Performing Excellence in the Humanities

- 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

Source: EIAA Mediascope 2008
2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

European internet users – % ratio of activities

- Keep in touch with friends / relatives: 73%
- Book holidays / travel arrangements: 54%
- Choose better products or services: 51%
- Manage finances: 46%
- Access health information: 42%
- Access local government information: 39%
- Keep up to date with environmental issues: 35%
- Better equip yourself for lifestyle changes: 19%
- Engage with government or political parties: 14%
- Give to charity: 12%
- Net: Lifestyle management: 83%

* 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.

Source: EIAA Mediascope 2008
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
2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

Academic publishing houses: average print run for monographs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Print Run</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1200 copies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>480 copies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Inscirption, ca. 1950 BC.
2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

Book production worldwide - new titles per year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>858,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>976,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: R. Darnton
2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

Book market turnover

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>25 Billion Dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>23 Billion EURO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>9.6 Billion EURO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. The paper-digital paradigm shift

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

- Humanities
- Natural Sciences

Source: DFG 2005, Chart 6.03 [detail]
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

Classical Philology: 20 years
Physics: 4.7 years
Medicine: 3.5 years

Heinz Hauffe 1995
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?“

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Natural Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DFG 2005, chart 3.05 [detail]
3. „opus magnum” – facts and figures

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

```
opus magnum
Decisions 2006 - 2009

31
97
```

- Grants: 4.8 Mio EUR
- Rejections: 97
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 application 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
5. "Deutsch plus" – a program for multilingualism in teaching and research

Following the idea of multilingualism this initiative seeks to attract more international attention

- to German as a language of science and
- to lend more weight to research findings obtained in the German language.
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