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# Performing Excellence in the Humanities



(Gideo Burton/flickr.com)

- the Funding Initiative  
„opus magnum“  
of the VolkswagenStiftung

Budapest November 2009

# 1. The VolkswagenStiftung



**non-profit foundation  
under private law  
located in Hanover,  
Germany**



# 1. The VolkswagenStiftung - History

**November 1959**

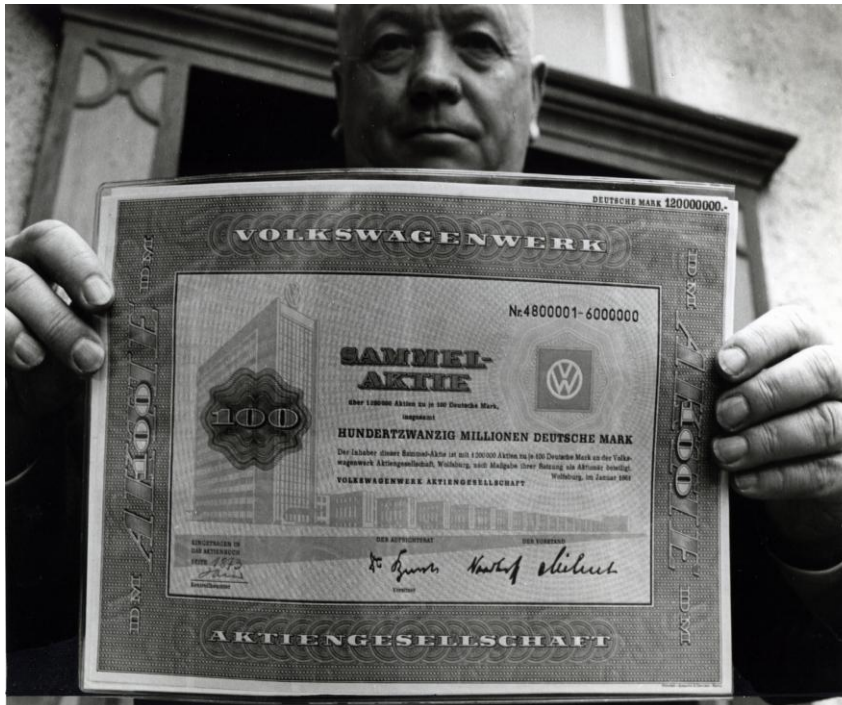
**Contract: settling the controversy concerning ownership of the Volkswagen Company and establishing the Foundation**

**May 1961**

**Signing of the foundation's statutes**



# 1. The VolkswagenStiftung - Capital



**Initial Capital  
stock in 1962:**

**562 million Euros**

**Capital today**

**2.1 billion  
Euros**



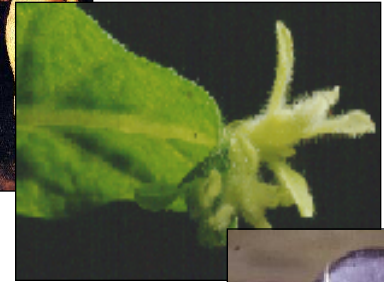
# 1. The VolkswagenStiftung - Mission



**Statutes § 2: Purpose of the foundation:  
„support of the humanities and social sciences  
as well as science and technology in higher  
education and research”**

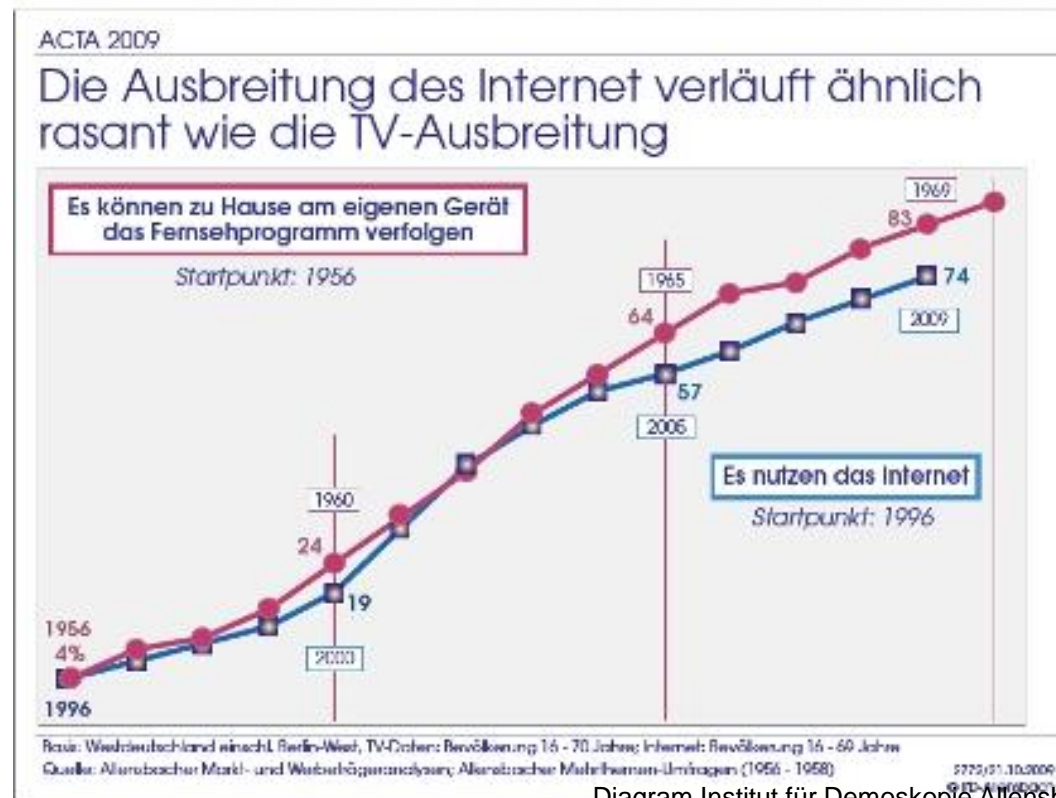
## Funding Philosophy

- providing fresh impetus to higher education and research
- crossing academic and national borders
- improving structures and opportunities for research and higher education, particularly focusing on young academics
- a portfolio of changing funding initiatives



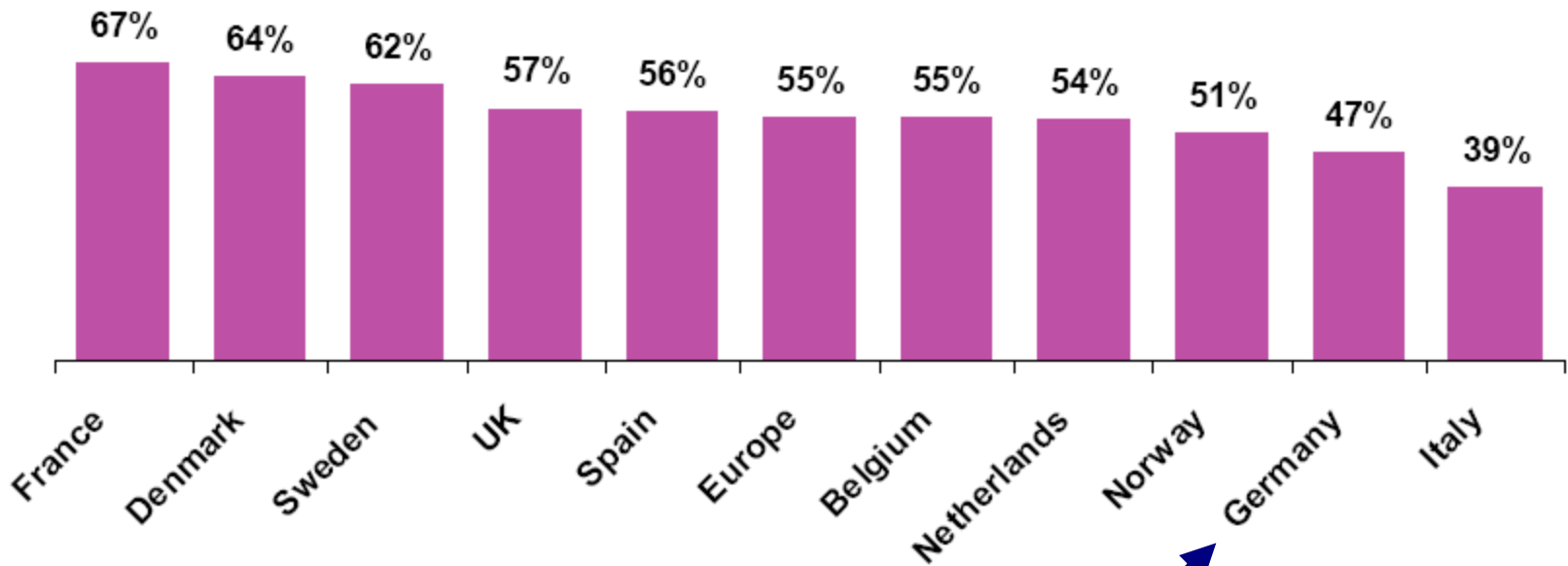
## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

### Internet access in Germany:



## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

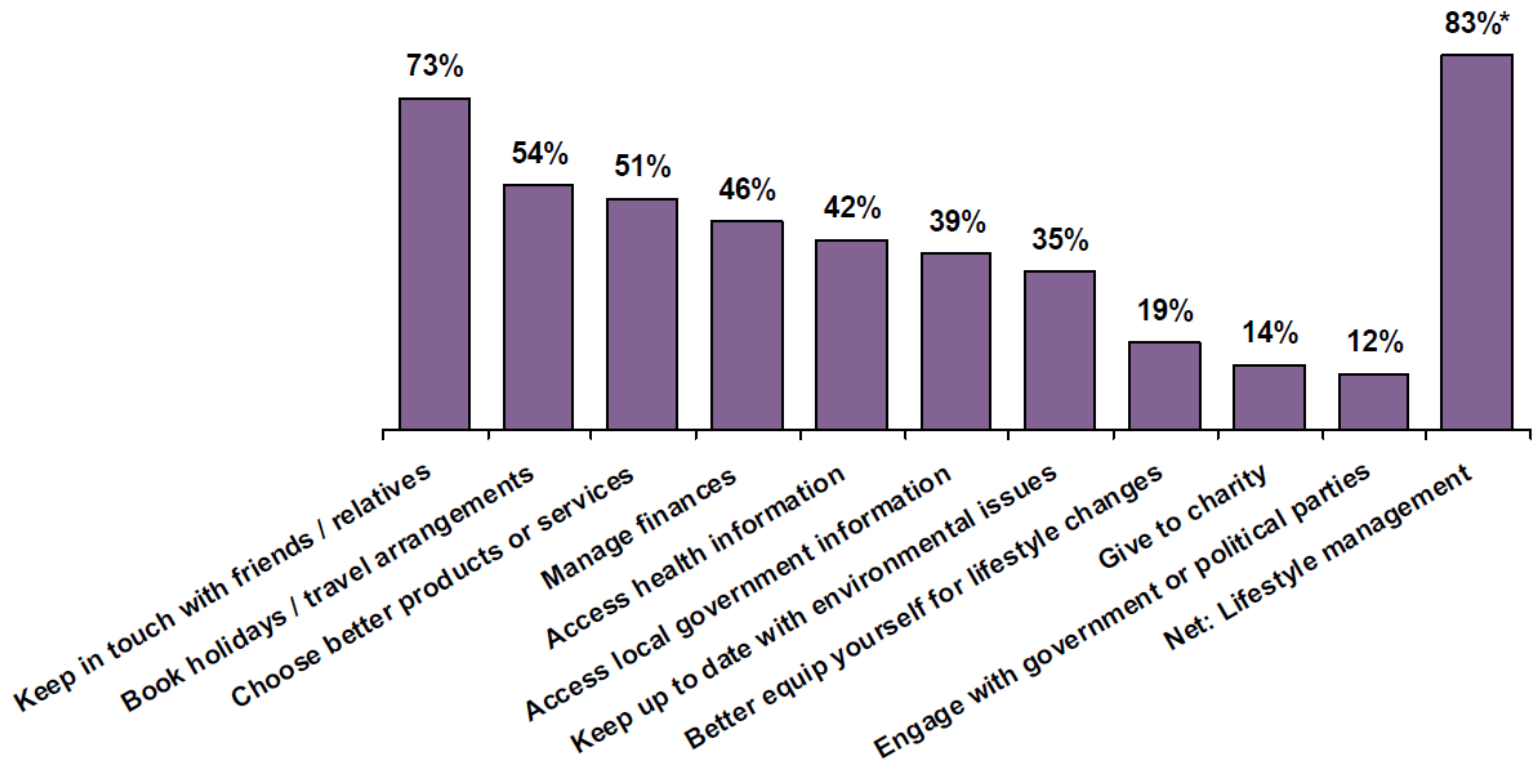
% online 7 days a week – all European internet users





## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

European internet users – % ratio of activities



\* Net: Lifestyle Management is an aggregate of: book holidays/travel arrangements, choose products or service, manage finances, access health information. Better equip yourself for lifestyle changes

## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

### E-Book

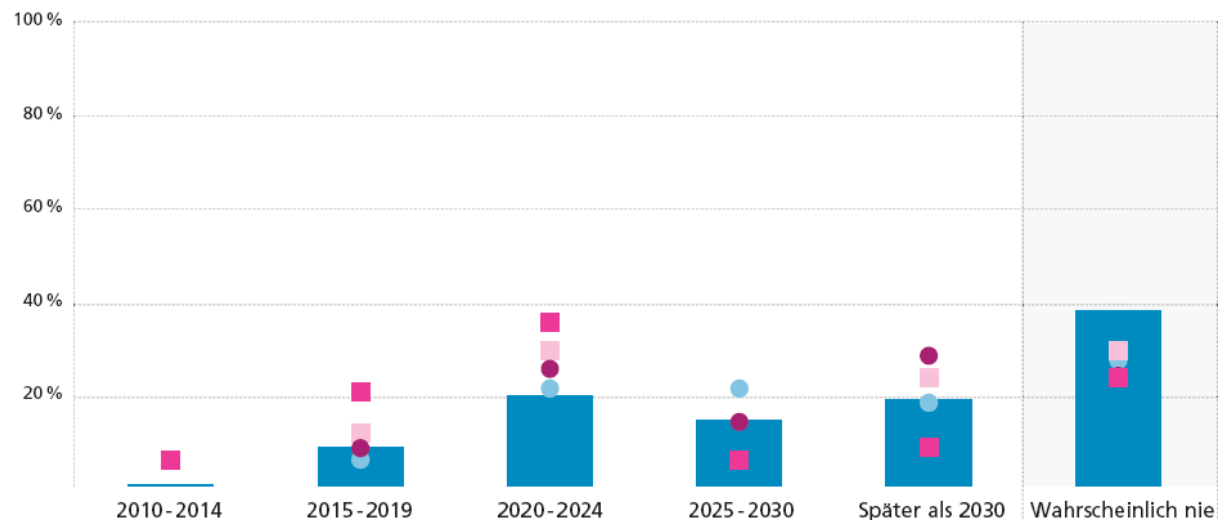
book faire 2009 in Frankfurt as a turning point

All publishing houses agreed on one technical format

Google edition will start e-books in 2010

„Will the e-book become the standard publication form?“

„Yes, in 2024“ (20 %), No, probably never“ (40 %)



## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

DFG

Max-Planck-  
Gesellschaft

Helmholtz-  
Gemeinschaft

Deutsche  
Rektorenkon-  
ferenz

Volkswagen-  
Stiftung



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Open Access information platform. The browser window title is "Informationsplattform Open Access: Homepage - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows "http://open-access.net/de\_en/homepage/". The page features a yellow header with the "open access" logo and navigation links: "About | Advisory Board | Contact | Sitemap | Legal notice". A search bar is located in the top right of the header.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- GENERAL INFORMATION:** Includes links for "What does Open Access mean?", "Pros and cons of Open Access", "Business models", "Legal issues", and "FAQ".
- OPEN ACCESS IN INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLINES:** A dropdown menu with "select" as the current selection.
- USEFUL INFORMATION FOR:** Lists various roles and organizations such as "Authors", "Journal editors", "Repository operators", "University management", "Libraries", "Research funders", and "Publishers".
- INFORMATION ON OA BY:** Lists organizations like "Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft", "Helmholtz Association", "Leibniz Association", and "Max Planck Society".
- Home:** A central section with a "Welcome to the information platform open-access.net!" message. It explains the platform's mission to meet the growing demand for open access information and provides contact information for user feedback.
- International Open Access Week:** Announces the event from October 19-23, 2009, and provides a link to the overview.
- Open Access Days:** Announces the event at the University of Konstanz on October 7-8, 2009, and provides a link to the mailing list.
- NEWS:** A list of recent news items, including "Bundestagspetition für Open Access" (2009-11-10), "PEER: Report on deposit workflow online" (2009-11-04), "DINI Annual Conference 2009: Presentation materials now online" (2009-11-04), "New Knowledge database for copyright" (2009-11-04), and "SWR2 radio feature on knowledge in the public domain" (2009-11-04).

At the bottom right, there are links for "News - Archive" and "RSS Feed".

## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

**Academic publishing houses: average print run for monographs:**

1990	1200 copies
2000	480 copies

**Libraries:**

**Less monographs and less money for monographs, more journals and more money for journals especially in the STM-sector**

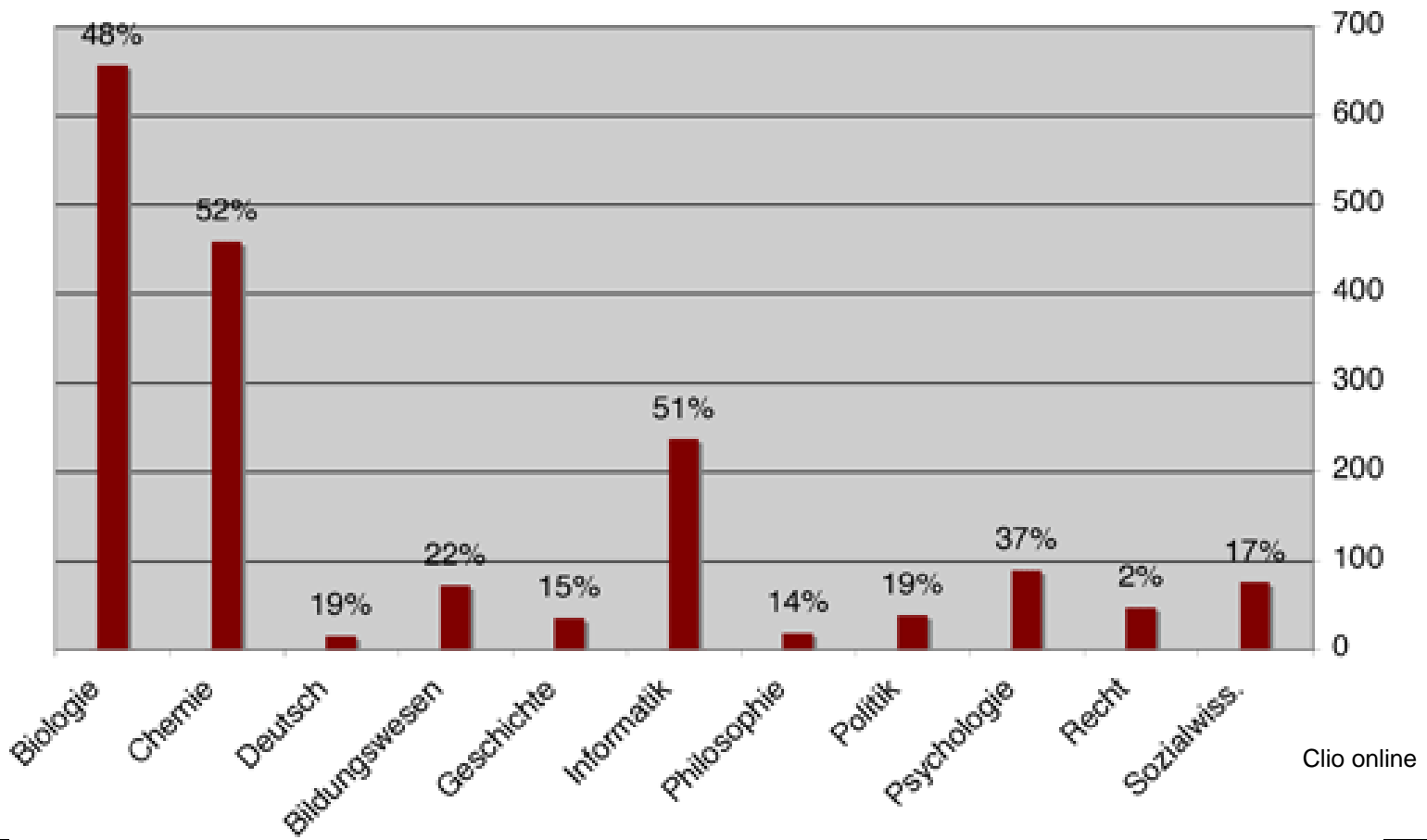
**From 1988 to 1998 university libraries in Bavaria:**

- **minus 27.18 % monographs**
- **minus 2% expenses for monographs**
- **plus 200 % expenses for journals**



## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

### On-line Dissertations 2004



## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

### Arguments in favor of ‚Open Access‘:

- **Increased visibility**
- **Fast and easy access to information**
- **High findability via search engines**
- **Successful application: dictionaries, encyclopedia, text editions**
- **New digital resources in the humanities**
- **Why pay for research results financed by the tax payer and non-commercial resources?**

## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

### Doubts about ‚Open Access‘:

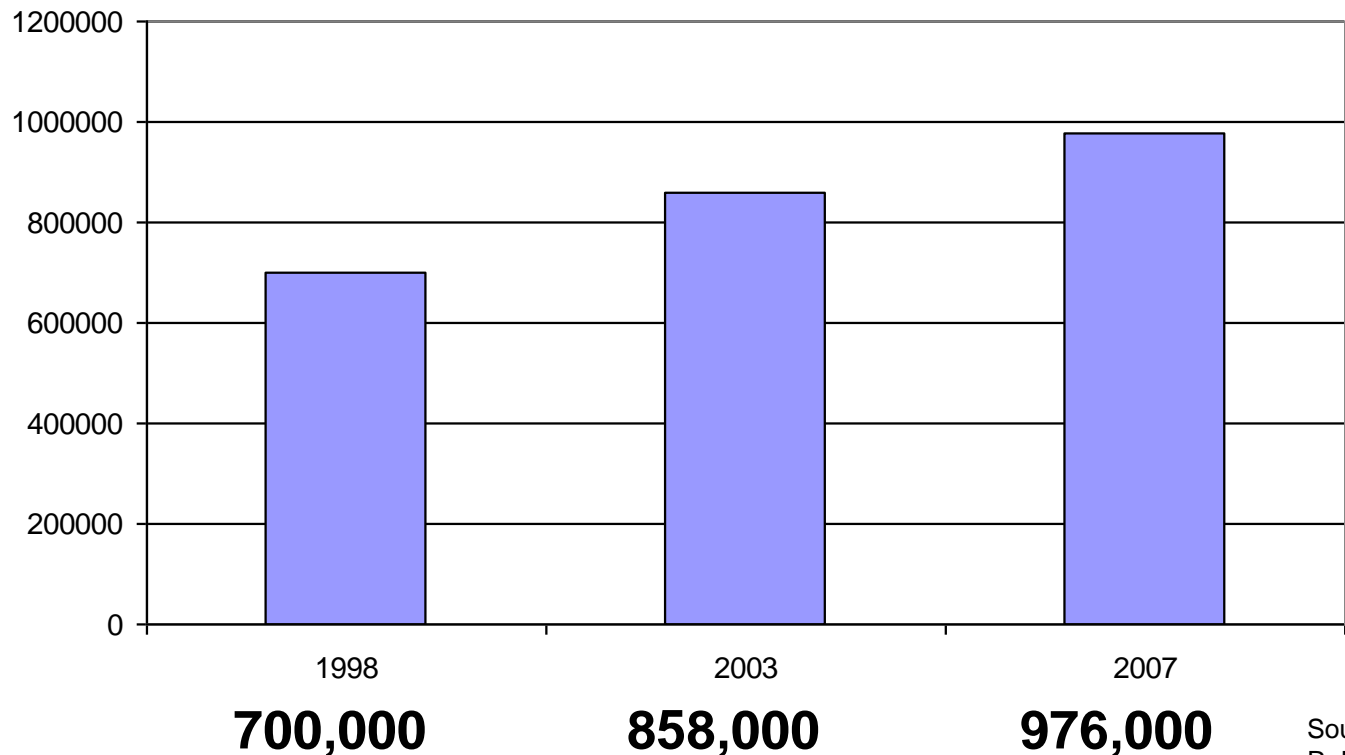
- **Quality issues**
- **Long term storage**
- **Need for public, non-commercial infrastructure**
- **Legal concerns**
- **Reading habits**
  
- **Who is the audience?**



Louvre: „Hymn to Iddin-Dagan, king of Larsa“. Sumerian Stone Inscription, ca. 1950 BC.

## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

### Book production worldwide - new titles per year



Source:  
R. Darnton



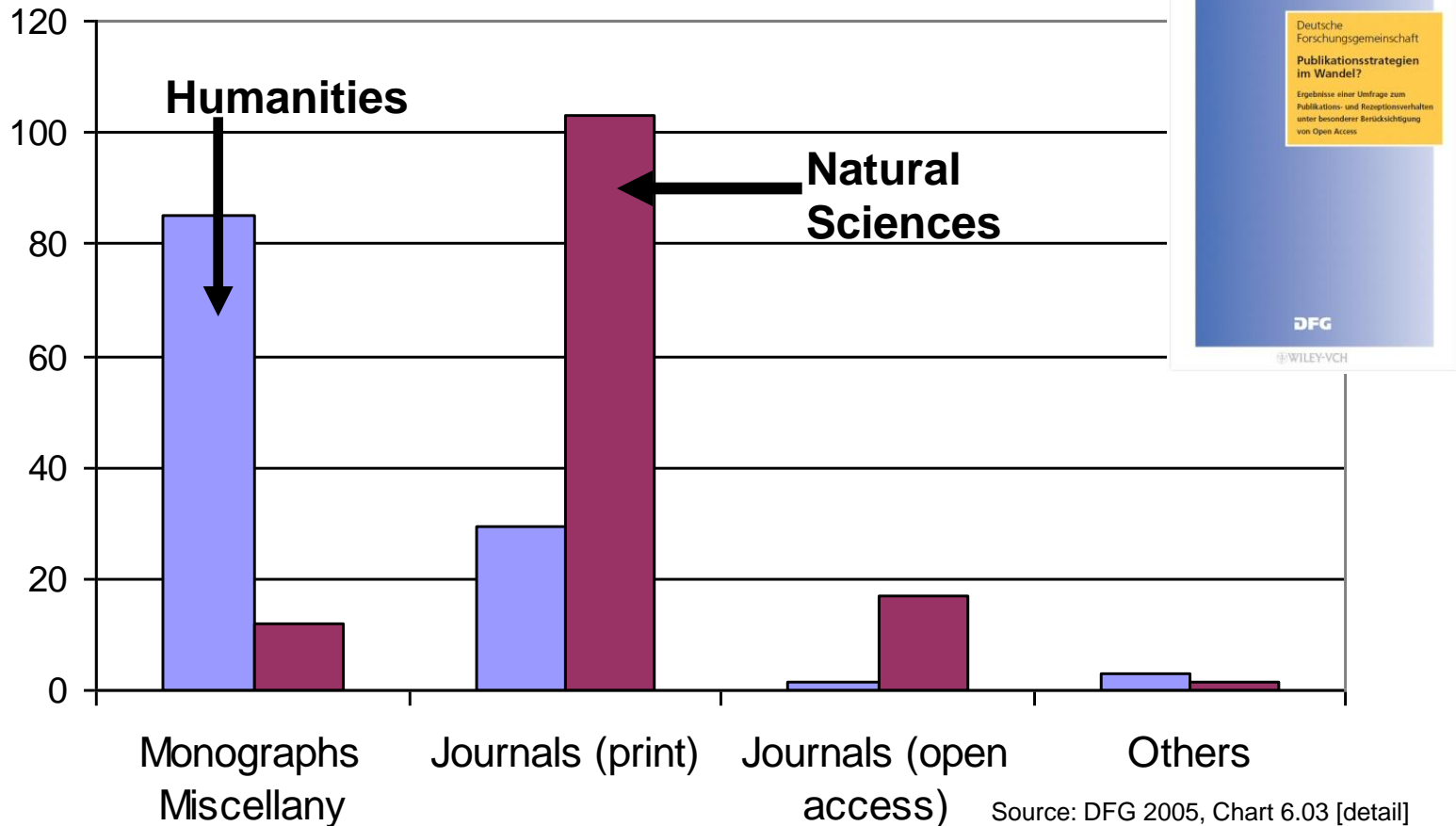
## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

### Book market turnover

<b>USA</b>	<b>25 Billion Dollar</b>
<b>Europe</b>	<b>23 Billion EURO</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>9.6 Billion EURO</b>

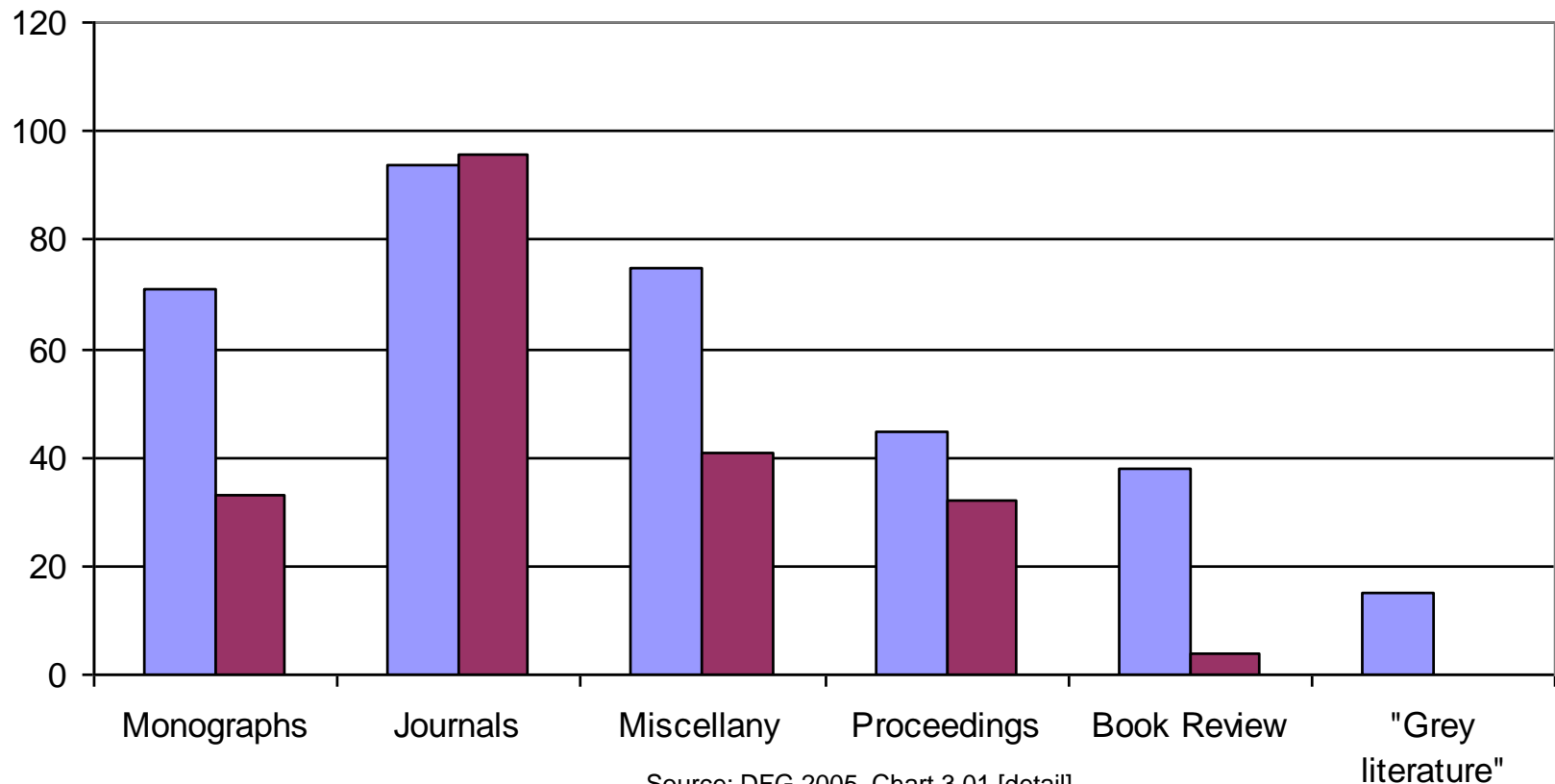
## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

For which purpose did you use the DFG publishing grant?  
(multiple answers possible)



## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

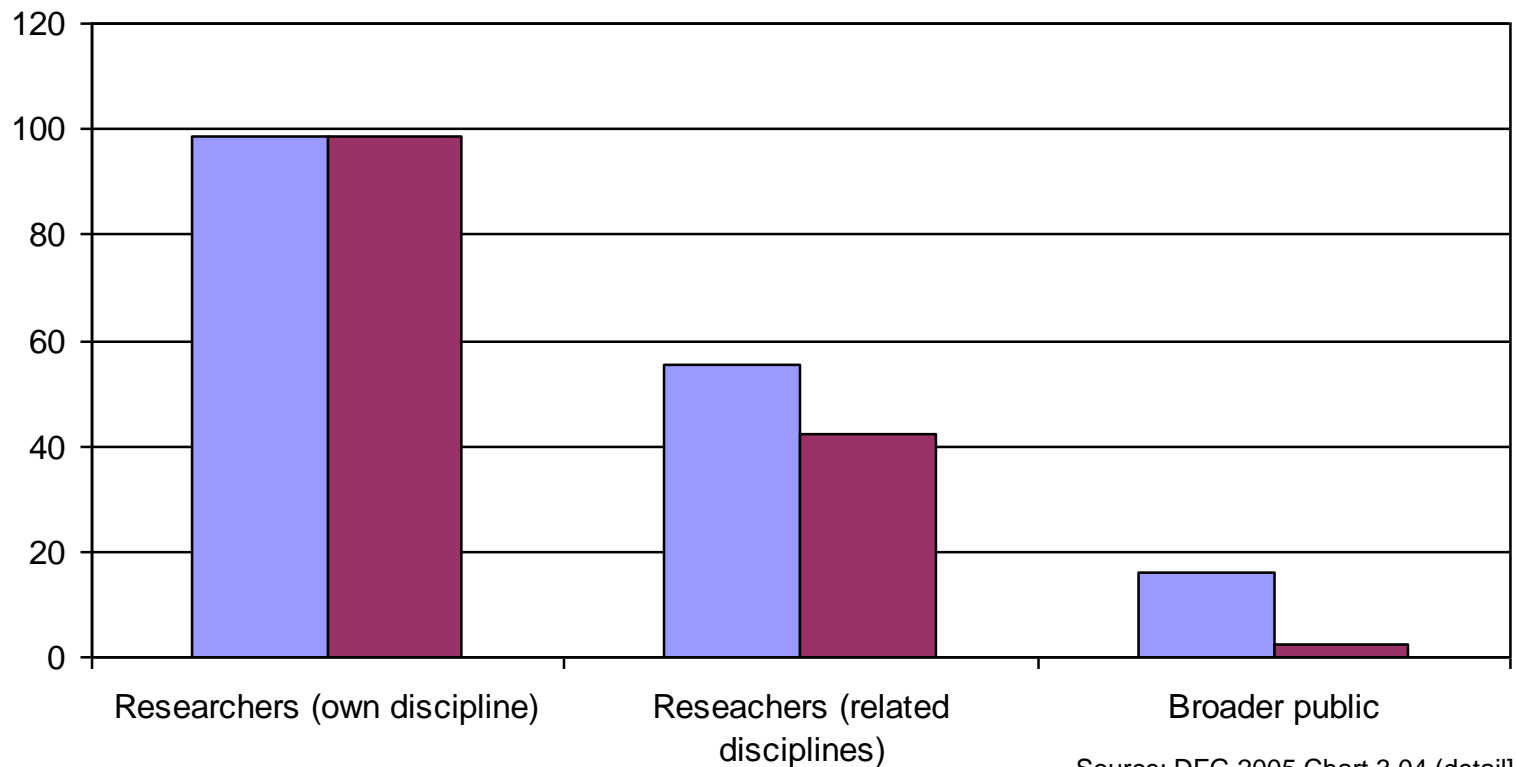
**Which form of publication do you use very often or often to keep yourself informed in your field?** (multiple answers possible)



Source: DFG 2005, Chart 3.01 [detail]

## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

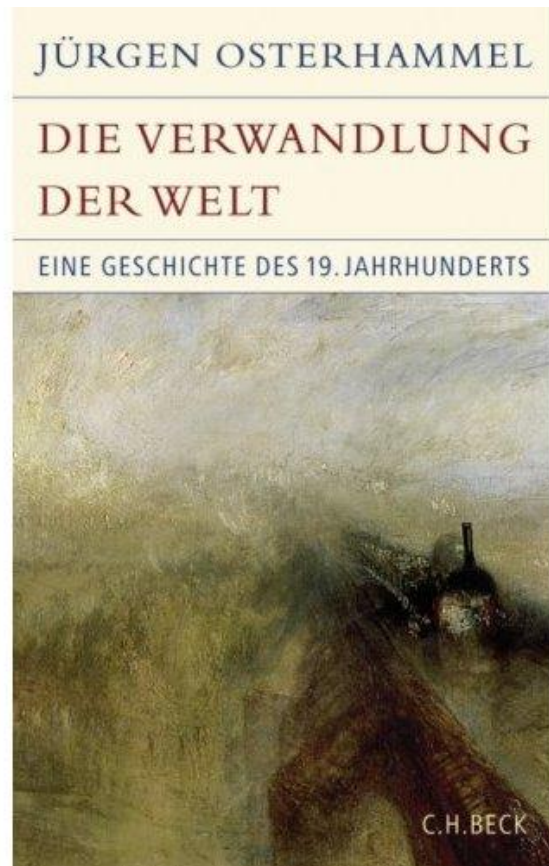
Who is the main audience of your publication?



Source: DFG 2005 Chart 3.04 (detail)



## 2. The paper-digital paradigm shift



**„Jürgen Osterhammel gewinnt  
NDR Kultur Sachbuchpreis“**

**Prize Non-Fiction 2009 NDR  
Kultur**

**October 25th, 2009**



### **3. „opus magnum“ – „Pro Geisteswissenschaften“**

**A funding opportunity for researchers in the humanities working at German universities**



### **3. „opus magnum“ – „Pro Geisteswissenschaften“**

- **Objective: to give professors in Germany the opportunity to write their „opus magnum“ by providing an „extra sabbatical“**
- **Duration: between 6 months and two years**
- **The foundations cover the costs of substitute teaching**



### **3. „opus magnum“ – „Pro Geisteswissenschaften“**

**What is an „opus magnum“?**

**„a substantial scientific publication which – thanks to its quality and originality – has a significant impact on the development of the respective academic discipline and beyond“**

**Please note:**

- **no restriction to print form**
- **no publishing grant**



### **3. „opus magnum” - performing excellence in the humanities**

**5 hypotheses:**

**(1) Peer review as quality assurance instrument:  
2-level peer review process (contest)**

**➤ Applications**

**➤ 2 individual written assessments**

**➤ Steering committee: comparative review**

**➤ Decision**

### **3. „opus magnum” - performing excellence in the humanities**

#### **(2) Sustainability issue:**

**Interest in long-term storage of books due  
to the „half-life“ of knowledge in the humanities**

<b>Classical Philology:</b>	<b>20 years</b>
<b>Physics:</b>	<b>4.7 years</b>
<b>Medicine:</b>	<b>3.5 years</b>

### **3. „opus magnum” - performing excellence in the humanities**

**(3) Text genre issue:**

**Monograph as an extended publication form  
corresponds to the epistemic aspect of  
research in the „Geisteswissenschaften“:**

**Natural sciences: publication as a „container“  
of existing findings**

**Humanities: publication as a foundation for and  
constitution of the argumentation itself**

### 3. „opus magnum” - performing excellence in the humanities



**(4) consequence: academic perception  
„first book, then journal“**

### 3. “opus magnum” - performing excellence in the humanities

#### (5) Language issue:

Styles of thinking and language are so inextricably intertwined that only the writing in your mother tongue guarantees the quality of your thoughts and argumentation.

„In which language do you publish?“

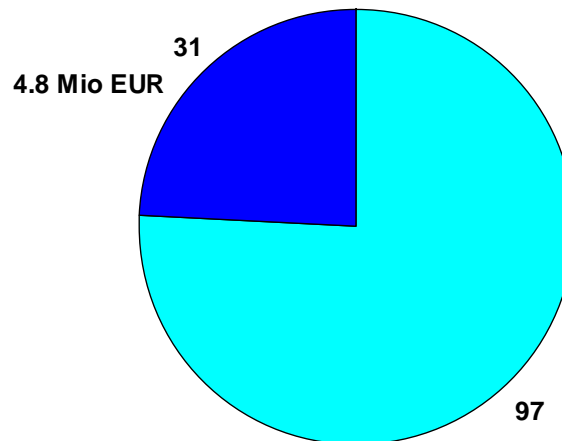
	Humanities	Natural Sciences
German	59.7	7.9
English	36.1	91.9

### 3. „opus magnum” – facts and figures

- **Number of grants (as of 11/2009): 31**
- **Percentage of granted applications:**

opus magnum  
Decisions 2006 - 2009

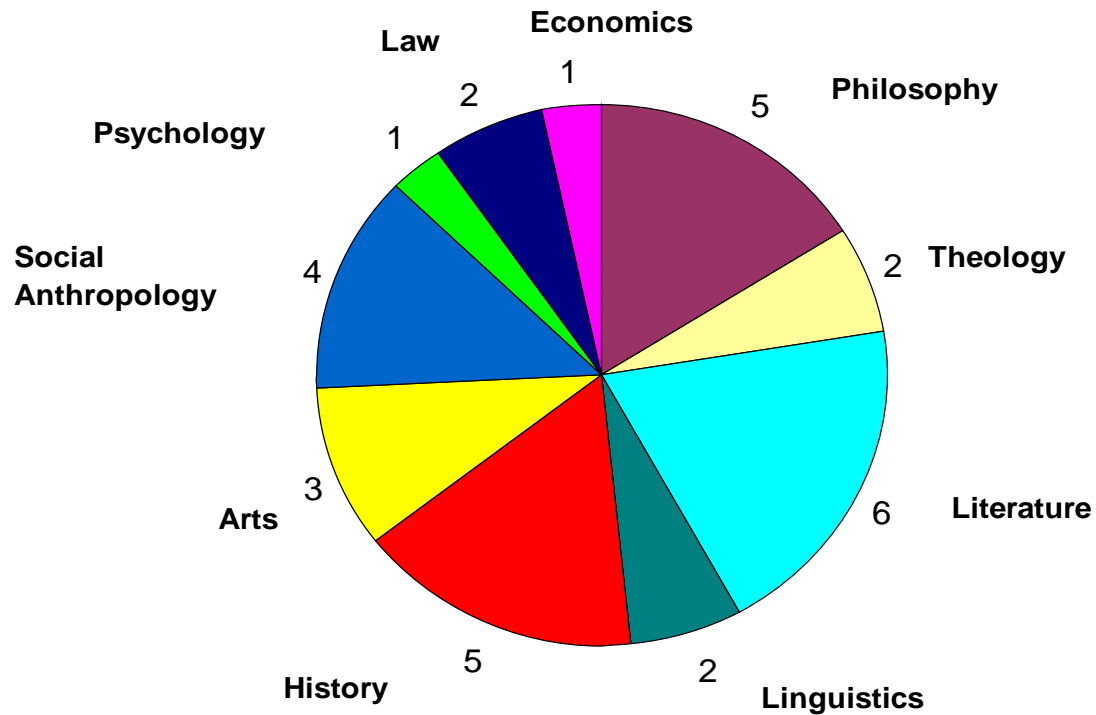
Grants



Rejections

### 3. „opus magnum” – facts and figures

#### Distribution of disciplines:



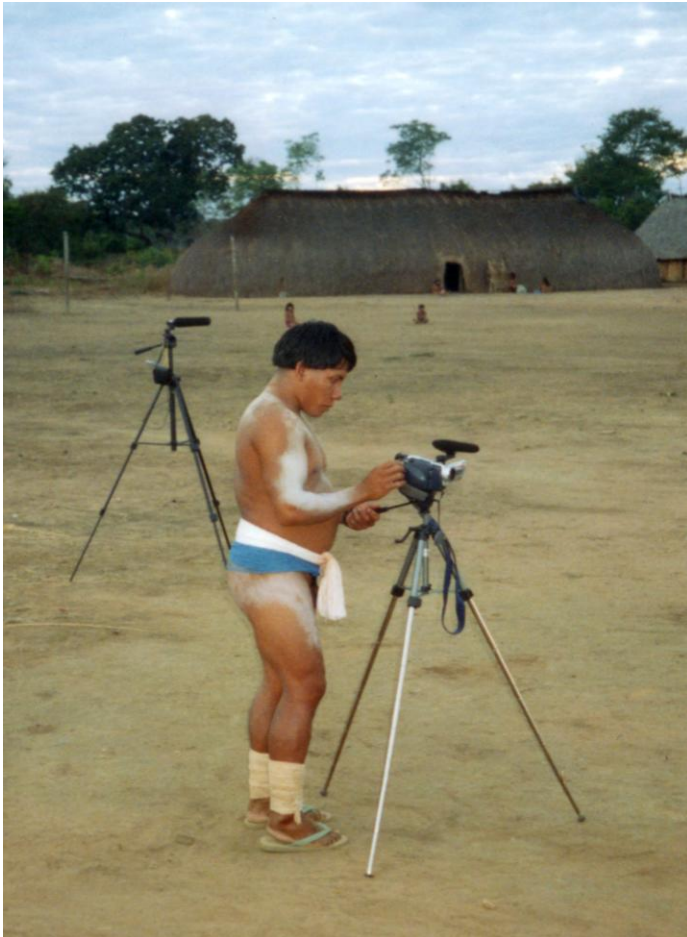


### 3. “opus magnum” - facts and figures

- **Pending applications: 18  
(decisions March 2010)**
- **until today:  
not a single appli-  
cation for an ,Open  
Access‘ publication!**



## 4. The DobeS Funding Initiative „Documentation of Endangered Languages“



**Objective:**

**Multimedia documentation  
of endangered languages**

## 4. The DobeS Funding Initiative „Documentation of Endangered Languages“

A digital archive containing multimedia sources

Added value to any printed documentation:

- Raw data in multiple formats (see + hear)
- annotation tiers
- cyclic linking to different resources: dictionary, indigenous knowledge, etc.



## 4. The DobeS Funding Initiative

### The DOBES World





## **5. Towards a future of media diversity**

**We stand for diversity in media usage –  
Against homogeneity and in favour of  
plurimediality:**

- **Monograph as extended publication form**
- **e-journals for international visibility and quick access**

## **5. Towards a future of media diversity**

**Key issues today:**

**Knowledge or Information ?**

**Reading/understanding or data mining ?**

**Sustainability or quick access ?**

**Key issues for tomorrow:**

**How will the media-use habits change in society  
and in research?**



**Thank you for your kind attention!**

[www.volkswagenstiftung.de](http://www.volkswagenstiftung.de)





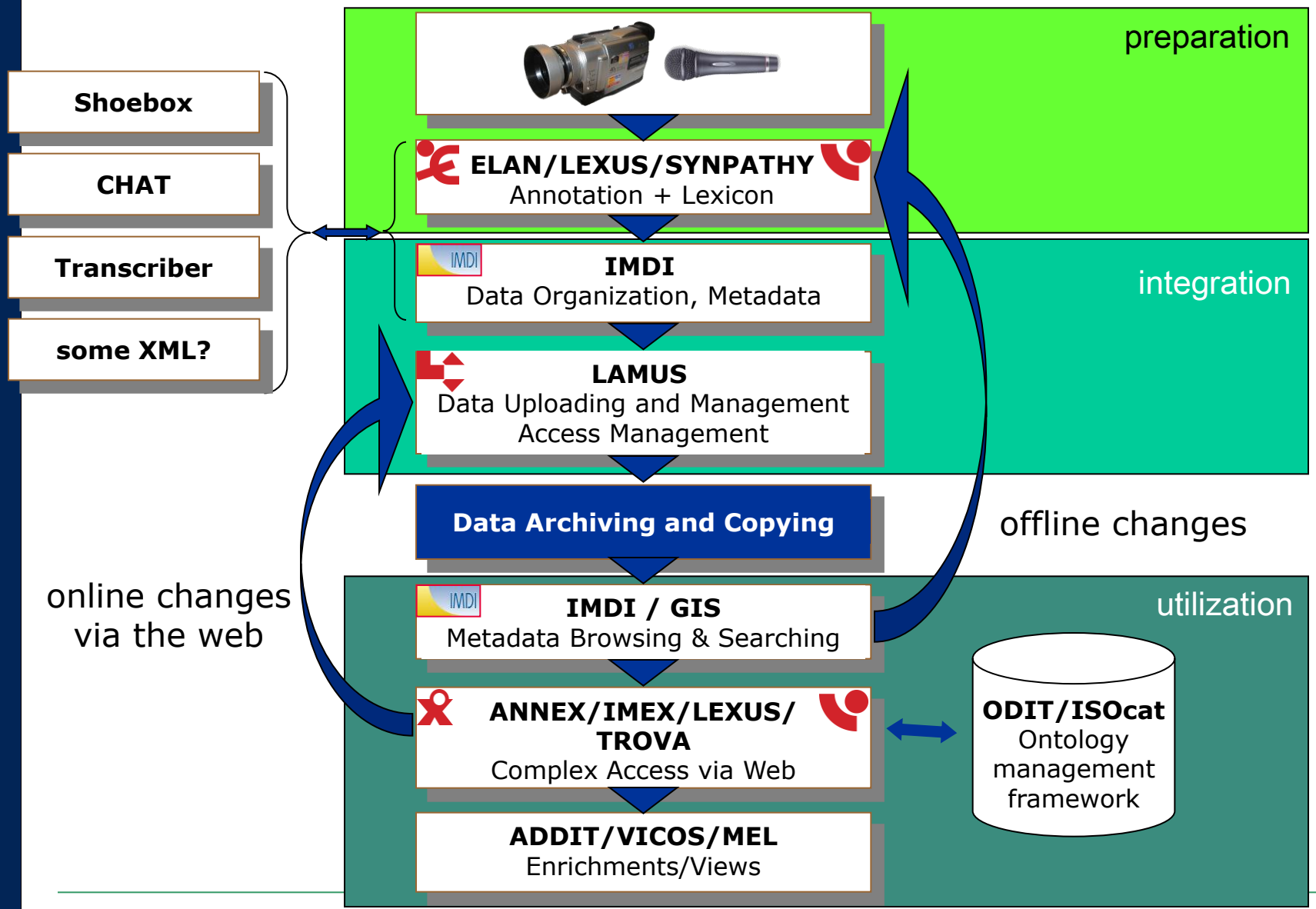




## **5. "Deutsch plus" – a program for multilingualism in teaching and research**

### **Four components:**

- **multilingual study courses**
- **Conferences and discussions**
- **Research projects**
- **Translation of outstanding German academic books in any main language of the world: English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic..**



## 3. „Pro Geisteswissenschaften“ – Dilthey Fellowships

- Funding opportunity for postdocs in the humanities working at German universities
- Themes that open up new avenues of research in the humanities
- Funding scope: 5 + 3 years
- max 5 years after PhD award

