Changing Publication Cultures in the Humanities
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**"The Future of Publications in the Humanities:
From the Perspective of Evaluation"**

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The context

- publication cultures may change for a variety of reasons:

→ "technological innovations"

→ "evaluation or assessment systems"
    national evaluation system
    (Norwegian model, Australian model,
     Croatian model, etc.)

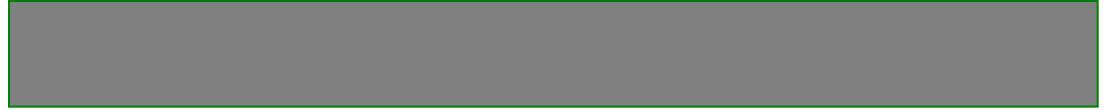   international or European evaluation
    systems
    ("European Database for the Social
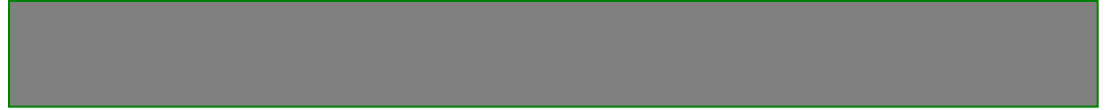   Sciences and Humanities")

Generally, all types of evaluation or assessment systems or instruments reflect

"The drive towards more transparency and accountability in the academic world... has created a "culture of numbers" in which institutions and individuals believe that fair decisions can be reached by algorithmic evaluation of some statistical data; unable to measure quality (the ultimate goal), decision-makers replace quality by numbers that they can measure"

("Citation Statistics" - A Report from the International Mathematical Union et al., 2008: 3)
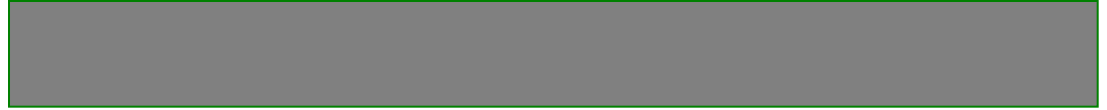
- decades of attempts to evaluate Humanities research on basis of databases, such as WoS, SCOPUS, Google Scholar, etc. have proven unsuccessful because of specific nature of research in the Humanities that is reflected in specific output
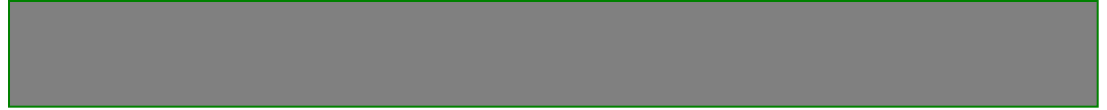
Specific nature of Humanities Research reflected in a number of characteristics, such as

- publication of articles, books, etc. in national languages
- importance of monographs, chapters in monographs, etc.
- necessity to include "collections" such as revised editions, collections of data, etc.
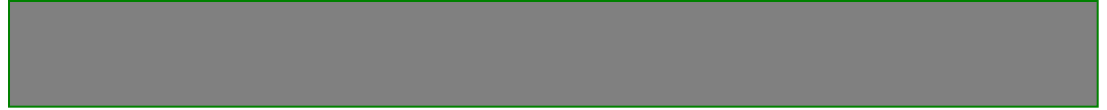
- in order to deal with diverse nature of Humanities research, the ESF, namely Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH) in 2001 launches ERIH – **European Reference Index for the Humanities**

- main aim of ERIH – to enhance the global visibility of high-quality research in the Humanities published in academic journals in various European languages across all of Europe

- journals but also monographs, chapters in monographs planned

- In summer of 2008 a number of funding bodies
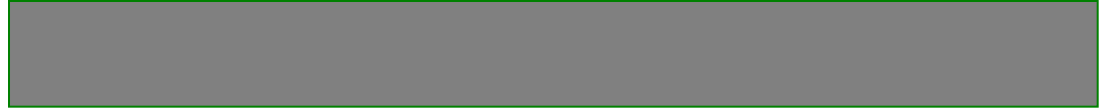   - ERC/AHRC (UK), ANR (Fr), DFG (De), NWO (Ne) secure funds for

Towards a Bibliometric Database for the Social Sciences and Humanities: A European Scoping Project

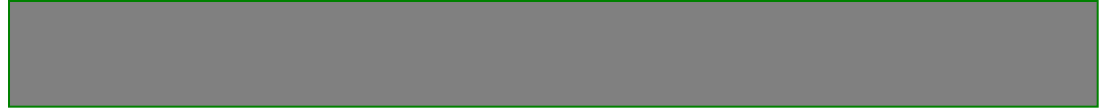(Ben Martin, Freeman Centre, SPRU University of Sussex, UK)

- Final report of Scoping Project being finalized at present
- Report primarily based on two "mini" projects:

  - "Options for a Comprehensive Database of Research Outputs in Social Sciences and Humanities"
    by Henk F. Moed et al.
    Center for Science and Technology Studies, Leiden
    University, The Netherlands

  - "Towards a Bibliometric Database for the Social Sciences and Humanities: A European Scoping Project"
    by Diana Hicks et al.
    School of Public Policy, Georgia Institute of Technology, USA

Relationship between ERIH versus WoS and SCOPUS shown

- in 2008/2009 WoS includes 1500 so-called "regional journals"
- in 2008/2009 SCOPUS includes 2250 so-called "regional journals"

  → mostly "A" and "B" journals, very few "C" or "national journals"

"Lessons learnt" from SPRU Scoping Project in general terms

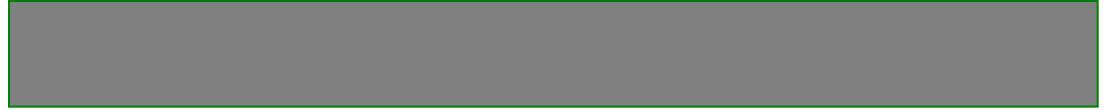• necessity of including research output in *national languages*

– journal articles

– monographs

• necessity of including so-called "enlightenment literature" and dealing with non-published output, such as archeological excavations, exhibitions, etc.
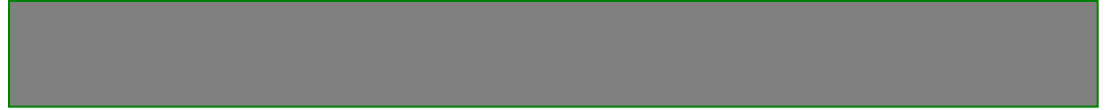
Major issues and problems in setting-up a European Humanities Bibliometric? Database

1. scale and variety of research outputs in the Humanities
2. the need to cover national journals and other research outputs
3. creation of a central coordination of national organizations for the establishment of standardized rules to ensure full comparability of nationally provided data

   central coordination ↔ national databases

4. would such an evaluation mechanism change publishing behavior, culture?
5. time factor – how long would it take to set up such a database?
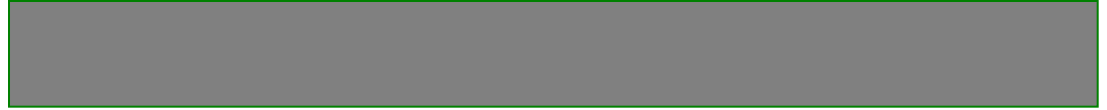6. costs involved – not known but certainly very high

What is known about how evaluation mechanisms change publishing behaviour, culture?

→ in principle very little, only fragments of analyses in some disciplines and research domains

→ what will (or would) be the impact of existing or future evaluation systems for the publication culture in the Humanities?
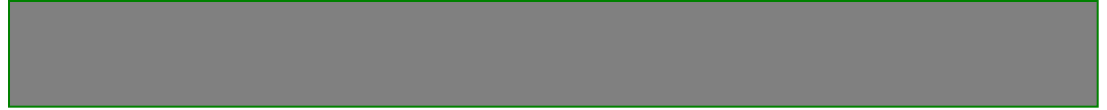
Documented examples of impact of assessment tools on publication cultures:

- In Spain, implementation of national assessment system in economics resulted in major shift to international journals indexed in either WoS or in national journal lists.

- In Spain, in medical research, assessment had immediate effect on mass emigration of best research articles to foreign journals resulting in an increasing neglect of Spanish journals to which Spanish researchers rarely submit their best work.

- In Croatia, medical journals published more and more in English.

- Since major commercial providers (e.g. WoS) as a rule index journals and do not cover books, or chapters in books, general trend is to publish journal articles

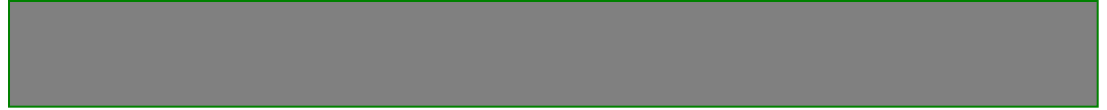Analyses of the previously mentioned shifts in publication behaviour show

- "the destruction of Spanish as a language of science"
    - → effect on language

- Many research groups have altered their research agendas to accomodate being published in high impact journals
    - → change in research topics

- Shift towards international journals and, what is more, to journal articles in some research domains is showing shift away from books and chapters in books
    - → change in publication behaviour

What can be done for "preservation" of Humanities research outputs?

- "bibliometric" assessment tools in the Humanities either already exist in certain countries or are being planned.

- "bibliometric" assessment on international or European level is already knocking at our door.
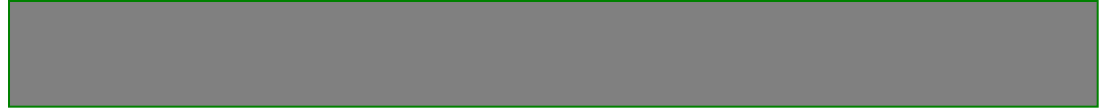
Fundamental question → can it be avoided?

- If "evaluation" cannot be avoided, then what can be done to ensure continuity of Humanities research in national languages and traditional Humanities research outputs?
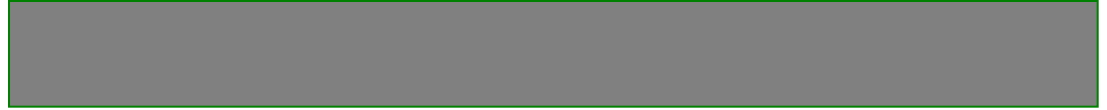
A Rough Agenda for the Humanities

- Show danger of WoS and Scopus mechanically taking over predominantly A and B ERIH journals
  - → "national journals" as well as other outputs lose visibility
    and evaluation potential

- Create national databases of journals, monographs and other research outputs

- Go from national databases to a European level bibliometric? database
  - → "bottom-up" approach – not the other way round

- In national assessment systems stress and institutionalize equal importance of high quality research outputs in national languages

- In national assessment systems stress and institutionalize importance not only of journal articles, but also books and other types of research output

- In national assessment systems take into consideration different research traditions in the disciplines of the Humanities
  - → this diversity should be reflected at all levels of "evaluation", for uniformity kills any possibility of quality assessment

- In conclusion, a quote from the Report on Evaluation in Mathematics (2008):

"Research usually has multiple goals and it is therefore reasonable that its value must be judged by multiple criteria."

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Ha, T.C. et al. (2006) "The Journal Impact Factor: Too Much of an Impact?", *Annals Academy of Medicine*, Vol. 35, No. 12.

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