Mind the Gap
A Landscape Analysis of Open Source Publishing Tools and Systems

Terry Ehling, Director of Strategic Initiatives
Mind the Gap

A Landscape Analysis of Open Source Publishing Tools and Platforms

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July 2019

The number of open source (OS) online publishing platforms, i.e. production and hosting systems for scholarly books and journals, launched or in development, has proliferated in the last decade. Many of these publishing infrastructure initiatives are well-developed, stable, and supported by a small but vigorous distributed community of developers, but promising new ventures have also recently launched.
Context

Discussion with Mellon in March 2018

Both Mellon and MITP asked, “What’s out there? How can we characterize these projects? Is there a path to sustainability?

Where’s the Gap?
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<th>Authoring/Editing</th>
<th>Ingest/Conversion</th>
<th>Submission Management</th>
<th>Review/Workflow</th>
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Funding variations

- Volunteer community OSS projects
  - PanDoc
  - Grobid
  - FidusWriter
  - ProseMirror

- Internally resourced
  - PubPub
  - Libero
  - Janeway
  - ElectricBook

- PKP/OJS
  - PubPub
  - Libero
  - Janeway

- Funding from multiple granting agencies
  - Hypothes.is
  - Editoria
  - Scalar
  - Fulcrum
  - Vega
  - Manifold
  - Mellon
  - Rebus Ink
  - PressBooks

- Single-dev projects
  - Hyphex
Existing v. novel functionality

- Lodel
- Janeway
- PubSweet
- Open Journal Systems
- Editoria
- MathJax
- PressBooks
- Fulcrum
- Hypothes.is
- Omeka
- Vega
- PubPub
- Rebus Ink
- Scalar
- Dokie.li
- Rebus
- Ink
- Dokie.li
- Zotero
Centralized v. distributed deployment

- PubPub
- Fulcrum
- Lodel
- eLife Libero Suite
- Janeway
- Pressbooks
- OJS
- OMP
- Manifold
- Dokie.li
- Editoria
- Scalar
- Lodel
- Libero Suite
- OJS
- OMP
Where’s the gap?

• No shortage of code; there’s a great deal of overlapping functionality

• Projects compete with one another for funding, resources, and attention

• We’ve (inadvertently) developed an organic market system for open source projects . . .

• . . . which is inefficient and risky, if you want sustainable open infrastructure for scholarly communications
The real gap is co-ordination

• Funding currently privileges projects over programs

• “We tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate the effect in the long run.” Roy Amara

• Many projects are too small, too niche to attract substantial investment, sustained community engagement, or demand-driven revenue

• Collective action—community-supported infrastructure—is needed
Thank you

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The MIT Press

Managing Director
MIT Knowledge Futures Group

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