citation information. Production in print, at this point still dependent on Adobe tools, is effectively a “downstream use” of the digital source. Our workflow is designed to ensure that a scholar-led publishing process is sustainable going forward, without reliance on commercial journal publishers. And, as *Pop!* comes from the Publishing program at Simon Fraser University (SFU), students are part of its operation; they have already made contributions to the journal’s strategy, design, and production, and we see their role expanding going forward.

Pop! has what we like to call a generous peer review process – generous in the time that is taken for review, and generous in the spirit of nurturing and improving the work. This is the opposite of review mechanisms that pride themselves on high rejection rates. This ‘generous’ review process precedes *Pop!*; for many years the INKE Winter Meeting’s proceedings have been peer reviewed in a spring event, where reviewers gather together in a nice environment and work in pairs to develop thoughtful and comprehensive reviews and constructive critique. We embrace this tradition and look to further developing this practice of evaluating each article for its originality, coherence, scholarship, and for its readability, not just for specialist audiences within the university, but for broader interested audiences.

If a journal is the embodiment of a community of discourse, then that embodiment needs to be a thing of quality. If a publication serves the gathering of a public to whom it matters, then that publication must be appealing and recognizable to those people. My colleague Amanda Lastoria has elaborated on how material design and production values are essential to the meaning-making process, both in positioning in the wider marketplace and in the reading process itself (Lastoria 2019). This is precisely what is lost in a massive-scale, enterprised-up scholarly publishing system.

The Pop! Manifesto

In the twenty-first century, the scholarly journal ecosystem has been scaled up to *inhuman* levels. The corporate machinery of the Elseviers and Springers of the world, not to mention the global ambitions of the Open Access (OA) movement, have served to

transform the journal from the quotidian mechanism of scholarly communication – that is, *how scholars communicate with their peers* – into a massive, planet-wide engine with huge economies of scale, increasingly run by and for algorithms. When we write journal articles in 2020, we are literally writing for machines.

Arguably, in the sciences, this is reasonable and appropriate; the global scientific project is a rapid, cumulative tradition based on the circulation of *research results*, and as such a colossal, automated engine perhaps may serve science well enough – or at least it might, in a fairer and more open version of itself. But this drive to scale is a poor fit for humanities scholarship. What does it say about the humanities if we are indeed writing for machines instead of each other?

The pursuit of scale does not – indeed cannot – prioritize *care* or attention to the details of human experience. And in the absence of these human values, scholarly communication becomes no different from any other robot commodity traded in twenty-first century late capitalism.

We would rather reach a community of people who *care* about both their scholarship and their community. Such a framing may be increasingly rare today, but we think it is not just worthwhile but of critical importance in a world-system facing the high costs of centuries of growth for growth’ s sake. We believe that a journal can still be the place where scholarship actually matters – where a human being takes the time to care about what’ s been written and whether it makes a difference. All the “enterprised-up” infrastructure in the world does not equal this.

A journal ideally is the embodiment of a discourse community and the *trace* of that community over time. In a world of ubiquitous and instantaneous network communication, the point of *publishing* is the establishment of a trusted, durable, and cite-able record of what has been thought and said and debated. These core definitions have served us well for many centuries, and yet they seem almost beside the point in a massive system trading in algorithms and metrics. What if we went back to first principles?

We thus offer *Pop! Public. Open. Participatory.* – a craft-scale post-digital journal of the public humanities.

Pop! is an intervention on behalf of care-based scholarship in an era of massive scale. *Pop!* aspires to be a practical demonstration of the virtues of small-scale operation and of a lightweight and convivial publishing model. *Pop!* asks the question: *How can we*

create a scholarly publication that people really care about? Not just a venue for a coterie of insiders, but rather a working prototype for open social scholarship that can find its way to broader and more diverse audiences? If a journal is the lasting embodiment of a community, *Pop!* aims to put its community first. It wants to be *read* more than it wants to be indexed – so it makes reading and readership a top priority, through care for its content, care for its audience, and care for the kind of world it wants to serve.

Pandemics and other challenges

Pop!'s print distribution was intended to stay close to its community, especially at events where our community gathers. Launching the inaugural issue at DHSI 2020 seemed like a perfect fit. The constraints imposed by COVID-19, however, put that plan on hold, as it did with scholarly gatherings of all kinds. As of spring 2021, it is still not yet clear when we will be able to return to the kinds of in-person, collegial gatherings to which *Pop!* wants to be connected. For now, we're confined to our website, where the first two issues (proceedings from the 2019 INKE and 2020 INKE/CAPOS meetings) can be found.

Our goal of foregrounding readability still strikes me as a good one. We founded *Pop!* on the idea of care – for writing, for ideas, and especially for reading. That's still a key priority. But people don't consume online content the same way they do with print. Online content tends to be atomic – contextualized by the Network itself, rather than by its publication. So, thinking of *Pop!* as a destination website is probably unrealistic, as is the idea of stuffing our website full of neat, browsable material as one might want to do with a print publication. Online and print publishing foreground different reading and consumption practices; it behooves us to pay attention to those differences, even as we wait for an opening to distribute the print edition.

Mail-based delivery, as an alternative to our original plan of in-person promotion and distribution, is a possibility, but the economics of it are considerably harder that way – as magazine publishers know well. Plus, the abstractedness of a mail delivery list pushes us back to the algorithmic approach of the world that *Pop!* was intended to resist.

Related to the ideas of humane scale and emphasis on care is the notion that we don't win by rushing. And so, in this particular case at least, the pandemic presents an opportunity to slow down and pay attention to the world instead of pushing forward for productivity's sake. When a return to face-to-face gatherings becomes possible, there will be an opportunity to move *Pop!* into those contexts.

We are, of course, very interested to hear from people interested in this endeavor. The pandemic has made access to our friendly scholarly community that much harder. We invite feedback, critique, suggestions, and comment. Please be in touch!

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Footnotes

1. The INKE community has for many years enjoyed a collaboration with colleagues in Australia through the Canada-Australia Partnership for Open Scholarship. See <https://inke.ca> and <https://inke.ca/canadian-australian-partnership-for-open-scholarship/>. ↵
2. From 2012 to 2016 these proceedings were published in special issues of *Scholarly and Research Communication* <https://src-online.ca>; in 2018 they appeared in *KULA: Knowledge Creation, Preservation, and Dissemination Studies* <https://kula.uvic.ca/index.php/kula/issue/view/6> In 2019 and 2020, proceedings have been published in *Pop!* <https://popjournal.ca>. ↵
3. A particular inspiration here was the cross-disciplinary anthropology journal/art magazine *Limn*: <https://limn.it/>. ↵
4. Laura Mandell’ s book, *Breaking the Book* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015) provides excellent insights into the coterie circulation in early print culture and how this critically differed from later mass circulation, especially in the development of authority and authorial voice. ↵

5. Approaching 4 billion people, according to Mary Meeker’ s 2019 *Internet Trends* deck at <https://www.bondcap.com/report/itr19/#view/7>. [↵](#)
6. To be frank, ResearchGate might have an edge here too, but let’ s not go there just now. See Borrego (2017). [↵](#)
7. See <https://manifoldapp.org/>. [↵](#)
8. Kelty. *Two Bits*. (2008); also quoted in Moore. “Revisiting ‘the 1990s Debutante’ ” (2019). [↵](#)
9. See Maxwell et al. “Mind the Gap” (2019) on the open infrastructure landscape. [↵](#)
10. Moore, “A Genealogy of Open Access” (2017). [↵](#)
11. Matthew Stadler’ s definition of publication is most eloquently given in “What Is Publication?” (2010). [↵](#)
12. Moore, “Open *By* Whom?” (2019). [↵](#)
13. See <https://scholarled.org/>
 “ScholarLed is a consortium of five scholar-led, not-for-profit, open access book publishers that was formed in 2018. Individually we comprise Mattering Press, meson press, Open Book Publishers, Open Humanities Press, and punctum books, and collectively we are seeking to develop powerful, practical ways for small-scale, scholar-led Open Access presses to grow and flourish in a publishing landscape that is changing rapidly.” [↵](#)
14. Barnes and Gatti, “Bibliodiversity in Practice” (2019). [↵](#)
15. Joy, “Not Breaking the Rules Is Unconscionable” (2015). [↵](#)
16. Punctum Books’ Eileen Joy in 2017: “...we’ re fairly certain it’ s our responsibility to collaborate directly with authors on ‘getting the word out,’ however possible, and not with the assistance of for-profit companies that are merely adding to and ratcheting up the career anxieties of researchers already feeling ‘left behind’ in the Neoliberal Academy that prizes the (media-saturated) Competitive Agon over the open and mutually supportive (and creatively dissensual) Demos of Thought, and in which Competitive Agon one is always looking over one’ s shoulder at the self-citing Academia.edu ‘top 2-percenter’ who has more Twitter followers than you do, and whose cheery Instagram posts about their latest invited speaking engagement is

making you nauseous, not with envy, but with performance anxiety and *careerum tremens*.” – Joy, “Here Be Monsters (2017). [↵](#)

17. Cramer, “What Is ‘Post-Digital’ ?” (2015). [↵](#)

18. Berry, “Post-Digital Humanities” (2014). [↵](#)

19. Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*. (2012). [↵](#)

20. Lorusso, “FAQs | P—DPA,” (2014). [↵](#)

21. Adema and Hall. “Posthumanities” (2016). [↵](#)

22. Currently, *Pop!*’s markdown/YAML-based content is deployed via Github, which feeds the website, a Grav-based web CMS running on Reclaim Hosting. It depends strictly on none of these components, because the simple, open standards serve the age-old virtue of content independence. <https://popjournal.ca>. [↵](#)