Sharing Knowledge: How the Internet is Fueling Change in Anthropology

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Abstract

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Online publishing options are transforming the ways academics create and share their work. Looking at the history of anthropology, academic journals fostered specialized audiences, and within the discipline there is a desire, even an ethical obligation, to incorporate or at least disseminate their work to, different audiences. Following these disciplinary directions onto the Internet, this research explores anthropology in public, where researchers work openly online, and public anthropology, where researchers target audiences outside academia. Open Access publishing works to remove price barriers to academic research, but because it is focused on peer reviewed articles published in academic journals, the intended audience of academic work doesn't change. It is anthropology in public. Some anthropologists desire a more radical change, and they are working outside peer reviewed presses to target new audiences. They have different reasons for doing this. One reason is to get feedback from outside the discipline. Openly accessible documents created using blogs, Twitter and other social media, are important collaborative tools that can engage new participants in the research process. Finally it touches on how these changes raise a number of issues related to public visibility. In this way this research explores how the Internet is fueling change within the discipline of anthropology.

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I. Introduction

With the Internet anthropologists are reaching new audiences and improving the dissemination of their work. Articles and books published through scholarly presses were once the best ways to disseminate academic research, but now with the Internet this isn't entirely true. Open access publishing, self-archiving, and even self-publishing can disseminate research better than the most prestigious anthropology journals. Established journals, not blind to this issue, are changing the ways they generate revenue from publishing research. There are alternatives to the reader-pays model which restricts access to a select few. But the Internet, beyond transforming the ways anthropologists disseminate their work between each other, has had more profound significance for engaging anthropology outside its traditional audiences. For many anthropologists, new online spaces have reinvigorated the discipline, providing opportunities to reach new audiences, to incorporate new participants, and to present anthropological research in entirely new ways. Blogs, Twitter feeds, Facebook and other social media are quickly being integrated into scholarly practices. By participating online in the anthropology blogosphere, writing “openly”, this research has experimented with the ways blogs and other social media can be used to collaboratively engage participants in the research process.

Online public conversations and interactions have informed much of the research presented here, and there is debate as to how this is ethnographic. Is it

ethnography, or is it textual analysis? To put into words experiences foreign and unknown has been a challenge of ethnographers, but this tale is not about the exotic, nor the foreign – at least not to me. This is a story about my engagement in online spaces as an anthropology student. Over the past few years I have met, argued with, and befriended numerous anthropologists. I even upset a few. I did this without meeting them all face to face and in many cases it will be impossible for me to tell you how beautiful, how old, or even what sex, the people I met were. Yet this has been an ethnographic project and without ever having set eyes on these people, without shaking hands, I have interacted with them. I know these people as much (and little) as I know others, only in this case I got to know them online, interacting through publicly accessible discussions on blogs. Through these readings and interactions I have come to appreciate the discipline of anthropology differently as I can say I feel closer to debates at the heart of the discipline, having engaged researchers and professors in ways I would never have had opportunity given the structures of a classroom. These experiences and interactions have informed an academic exercise which seeks to answer the question "how is the Internet fueling change in anthropology?". While I will try not to embellish by making my everyday interactions exotic, I do hope that the ethnographic style in which I present my research can help those unaccustomed to anthropologists, or to online interaction, understand their potentials and pitfalls better. For those already native to the Internet, or at least parts of it, then I hope this ethnographic style makes the report more pleasurable to read.

This research builds on online interactions, on participation in the English language blogosphere and various social media websites, and it discusses those experiences in relation to broader discussions of academic discipline and the creation and distribution of anthropological knowledge. This study does not deal with peoples lack of access to the Internet, but it does pay attention to the boundaries academics create and re-create online, particularly in terms of the political-economy of academic publishing and the issues involved in making knowledge accessible online. It is also a self-reflexive study that explores the challenges and opportunities that come with doing ethnography with the Internet. In this way this research explores how the Internet is fueling change in anthropology, looking at how anthropologists create and share their work in the era of "one click publishing". Through online participation, a few interviews and a small survey, this research has explored how blogs and other social media can be used during the research process, and in particular how these new publishing strategies can answer certain issues of collaboration and representation. Finally, as an ethnographic project it explores methods of participating in and engaging with, online communities - in this case that of English writing anthropology bloggers. Unlike traditional ethnographic projects, as it has progressed aspects of this research have been shared publicly on a blog, open to the thoughts and opinions of anyone online. The blog has served as a field site created to invite collaborators to share their perspectives, and in doing so it has explored a new way to engage people in the research process.

Section one explores the historical foundations of anthropology looking at how it became a distinct social science discipline. It looks at anthropology's colonial roots, how it has been institutionalized, and how problems with these institutional structures have led some to advocate for change. Born within colonialism, anthropology was always a form of political engagement and how anthropologists should engage politically has been the subject of much debate. From science to art and back again, anthropologists and the subjects of their research have questioned the purpose and goals of their academic pursuits. Whose interests does the research serve? It is an acknowledgment of the disciplines ties to power which motivate an ongoing search for more collaborative research methods. These debates are the theoretical inspiration behind the thesis and they frame the observations and analysis throughout.

Laying out the method behind the research, section two looks at ethnographic method and the Internet, particularly the challenges ethnographers have encountered experimenting with and justifying online research methods. It looks at how blogs and publicly accessible online documents and discussion can be created and used in a research context, and how they can be of benefit to anthropologists and others. It also shows how writing can be an interactive and iterative process that challenges conceptions of ethnographic engagement.

With both inspiration and method addressed, section three takes us out into the "open", looking at Open Access publishing and blogging. Given the changing audiences of anthropological research, how are anthropologists using

the Internet to disseminate their work? The Open Access movement works to break down price barriers to peer reviewed research by making it freely accessible online. It promotes peer reviewed research by making it easier for interested parties to find and read it. Why publish work in an academic journal that restricts its readership to a fraction of its possible academic audience? As the Open Access movement asks, are scholars not meant to share their insights as broadly as possible (Willinsky 2006)? Now able to share work more easily online than through scholarly associations and their peer reviewed presses, academics are often forced into a decision between accessibility and prestige. The choice can be between long established journals and their associated subscription fee, or Open Access alternatives which often have less established reputations (although there are a few long standing journals that have, or plan to, move to an Open Access publishing model). A third option, self-archiving, provides a middle road that encourages authors who publish in pay-to-access journals, to retain the rights to share that work on a website or in a self-archiving repository. In this way Open Access publishing leverages the Internet to make work easier to find and access while promoting academic peer review.

The audience of anthropological work becomes an important focal point of this study as the exploration of "openness" online develops. Turning away from the Open Access movement and access to peer reviewed articles, we move to the unrefereed free for all that has manifested in the English writing "blog-sphere". At first the use of a website as a personal self-publishing platform,

blogging has since become a genre of communication in itself. Blogging software makes it easy to publish on the Internet with very little technical expertise. Where the academic publishing process can take years, blogging and other online tools allow anthropologists to share information in seconds, to a greater number of researchers as well as to different audiences. This new publishing environment reinvigorates a number of debates in anthropology. Anthropologists are now able to make their work more accessible but they ask how or if they even should. What do anthropologists have to gain working outside the traditional academic presses? Among cries for a more public presence are the rather small group of English writing anthropology bloggers that became subjects of this study. This thesis examines who anthropology bloggers are writing for, while also exploring the ways anthropology bloggers engage with their audiences. Is anthropology to be written for anthropologists or might others find interest? Is it a form of public engagement? These questions lead up to a final discussion as to whether or not blogging anthropology is "anthropology done in public" or "public anthropology".

In conclusion new forms of academic expression renew debates surrounding the purposes and goals of academic research. Who are anthropologists writing for, and why? Are pieces created for a popular audience valid scholarship? Is a blog? A Twitter feed? Blogging and other social media tools, as will be shown, provide a new publishing strategy that promote ongoing dialogue while building a community of collaborators around particular interests. Looking at Wallerstein et al. (1996) calls to "open the social sciences", the fluid

networks established by scholars online foster multidisciplinary communities that are able to address timely issues in ways traditional journals and academic conferences have not. Finally the rapid growth and adoption of blogs and other self-publishing platforms by anthropologists has created an interesting vantage point from which to evaluate academic publishing and research strategies, and it has provided room for anthropologists to experiment. As Hine (2005:9) writes, new technologies can provide a fresh lens from which to examine taken for granted practices.

II. A changing anthropology

> ‘Hey great to see you! Nice tan! I’m happy you are back!”
>
> ‘Thanks!’
>
> ‘Where did you go?’
>
> ‘Mexico’
>
> ‘Oh wow, what a great place for an anthropology project.’
>
> ‘Umm.. yeah… well Mexico wasn’t really the ‘place’ for my anthropology project… I just had to get away… my project is on how academics share and make knowledge accessible online. You know, like open access publishing, blog…’
>
> She looked at me for a brief second, then cut me off while looking at her friend, “Owen is soooooo funny.”
>
> Turning back to me she excused herself, “I’m so glad you’re back. Your tan looks great! I have class and have to go. Message me k? Bye.”
>
> ‘Umm.. yeah… see ya soon I guess.’ I replied. Not surprised at her reaction I could have expected to be cut off sooner. I always ran into trouble describing exactly what it was I studied, especially to friends and relatives who had never heard of cultural anthropology. I made a mental note to keep such descriptions as brief as possible.

Research into the Internet was already old news. “You are still talking about Facebook?” she and others might think. But she hadn’t spent years reading anthropology essays – investing energy in the oddest of debates which give life to this story. Part of what makes this research interesting is how it is an anthropology project at all, given its extraordinary subject, that of anthropologists and the Internet. To explain this we must first engage with a rather prickly subject - that of defining anthropology - a question one might assume simple for a

graduate student, but like the world around it anthropology has always been changing and with these changes it has become an increasingly difficult discipline to define. The following chapter explores a few significant changes in anthropology that have shaped the way anthropologists create and disseminate their work online. In particular, it explores how the intended audience of anthropological work has changed such that non-anthropologists might be interested in anthropology, and how even prior to the Internet, some anthropologists had been trying to disseminate anthropology beyond the university, as part of escaping the disciplines scientistic mold.

Anthropology - what is it?

Anthropology is an eclectic discipline that has come to cover numerous areas of interest. Originating with the extremely broad definition of the scientific study of mankind, anthropology has since taken on a range of positions and specializations. This research focuses on cultural or social anthropology. At Concordia University anthropology is taught alongside sociology with numerous courses being listed under both, but it is often taught alongside archeology, biological anthropology, and linguistic anthropology, in the "four fields approach", popular in the United States. It is practiced and taught in different ways; as a science, as an art, and/or as something in between. These approaches push the discipline in different directions and in this way the focuses and interests of anthropologists vary, sometimes substantially. So as to not trick you into

believing my words let us instead look briefly to descriptions given by others. Talal Asad writes:

> When Evans-Pritchard published his well-known *Introduction to Social Anthropology* in 1951, it seemed reasonably clear what the subject was about. "The social anthropologist", he explained, 'studies primitive societies directly, living among them for months or years, whereas sociological research is usually from documents and largely statistical. The social anthropologist studies societies as wholes – he studies their oecologies, their economics, their legal and political institutions, their family and kinship organizations, their religions, their technologies, their arts, etc. as parts of general social systems.' The doctrines and approaches that went by the name of functionalism thus gave social anthropology an assured and coherent style...
>
> Today by contrast even this coherence of style is absent. The anthropologist is now someone who studies societies both 'simple' and 'complex'; resorts to participant observation, statistical techniques, historical archives and other literary sources; finds himself intellectually closer to economists or political scientists or psycho-analysts or structural linguistics or animal behaviorists than he does to other anthropologists. (Asad 1973:10)

Within this diversity there is much debate as to the goals and directions of anthropology, which makes sense given the general nature of research. It requires that researchers adapt methods and approaches to new settings. But what defines the discipline of anthropology today?

Less distance same difference

If it is understood by many that anthropological fieldwork can be done by a Canadian in Mexico, the same cannot be said of a Canadian doing anthropological research online and at home. Is it still anthropology when you are discussing the online practices of those around you? As the brief tale of entry introduced, anthropology is a broadly defined discipline that often requires a lot of careful contextualizing. The following section introduces a discipline divided in its

directions - a reality that manifests itself just as clearly in online public spaces as it is does reading through peer reviewed publications.

Some feel anthropology should be practiced afar, stressing the importance of long-term fieldwork and the ability of an outsider to make different observations than an insider (Borneman 1995). Yet others argue that the boundary dividing "us" and "others" is impossible and/or impractical to draw. People do not conform to neat and natural boundaries, nor do research questions. As such, anthropologists have returned from their niche, the far off field, to practice at home:

> On sheer empirical grounds, the differences between Western and Non-Western societies are blurrier than ever before. Anthropology's answer to this ongoing transformation has been typically ad hoc and haphazard. The criteria according to which certain populations are deemed legitimate objects of research continue to vary with departments, with granting agencies, with practitioners and even with the mood shifts of individual researchers. Amid the confusion, more anthropologists reenter the West cautiously, through the back door, after paying their dues elsewhere. By and large this reentry is no better theorized than were previous departures for faraway lands. (Trouillot 2003:9)

Anthropology is now about “here” and “there”. Not only are “... the differences between Western and Non-Western societies” quite blurry, but so too is “sameness” at home. Let's accept then, that anthropology is practiced differently at different times within different academic institutions, by different anthropologists. Where anthropologists were once focused on remote, non-European societies, contemporary practice has changed. The scientific study of people, where anthropologists were keen to take scientific measurements of peoples skull size to determine their evolutionary advancement and place in

nature (Rainger 1978:53), is now the "study of [hu]mankind", defined appropriately by Wikipedia (and adjusted for gender bias by a blog reader named "Socect").

This change in definition, where "science" isn't mentioned, is reflected in the AAA's recent changes to its "vision" of anthropology, but it is not without controversy. The removal of "science" from this vision created quite the stir online, with some feeling that the AAA had abandoned the goals of science. Responding to an article "Anthropology Without Science" (Berrett 2010) published in Inside Higher Ed, Hugh Gusterston tries to calm a number of upset anthropologists:

> The old wording said "the purposes of the Association shall be to advance anthropology as the science that studies humankind in all its aspects, through archeological, biological, ethnological, and linguistic research; and to further the professional interests of American anthropologists; including the dissemination of anthropological knowledge and its use to solve human problems." The new wording says, 'The purposes of the Association shall be to advance public understanding of humankind in all its aspects. This includes, but is not limited to, archaeological, biological, social, cultural, economic, political, historical, medical, visual, and linguistic anthropological research.' The document goes on to make numerous references to 'anthropological knowledge, expertise, and interpretation.' Fair-minded people will recognize this as a modest change and will see that science is still there in the mission statement (after all, what are biology and archeology if not sciences?) even if the wording has been slightly changed. You would think from some of the hysterical statements here that the AAA had issued a statement condemning science... (Gusterson 2010)

Anthropologists have seemingly pushed against science, arguing that strict scientific goals are inappropriate for conducting human research. But it is not that there is no science in anthropology, but rather that a pure focus on science isn't necessary, and it can even be immoral in the contexts of conducting human research. As important as the goals of pure science are, such as prioritizing

objectivity over biased opinion, anthropologists have found it impossible to distill ethical obligations from their research. It can be more important to engage research morally - prioritizing political, ethical, and other goals over those of ‘pure’ science. This debate, between science and advocacy, has profound implications for understanding what anthropology is, and also for how anthropological knowledge should be disseminated.

In order to locate this project within its disciplinary history, it helps to ask what makes this study about publishing and disseminating academic research, anthropological? Is it enough that it discusses anthropologists? Certainly some anthropologists would argue against this approach. Borneman, when he published his article "Anthropology as Foreign Policy" (1995), at around the same time the Internet was taking off, would have had something to say about this study. He writes:

> Fieldwork among the foreign, not the reading of texts, and not the salvage or preservation of vanishing ethnic identities, remains anthropology’s unique location from which it makes continued contribution to knowledge. Fieldwork offers privileged insights not into already constructed cultural “texts” but into the conditions of possibility of such texts and the processes by which they take on form and meaning. During the course of fieldwork, anthropologists experience the foreign and intergroup relations directly, in an empirical fashion not comparable to experiences in the archives (on the function of hospitality in fieldwork see Herzfeld 1987). Study of written texts and participant-observation are distinct practices that offer different insights. They should not be collapsed together into trendy cultural studies, where they are often used as an alibi by bourgeois academics to avoid the discomforts and uncertainties inherent in face-to-face interaction with strangers. (Borneman 1995:669)

Yet here we are, fifteen years later, with not just an Internet, but numerous Internets, and this anthropological study of anthropology that's largely been done online. As will be developed, new communication technologies have changed the

way people work. Where many anthropologists saw the Internet as an archive of static texts, new generations of researchers are using the Internet to interact and communicate with each other. Contrary to Borneman's argument that "the study of written texts" and "participant-observation" are distinct practices, with new communication tools like blogs and Twitter, online texts become interactive sources for use in research that benefit enormously from the direct participation of the researcher and all involved. This participation is what makes the new mediums effective, in that authors establish more “direct” contact with their audience then they had in the past. The distance between author and reader, given the ability for many to publish ideas rapidly has shrunk, making it possible to engage and be engaged through writing. The interactive and timely character of these communication tools make them ideal for a new kind of ethnographic engagement and in consequence they have challenged conceptions of anthropological research strategies – welcome the Internet ethnographer.

This version of anthropology's history highlights changing research contexts, goals and audiences – alongside which will be introduced the story of an unchanging publishing strategy that doesn't always fit. The need, or at least emphasis, on publishing in professional journals has had the effect of limiting the dissemination, style, and audience of anthropological work. With the Internet however, simpler, quicker, and cheaper publishing options provide anthropologists the ability to experiment with different writing styles and to foster different standards of presentation and consumption. But one significant change

these new communication tools bring is that they bypass a longstanding system of peer review. And while bypassing peer review prior to sharing and communicating ideas, it also greatly improves the dissemination of anthropological ideas. Another consequence is that anthropologists working online end up representing themselves in “public” instead of leaving the job up to journalists and others. Yes, the Internet is fueling change in the way anthropologists disseminate their work.

But as nice as it sounds to say the Internet changed anthropology, the truth is that it is an academic discipline that has always been changing, with or without the Internet. So before we answer the question "how is the Internet fueling change in anthropology?" let us dig deeper into the history of anthropology, to better understand the pressures and motivations that have pushed anthropology to change, and later to explore how the Internet has provided fuel and opportunity for these particular pressures. It is important to note that the following history of anthropology presented is highly selective, touching on specific breaking points in the discipline that have ended up pushing anthropologists to write for different audiences. As will be shown, anthropology is not only done for anthropologists, even if anthropological journals are. And while obvious to those who have studied anthropology, it might help to note that the following section makes no attempt to represent the discipline as a whole. There are many who will disagree with the positions raised below, but what is important

is that these positions exist, and that within anthropology there are a number of pressures for change that had been brewing prior to the Internet.

Ethnocentrism

The academic discipline of anthropology was born within the contexts of European exploration and the subsequent colonization and exploitation of the newly discovered world. Anthropology was the scientific study of the discovered 'others", and it was to a militarily dominant and colonizing Europe that anthropology was first in service. Colonization, empire, and the expansion of European powers made and for some continue to make the discipline relevant. Erickson and Murphy write:

> No other event in history was as significant for anthropology as the voyages of geographical discovery. The voyages put Europeans in contact with the kinds of people anthropologists now study. They also launched the era of global domination of aboriginal societies by Europeans, and the associated eras of colonialism, imperialism, and slavery, with which anthropology has, justly or unjustly, been associated ever since. (Erickson and Murphy 1998:27)

European exploration and conquest facilitated anthropology while a belief in the superiority of scientific methods over other ways of knowing entitled European social scientists to study other cultures. The scientists gaze was directed outward and the commentary was directed inward. This structure of a European center and a non-European periphery came to define anthropological research. European anthropologists, wrote in European journals, about non-Europeans. In this way anthropologists worked within the goals and aspirations of European society. Consequently, as the goals and aspirations of European society have

since come to be questioned, so too have the goals and aspirations of anthropologists. Wallerstein writes:

> Social science emerged in response to European problems, at a point in history when Europe dominated the whole world-system. It was virtually inevitable that its choice of subject matter, its theorizing, its methodology, and its epistemology all reflected the constraints of the crucible within which it was formulated. (Wallerstein 1999:169)

As the world around anthropology has changed so too has the discipline of anthropology and the interests' of anthropologists. Many seek to reformulate and even decolonize the discipline by incorporating a more diverse membership and more flexible research directions, arguing that anthropology needs to shed its ethnocentric structure. As Geertz writes, anthropologists seek to "distance themselves from the power asymmetries" (Geertz 1988:134) that challenge the ethics of their research. In this way, many anthropologists acknowledge the way eurocentric bias has negatively influenced anthropological research. Naively believing in the superiority of their findings, anthropologists have published what is now seen as prejudiced and racist, and they did this arguing it to be objective truth. Attempts to correct and work with unequal power relationships in the research setting have become, at least for some, an important methodological goal.

But motivation for a decolonized anthropology first required vocal critique from outside and inside the discipline and long before that would happen anthropologists were spreading themselves out, not to decolonize, but rather to find new fields in which to contribute.

University and discipline expand

Anthropology spread into a number of sub-fields as the university system expanded rapidly after WWII:

> The runway expansion of the university system worldwide had a very specific organizational pressure for increased specialization simply because scholars were in search of niches that could define their originality or at least their social utility. (Wallerstein et al. 1996:34)

Growing numbers of anthropologists engaged new research areas and these new areas ended up bordering closely with, and overlapping, other disciplines. While the number of topics grew, anthropologists developed their interests into distinct areas. Wallerstein et al. (1996:6) discuss the logic behind such specializations:

> The creation of multiple disciplines was premised on the belief that systematic research required skilled concentration on the multiple separate arenas of reality, which was partitioned rationally into distinct groupings of knowledge. Such a rational division promised to be effective, that is, intellectually productive. (Wallerstein et al. 1996:6)

Academic disciplines were originally divided with the idea of maximizing a researchers effectiveness based on the belief that focus in a single discipline would be better than a general study spanning multiple areas of interest and approaches. A mathematician specialized in mathematics was understood to be better than a mathematician meddling in philosophy, and vice versa. The point here is that anthropology was originally established as a discipline distinct from the rest, and that in its development it came to address issues closely related to other disciplines. That researchers would find collaborators in other disciplines (which closely overlapped), as easily or easier than they would within

anthropology, worked against the idea that the study of anthropology alone would be most productive. Wallerstein et al. discuss the ways anthropology developed within the Western university system:

> In the course of the nineteenth century, the various disciplines spread out like a fan, covering a range of epistemological positions. At one end lay, first, mathematics (a nonempirical activity) and next to it the experimental natural sciences (themselves in a sort of descending order of determinism – physics, chemistry, biology). At the other end lay the humanities (or arts and letters), starting with philosophy (the pendant of mathematics, as a nonempirical activity) and next to it the study of formal artistic practices (literatures, painting and sculpture, musicology), often coming close in their practice to being history, a history of the arts. And in between the humanities and the natural sciences, thus defined, lay the study of social realities, with history (idiographic) closer to, often part of, faculties of arts and letters, and 'social science' (nomothetic) closer to the natural sciences. Amidst an ever-hardening separation of knowledge into two different spheres, each with a different epistemological emphasis, the students of social realities found themselves caught in the middle, and deeply divided on these epistemological issues. (Wallerstein et al. 1996:9)

They call on academics to "Open The Social Sciences", not as a way for disciplines to be abolished, but rather to breakdown unnecessary and unproductive divisions. They point out that the disciplinary phenomena of "area studies" brought into question the necessity of a targeted focus in one area. Area studies brought together numerous disciplinary approaches to engage current issues in particular regions. It showed that it makes sense to engage a number of disciplines/approaches to address any particular issue. Based on the success of these interdisciplinary engagements and as part of "opening the social sciences" they challenge the organization of researchers into narrow specializations, by suggesting all faculty sit within two faculties, and that multidisciplinary research teams be created every so often to address currently relevant research issues. In this way they argue that the original disciplinary divisions are less than ideal. It

makes sense for researchers to be able to access the work of other researchers, not simply those in the same specialization as themselves. This argument should have consequences for the ways academic journals are distributed. How should research created by multi disciplinary research teams be published? In discipline specific journals? There is pressure then, within the social sciences, to break down unnecessary disciplinary barriers.

Another blow to anthropology's disciplinariness came from anthropologists seeking to make their work useful outside the university setting. Ericksen and Murphy write:

> A conspicuous trend in late twentieth-century anthropology, at least in North America, has been the diversification of the traditional subfields into an increasing number of special interest groups. Arguably this trend began with the fifth subfield, applied anthropology, designed to accommodate the interests of anthropologists finding employment outside universities and museums. (Ericksen and Murphy 1998:4)

Enter the fifth sub-field of anthropology which seeks to address questions and issues relevant to other audiences. It is about making anthropology useful to some group of non-anthropologists, like management, advertising, market research, military intelligence, and the like. It is also about anthropologists seeking to make their research useful to others not just for employment reasons, but also because they have been morally challenged to do so. Understanding that anthropology has been structured in such a way as to be ethnocentric, some point to the need to make anthropology useful, not to anthropologists, but to others involved in the research, as a way of recognizing and dealing with political realities like colonialism, imperialism, and war. Deciding which questions and

whose approaches anthropologists are to be put in use, has ended up, as debates often do, splintering the discipline.

Who is to be the anthropologist, and who is anthropology to be done for?

Another way to answer the question "what is anthropology?" is to look at the people practicing anthropology. Who is to be the anthropologist, and who is anthropology to be done for? Scientific journals propagate disciplinary knowledge among interested experts. In the majority of academic journals, only those educated have the means to engage in the discussions of anthropology. The voice of the subjects of anthropological research have been mediated by the anthropologist - sometimes rightly and sometimes wrongly. In this way the ethnocentric structure of a European center and a non-European periphery has been reproduced in the ways anthropologists create and distribute their work. There have been attempts to change this relationship, yet as Trouillot argues, anthropology remains to a large extent, a discursive practice of the West (Trouillot 2003:8). It is a "discursive practice of the West" in part because the subjects of anthropological study have rarely been invited to participate as equal creators of anthropological knowledge. Anthropologists choose the research questions, choose how to answer the questions, and choose who to share the answers with. The welcome anthropologists generally received by communities to conduct participant-observation was not reciprocated such that communities could guide anthropology.

But why? Anthropology, commonly defined as "the study of humankind", excludes no person. An interest in people around you cannot be linked specifically to the West. In this way Anthropology is not just "the study of humankind" for it is an academic discipline that has developed in particular ways since being institutionalized within a growing university system. Trouillot writes:

> Academic disciplines do not create their fields of significance, they only legitimize particular organizations of meaning. They filter and rank - and in that sense they truly discipline - contested arguments and themes that often precede them. In doing so, they continuously expand, restrict, or modify in diverse ways their distinctive arsenal of tropes, the types of statements they deem acceptable. (Trouillot 2003:8)

In other words, as an academic discipline anthropology has legitimated particular forms of research. The system of editorial control and peer review works to select, filter and rank material. The system works to control whose ideas get spread. As academics, anthropologists write to each other in academic journals that control what is published and to some extent who is given access to the material. As scientists and experts, anthropologists saw themselves as, or were expected to be, the most able creators of that knowledge. And they came from a particular side. Talal Asad writes:

> But anthropology is also rooted in an unequal power encounter between the West and Third World which goes back to the emergence of bourgeois Europe, an encounter in which colonialism is merely one historical moment. It is this encounter that gives the West access to cultural and historical information about the societies it has progressively dominated, and thus not only generates a certain kind of universal understanding, but also re-enforces the inequalities in capacity between the European and the non-European worlds (and derivatively, between the Europeanized elites and the 'traditional' masses in the Third World). (Asad 1973:10)

The anthropological subject, the "Other", defined ethnocentric anthropology. Information flowed from “out there” back to the academic home through

anthropologists who sought corroboration and review from their like-minded peers. Who then, is to be given a voice in anthropology journals now that so much research is applied, collaborative and/or interdisciplinary? Caroline B. Brettell introduces the issue of people from "out there" responding to what is written about them:

> Ethnological research carved out a niche for itself in the latter nineteenth century as the study of the far-off remote "other". Those people among whom the anthropologist worked were often preliterate, and the languages they spoke certainly were not the language in which the ethnographer intended to publish the results of his or her research. There was virtually no chance for the subjects of anthropological investigation to respond, either critically or favorably, to what was written about them. Ethnographic authority survived under the cloak of distance and difference because the "natives" never knew what had been written about them. For Western sociologists, or for those anthropologists who study their own society with the tools and methods of research developed in the study of the far-off "other", the situation has been somewhat different. (Brettell 1995:9)

As research contexts and power relationships have changed, anthropology has been pushed to develop dialogue around academic research, and a number of communities other than the anthropologists' have shown interest in this dialogue.

Changing research relationships

Anthropology, through changes in the world and through external critiques that could no longer be ignored, came to be seen by some (anthropologist and other), as being biased and narrow minded - more focused on tools, theories and methods than on the interests' of the people surrounding them. Some subjects of anthropological research came to criticize anthropology, helping to attack and at the same time reveal an ethnocentric bias in the discipline. Wallerstein et al. write:

> It is thus within the context of changes in the distribution of power in the world that the issue of cultural parochialism of the social sciences as they had historically developed came to the fore. (Wallerstein et al. 1996:50)

Meanwhile the voice of the anthropological subject established its own authority both outside and inside the discipline. Trouillot writes:

> Minorities of all kinds can and do voice their cultural claims, not on the basis of explicit theories of culture but in the name of historical authenticity. They enter the debate not as academics- or not only as academics- but as situated individuals with rights to historicity. They speak in the first person, signing their argument with an 'I' or a 'we', rather than invoking the ahistorical voice of reason, justice, and civilization. (Trouillot 2003:10)

Accepting others ability and right to challenge anthropological representations, the responses to anthropologists from the communities in which they study need to be better incorporated into anthropological practices. When anthropologists first started publishing, they did not expect the subjects of their research would ever read what they wrote. Keith Hart shared this anecdote during a discussion on the Open Anthropology Cooperative, an online forum for anthropologists. Keith Hart shared this anecdote,

From the Open Anthropology Cooperative forum
Response to discussion "Ethnographic Blogging"

Reply by Keith Hart on July 7, 2009 at 7:14pm

...
I studied the Tallensi of Northern Ghana made famous by Meyer Fortes. His field research took place in the mid-30s and his great monographs were published in the late 40s. He revisited the Tallensi in the early 60s, not long before my own fieldwork later that decade. On one occasion he was confronted by an angry young man waving one of his books: "How dare you describe my father in this insulting way?", he demanded. Fortes, especially in his first book, was keen to write about concrete people and places; his arguments became more abstract later. His comments were often direct. He told me, "If you had suggested to me then that the Tallensi would one day read my books, it would have been as strange as...you having to imagine the Tallensi founding a colony on the moon!"

(Hart 2009)

Beyond just offending people, the lack of feedback from communities (or the lack of a response to feedback) involved in anthropological research has had serious consequences on communities involved. Fahim and Helmer discuss the way anthropologists, sociologists, and other social science researchers had done little to incorporate feedback into their research, and in doing so the subjects of anthropological research rejected the goals and interests' of anthropologists:

> ... development measures and scientific research have been psychologically very damaging to the Inuit. Recurrently the objects of scientific research, they have not been asked to participate in the selection of research topics, and there has not even been a subsequent communication of findings. 'In some cases,' he said, 'you may hear people say: 'No more sociologists!' or the like.' (Fahim and Helmer 1982:xxv)

Beyond requiring a space to challenge and discuss research, there is also the need to address interests beyond those of the discipline. A powerful argument comes from Vine Deloria Jr., a Native American activist, scholar and lawyer, who became a vocal critic of anthropology. His work was published in scholarly journals and it had a profound effect on some anthropologists (Grobsmith 1997:36). Deloria Jr. argued that anthropologists did more harm than good by reinforcing and legitimizing negative stereotypes, while spending money on research projects that were of no benefit to the communities involved. Indians, he writes, "... have been cursed above all other people in history, Indians have anthropologists" (Deloria 1969:78). Educated in Western universities, Vine Deloria Jr. held a powerful position from which to speak. He was able to respond to anthropologists in the language needed, which is, as he puts it, the

"vocabulary created by the Ph.D." and he took interest in what anthropologists were writing.

A definition from the outside

Defining anthropology is quite tricky given the ways it has changed since first being institutionalized. The goals and interests of anthropologists vary. Sometimes, as anthropologists have argued, it helps to look at an issue from the outside as a way of escaping taken for granted assumptions. While anthropology covers a diverse set of topics, it is also true that it does this in particular and identifiable ways. Vine Deloria Jr. describes the work of anthropologists more succinctly:

> An anthropologist comes out to Indian reservations to make OBSERVATIONS. During the winter these observations will become books by which future anthropologists will be trained, so that they can come out to reservations years from now and verify the observations they have studied.
>
> After the books are written, summaries of the books appear in the scholarly journals in the guise of articles. These articles "tell it like it is" and serve as a catalyst to inspire other anthropologists to make the great pilgrimage next summer.
>
> The summaries are then condensed for two purposes. Some condensations are sent to government agencies as reports justifying the previous summer's research. Others are sent to foundations in an effort to finance the next summer's expedition west.
>
> The reports are spread all around the government agencies and foundations all winter. The only problem is that no one has time to read them. So five-thousand-dollar-a-year secretaries are assigned to decode them. Since these secretaries cannot read complex theories, they reduce the reports to the best slogan possible and forget the reports.
>
> The slogans become conference themes in the early spring, when the anthropologist expeditions are being planned. The slogans turn into battle

> cries of opposing groups of anthropologists who chance to meet on the reservations the following summer. (Deloria Jr 1969:80)

Vine Deloria Jr. defines the anthropologist in simple and sensible terms. He argues that anthropology is largely about writing books and articles. It is an academic discipline in a university, and it is taught by teachers and studied by students. Students fight to be teachers by getting published or supporting what has been published, while teachers fight for financing. Anthropologists produce a lot to read, which once peer reviewed is used by administrators to select the next round of teachers. The whole system is wrapped within the universities productivity schedule. The goals are professional and performed in the interests of themselves. This view of anthropology however conflicts rather strongly with the view disseminated by many anthropologists who argue social science is done to study society for a better world. It is not my intention to dismiss anthropology as a positive social force, nor to sell it as one, but rather to show that there has been debate as to the effectiveness of anthropology as a tool for positive social change, and that part of this argument centers around the limited audience and interests' of anthropological work.

Deloria's critique raises the question of whose interests anthropological research should serve. Attacking the costs involved in conducting all this research, he argues that it is wasteful and that funds could be better spent on research relevant to the communities involved. Anthropologists in this light are preying on marginalized communities as a way of advancing their careers much like lawyers chasing ambulances – quite the opposite vision of anthropology than

the one promoted by most anthropologists. His and others' passionate responses to anthropology have helped to expose the narrow goals of academic research. Working with these and other criticisms, many anthropologists have changed, accepting the need to work with communities on research questions relevant to them. In this way, anthropologists work in research contexts that morally demand that researchers address "subjective", unscientific goals, forcing anthropologists' into a debate between "pure science" and advocacy.

Grobsmith discusses the discipline's response to Deloria and others' arguments:

> Deloria's impact on our discipline has been such that working with any ethnic or cultural group now reflects a different protocol than before. our actions have changed, and the assumptions that underlay them have changed as well. Those of us 'raised on Deloria' have had built into our knowledge of our discipline issues of ethics and morality, legality and propriety, jurisdiction and self-determination, seldom considered by pre-1950's ethnographers, their offensive and frequently unethical field techniques having been well documented. Our discipline continues to suffer internal conflict between the applied research approach and the pure research orientation. (Grobsmith 1997:45)

The ethics of conducting research involving people is now an important focus of anthropology. There are attempts among anthropologists, not just to make research useful to others but in particular to recognize, work with, and balance power relationships throughout the research process. Beyond blending science and advocacy, anthropologists are also working to distribute and share power and responsibility. Rather than being the expert, collaborative research methods can work to integrate participants as equal experts, who can contribute and guide the project. As Lassiter argues, collaboration is not about collusion but rather

about negotiating power (Lassiter 2006:20). But the big point relevant to this research is that while anthropologists have been pushed to change their research methods and interests, the system of disseminating that anthropologically produced knowledge has yet to adapt. Anthropologists, while trying to advocate on behalf of communities, continue to publish in journals with unnecessarily small audiences that due to their professional nature struggle to disseminate ideas beyond the university.

Making anthropology useful and interesting to people outside the university can take a number of forms. On one hand there is an applied anthropology that seeks to make itself useful outside the university, on the other, is an applied anthropology with a moral obligation to transform traditional research relationships. Both approaches fall under the label "applied" anthropology. Both involve adapting to new research contexts and questions, and both share a common thread of desired collaboration, but there are different answers when it comes to who those collaborators should be. On one side we can collaborate with communities to develop and guide research, but on the other side the community involved might just be a military, and collusion with such a community has horrible consequences for other communities (Deloria 1969, Fahim and Helmer 1982). Again, whose interests should anthropological research serve? And how are these changing interests reflected in academic publishing today? Questions like these challenge the traditional means of distributing anthropological products. How can anthropologists address concerns

and issues of communities, while also addressing concerns and issues of academics in the universities? One answer is that anthropologists might benefit from more diverse publishing options that can cater to the diverse audiences involved.

Anthropologies

As discussed, anthropologists write for different audiences. But anthropology departments also exist around the world. Beyond the need to collaborate with communities in order to develop and guide anthropological research, anthropologists today also work within different funding networks. The institutions supporting anthropology abroad target research funding into issues relevant to them. This brings us to the reality of national anthropologies, indigenous anthropology, and “non-Western anthropology”. As Fahim and Helmer argue, the change in “the actor (i.e., local in lieu of foreign) implies a change in the anthropologist's role and perspective” (Fahim and Helmer 1982:xxiv). Further:

> Anthropologists in different cultures under other social imperatives must devise their own means in pursuit of new goals. Thus, a qualitative difference in the source and direction of change in developing countries and different roles for anthropologists should prompt the creation of a new type of anthropology. (Fahim and Helmer 1982: xxiv)

A result of anthropologists in different institutions pursuing their own agendas, is that anthropology consists of a number of “anthropologies”, each with its own values, perspectives, languages, and journals that motivate and influence it. Discussing anthropology programs in Africa, Ntarangwi, Babiker and Mills write:

> What unites a Ugandan social scientist working for the Population Council in Nairobi, an academic from Lesotho teaching at the University of Zimbabwe and a Khartoum-based academic doing a short-term consultancy for Oxfam in Southern Sudan? All share an anthropological identity and a commitment to shaping an African discipline that critically contributes to both social knowledge and social reform. Whilst aware of colonialism's influence on the development of African anthropology, its practitioners are forging new intellectual agendas, working practices and international collaborations. The expansion of anthropology worldwide and its willingness to tackle a broadening set of intellectual challenges presented by globalization – religious revival, ethnic conflict and genocide, street children, child soldiers, human trafficking, grinding rural and urban poverty, pandemic diseases, good governance, brain drain, to name but a few – are revitalizing anthropological practice. In Africa, the new face of the discipline is developing through ever-closer association between academic anthropologists and those working in multidisciplinary research teams, between consultants and teachers. (Ntaranwi, Babiker and Mills 2000:389)

National anthropologies challenge the identity of anthropology as a single academic discipline, and they reveal the changing audiences of academic research. Where originally anthropologists wrote mostly for anthropologists, with "anthropologies", anthropologists are writing about issues relevant to a broader group of people – multidisciplinary research teams, consultants, teachers, NGOs etc. The particular organizations involved change between country and program, and with this expansion of anthropology around the world, there is debate as to how "anthropologies" should relate to each other. Are they all part of a single discipline? Do they need to be? Should anthropologists in one anthropology, make an effort to read the work of anthropologists in another? Syed Farid Alatas argues that anthropologists in different anthropologies should contribute to some form of international anthropology:

> It should, therefore, be obvious that the indigenization of knowledge projects around the world for the most part seek to contribute to the universalization of the social sciences by not just acknowledging but insisting that all cultures, civilizations and historical experiences must be regarded as sources of

> ideas. Local scholars should contribute on an equal basis with their Western colleagues to international scholarship (Fahim 1970: 397). (Alatas 2005:232)

Local scholars are contributing to international scholarship while operating within different funding environments. But a major issue, that will be developed more in chapter 4, is that they do not all have access to the same research. Attention needs to be paid to disseminating work outside disciplinary and geographical boundaries.

Public engagement

A consequence of anthropology's scientific goals is that the distribution of anthropological knowledge outside the academy is left to others. Popular representations of anthropology are often mediated by journalists. So as close as we are to engaging in our intended subject, the Internet and anthropology, let us step back one last time, to incorporate the final piece of our history puzzle – the story of public engagement in anthropology. Thomas Hylland Eriksen writes:

> Anthropologists have an enormous amount of knowledge about human lives, and most of them know something profound about what it is that makes people different and what makes us all similar. Yet there seems to be a professional reluctance to share this knowledge with a wider readership… Anthropological monographs and articles tend to be dense, technical and frankly boring, and in many cases they are preoccupied with details, allowing the larger picture to slip away from sight. (Eriksen 2005:ix)

Public engagement in anthropology is not simply a matter of distribution and access, but of style and interest. Why would a wider audience seek to engage with anthropological material? As Eriksen states, much anthropology has acquired a style that is particularly difficult to digest. It wasn't always like this, he

argues, stating that anthropologists were originally actively involved in public debates. Anthropology was made famous by published works that were of interest to European society. They captured the imagination of a large public audience. Malinowski, Mead and others appealed to public audiences, but as Thomas Hylland Eriksen writes:

> Since the Second World War, anthropology has shrunk away from the public eye in almost every country where it has an academic presence. Student numbers grow; young men and women are still being seduced by the intellectual magic of anthropology, ideas originating in anthropology become part of an everyday cultural reflexivity – and yet, the subject is all but invisible outside its own circles...
>
> … Paradoxically, as the discipline has grown, its perceived wider relevance has diminished. In the twentieth century, the day of Mead, Montagu and Evans-Pritchard, anthropologists still engaged in general intellectual debate and occasionally wrote popular, yet intellectually challenging texts. (Eriksen 2006:21)

So what happened? How, if anthropology was made popular by academics writing to broad public audiences, has it today withdrawn in such a way as to be called an "ivory tower"? Why would new researchers today be given the following advice regarding publishing and their careers:

> The advice given to pre-tenure scholars was quite consistent across fields: focus on publishing in the right venues and avoid too much time spent on public engagement, committee work, writing op-ed pieces, developing websites, blogging, and other non-traditional forms of electronic dissemination (including courses). (Harley et al. 2008:8)

Part of the answer is publishing in the right places helps administrators and others recognize that a scholar has seriously applied themselves to the discipline and that their work has been recognized. But another part of the answer is that public engagement is not a virtue in itself. The retreat into the "ivory tower", whereby academics isolate themselves from the outside, writing only to

themselves, has been a phenomenon that came with institutionalization, scientific goals, but also as a backlash against unpopular political engagement of the past. Lots of anthropological work is intentionally left under the rug, like the work of Dr. James Hunt, who applied science in pursuit of his own, now controversial and racist, agenda. His work is barely recognized in anthropology, and certainly it is not representative of many anthropologists. Hunt's anthropology however involved the intentional mix of science and politics, and he promoted public engagement – and as the mix of science and politics has always been, his work is very controversial.

Where academics find popularity, they also find controversy. To what extent can anthropologists engage with politically sensitive issues when they become offensive to their own universities and governments? Dr. James Hunt upheld scientific goals yet today his work is racist and bigoted. He established the Anthropological Society of London with the intention of mixing politics and science. He also encouraged researchers to engage with relevant public issues, regardless of the possibility of ridicule. Yet his views were tied to a particular agenda that worked to subjugate and maintain power relationships. In this way public engagement has also been a thorn in academia. Anthropologists are human beings, with their own flaws. In dealing with highly controversial topics, anthropologists have increasingly withdrawn from public engagement, preferring to write to each other, in dense, academic language, perhaps as a way to minimize any unnecessary response or backlash against it.

Reactions against the anthropology produced by people like Hunt contributed to anthropology's safe withdrawal into the ivory tower. Journals, with peer review and limited distribution, served to shelter the public image of anthropology from its controversial faces. But with the need for collaboration with communities, and with the need to bridge disciplinary boundaries, anthropology is being pushed back outside. The tug of war between the academy and its disciplines, and between the academic and “others” has put pressure on anthropologists to disseminate their work to public audiences.

To summarize, within anthropology there are numerous competing positions and a range of specializations, and areas of interest. The expansion of topics in anthropology has been a result of the expanding university system and the need to escape the narrow scope within which anthropology was originally institutionalized. It is also a story about scientists getting things wrong, colonialism, western expansion, and the objectification of “others”, which has developed into internal and external pressures for change. Finally it is also a result of anthropologists seeking to address questions not determined by other anthropologists, but rather by the communities involved. Here lies the trouble of a changing anthropology whose values, approaches and methods have grown in such a way that the publishing system surrounding them doesn't always fit.

Both the participants and the audiences of anthropological research have been changing. Where Hunt wrote for public audiences, mixing science and politics, anthropologists started to focus on disseminating ideas within the

discipline. But specialists writing to specialists led to disciplinary pigeon holing at the expense of accessibility. By writing only to specialists the language became increasingly technical, giving academic anthropology a specific style that some anthropologists argue gets in the way of accessibility. Further, disciplines frequently overlap in interests and research in anthropology tends to be interdisciplinary. There is pressure then to increase dialogue between disciplines. Anthropology departments have also spread around the world creating numerous anthropologies. These anthropology departments focus on varying issues and they disseminate their work in different places. Again, there is pressure to bridge anthropology, this time internationally, to link "anthropologies" into some form of international scholarship. Further, there is a need to invite others to participate in and to guide the research.

In these ways the questions anthropologists address are necessarily broad, yet the audience of scholarly journals remains narrow. Given that anthropologists have focused on writing for other anthropologists, the dissemination of academic work outside the university is often handled by journalists, if at all. Once a popular discipline in the public imagination, anthropology has become less popular and less understood – even demanding an explanation when the word is used in friendly conversation. There is a desire among some anthropologists, for anthropology to re-establish itself as a public interlocutor, while admitting and accepting that anthropologists are people who impose their own motivations and directions, and understanding that this

engagement will certainly be political, and have political repercussions. Cocooning wasn't the answer, so let us explore now an anthropology stepping out into the “open”.

III. Open research methods

No longer about long-term fieldwork in far off places or even about particular groups of people, ethnography, as Wittel writes, is “on the move” (2008:1). Ethnographic research now targets political issues that involve multiple groups of people and different political positions. Ethnographers are tackling contemporary questions that can't be addressed through the traditional long-term fieldwork approach where the researcher stays in a single space. Research spans across numerous sites, and ethnographers have the Internet, allowing some of them to return to the armchair, engaging their subjects through the computer screen almost anywhere they or their informants might be. The openly accessible nature of many online interactions opens the door for others to join in as well. Does it make sense for anthropologists to engage people in such a public fashion? Why create publicly accessible documents related to ones' research? As will be shown, it can be a great way to develop feedback, to invite participants to comment on and contribute to ideas related to the research.

Prior to ethnography, early academics conducted research in universities, learning about non-European societies through the writings of others. Travelers, missionaries, and military men all wrote about the people and places they visited. These texts formed the base from which early anthropologists theorized upon the nature of humankind. But anthropologists found a need for more direct evidence from which to write, given the biased sources they had drawn on in the past. The

act of traveling abroad, to remote little known destinations, became an important methodological commitment for anthropologists who sought out empirical evidence from which to establish scientific theory. The evidence they gathered was empirical, in the sense that they recorded their observations into texts, or field notes, which then became scientific data that were considered to be more reliable and nuanced than the texts from missionaries and militaries. And since so few were writing about these people and places, anthropologists found an academic niche in which to contribute.

Ethnography today continues the tradition. It continues to be based on fieldwork and anthropologists continue to write field notes, which are later turned into reports. However the “field” is now conceptualized quite broadly, as are the kinds of questions currently considered interesting and valuable. Wittel writes:

> A century ago, ethnographers like A.C. Haddon, Franz Boas and a few years later Bronislaw Malinowski revolutionized anthropology by not merely studying decontextualised objects – this is what the armchair anthropologist did – but rather by studying people in their natural environment. To them the key to gaining an understanding of communities/tribes and their cultures, rituals and patterns of interaction was a long-term immersion in another way of life. This shift from decontextualised objects to the study of people in their natural environments has to be understood as an increase of complexity. What made perfect sense at the turn of the last century, now becomes the centre of debate...
>
> … whereas a century ago fieldwork in the natural habitat of communities had the immense advantage of integrating context, a dogmatisation of the same practice in contemporary ethnography seems to achieve the opposite. It rather excludes the context of the people under observation. (Wittel 2000:8)

The interests of researchers have changed such that it does not make sense to focus on a single place. In order to address issues such as globalization, colonialism, power, etc., ethnography today is typically multi-sited – involving

different political groups at various locations. In this way, researchers investigate research issues from a number of different angles.

In terms of a study like this one, that looks at how anthropological work is being disseminated, the research can span multiple sites that include the university, reports in scholarly journals, books, newspapers, blogs and websites. And it it can engage these sites from a number of different perspectives, from that of students, professors, researchers outside academia, or the communities involved. The location in which the research is conducted isn't geographically bound. In this way, ethnographers continue to do “fieldwork”, but the field is flexible and determined by a research issue rather than a place. Wittel writes:

> Gupta and Ferguson (1997b, p.37), referring to the work of Appadurai, suggest to decenter the notion of the field. Instead of the field being used to connote locality, to “the here” and “the elsewhere”, the field should rather be conceptualized as a political location. (Wittel 2000:6)

Anthropologists, ethnographers, or more simply researchers, address issues across geographical, political and disciplinary boundaries. And while the concept of field has transformed rather radically, anthropology's defining method, participant-observation, has more relevance online.

Online engagement

Participant-observation engages the researcher directly as a way of collecting data, allowing the researcher to make observations in a '”natural habitat”. More generally, it involves various sorts of qualitative research, with an

emphasis on the researchers' direct engagement. It is no challenge then for ethnography to apply itself online. Michael Wesch writes:

> Understanding human relationships within this new mediascape will require us to embrace our anthropological mainstay, participant observation. We know the value of participant observation in understanding social worlds. Now we need to participate in the new media in order to understand the new forms of sociality emerging in this quickly changing mediated world. (Wesch 2007:31)

Moving from studies of small scale communities to studies of virtual worlds is a big change for a slow changing academic discipline, and there remains some anxiety and concern about studies that are done entirely online. Wittel writes:

> If the research conducted is single sited, that is to say from the researchers office computer, it might be more appropriate to dispense with the term ethnography and talk about conversation analysis, text analysis or discourse analysis. (Wittel 2000:21)

Wittel, here, pushes the importance of face-to-face interaction as a means of distinguishing ethnography from other online research methods. But where there was once a clear division between the study of texts, and that of participant observation, online publicly accessible discussions merge the interaction that comes from participant-observation with the creation and interpretation of texts. Blogging and other social media tools provide another way for researchers to participate and engage with people. This coincides with Johannes Fabian's discussion regarding the creation of ethnographic texts, where he distinguishes between the texts of literary critics, and the texts of the ethnographer. He writes:

> As I have done already several times I find it useful to stipulate the difference between the ethnographer's and the literary critic's texts. This is not to suggest that literary texts are simply given, as if they did not have to be appropriated in various ways before they become objects of interpretation and critique. Still, the literary critic is usually not the author of his or her text,

> whereas the ethnographer usually is, at least as far as the kind of text we have before us is concerned. (Fabian 2008:40)

With email, listservs, websites and now blogs, Twitter and Facebook, virtual worlds, ethnographers are making use of the tools offered to them and in doing so they are blurring the distinction between ethnography and what Borneman called "trendy cultural studies" (Borneman 1995:669). Blogs and social feeds like Twitter provide a new way for ethnographers to “make” texts, in a sense similar to what Fabian suggests. But unlike the texts Fabian discusses in “Ethnography as Commentary” (2008), the texts created through blogging and other social media are created in collaboration with others, with the knowledge that they will be public. These technologies are a way to develop and disseminate dialogue around an issue while giving people a chance to represent themselves in a dialogue with the anthropologist. The documents are ethnographic, in that the ethnographer motivates and moderates discussions to inform research. And they can provide a welcome space for continuing dialogue after publication.

Isn't it better face to face?

There remains the issue of ethnographers avoiding the "discomforts and uncertainties inherent in face-to-face interaction with strangers" (Borneman 1995:669). Anthropologists can use the Internet to communicate, but is this ideal? Why not interact face to face? This fear is somewhat dated however. It turns out that online interaction involves plenty of discomfort and uncertainty, with

less face-to-face interaction, but with more computer mediated interaction. And yes, it involves more strangers.

Computer mediated interaction has been a hot topic among researchers. While researchers have experimented with online research strategies, they have also been careful to emphasize the traditional method of face-to-face participant observation. But researchers have shown how people interact differently through different media. It has been argued that people can not express themselves online to the same degree as they can face to face - that social cues are missed. How can you really know who you are talking to online? John Smith can write on a blog, and it might later turn out to be Veronica Adams. John can pretend to be whoever he wants to be. He can pretend to have a Ph.D., or he can pretend to be Bon Jovi. And who knows he might even be drunk which would explain the demonic rant he left in reply on your blog. But maybe he wasn't drunk maybe he really is a bastard? Sharing thoughts and opinions with “anyone out there” can be, as Danah Boyd describes, a bit sadistic:

> One thing that we’re missing as disconnected souls reading each other’s words is a shared social structure where we can intuitively understand when to critique and when to support. The blog world too easily lends itself to a forum for attacking each other, purportedly to critique ideas. How often are anonymous critiques truly constructive? How easy is it to tear apart someone you don’t know? Stanley Milgram learned that ages ago… if you feel like your responsibility is to critique, you can do so infinitely, regardless of how another might feel. And the further removed you are from witnessing the horrific reactions, the more you can continue on. Sometimes, i think we’re all a bit sadistic. (Boyd 2004)

The brutal, heartless comments left by many people online have caused many researchers to disregard and ignore the medium. That there are differences in

behavior online and off, push some ethnographers to appeal for online interaction to be put in context of peoples "real offline lives". How can you trust what people write online when they hide behind fake names?

New means of expression

But computer mediated technologies have also been shown to provide new means of expression, and new ways to look in on those expressions. Christine Hine writes "... outside the strictly controlled experimental setting, rather than providing a limited and constraining medium, CMC [computer mediated communication] has provided rich and complex social experience" (Hine 2000:15). People interact differently online, but this doesn't have to be a problem. Allowing anonymous comments on a blog can lead to vicious diatribe, but it can also provide a way for people to express themselves in ways they never would have otherwise. Pamthropologist, an pseudonymous anthropology blogger, discusses how writing under a pseudonym allows her to write more freely:

> I don't mind the idea of followers of my blog knowing my identity. I do not want my students, administrators and, colleagues to be able to Google my name and find my blog easily. I do write things critical of all of them from time to time. If the blog bore my name, I would feel compelled to filter my postings more carefully. "Pamthropologist" is a personna I adopt which allows me to be a little more snarky than I normally would. That voice is the one I use with my close friends for whom I have a relationship of trust. Anonymity substitutes for trust. I would add that I work in a right-to-work state. I have little contractual support and could be non-renewed with ease. In short, I could, easily, loose my job, although, I don't see that happening. -Pamthropologist (via email)

Online anonymity is a blessing for some, and for others it is a curse. For Pamthropologist, it allows her to write more honestly, about topics she wouldn't

be able to otherwise. As a teacher she is unable to interact openly for fear of offending students and coworkers. Her professional responsibilities limit the way she can represent herself online. A pseudonym lets her discuss serious issues related to the discipline, with less worry of professional recourse. At the same time, being anonymous, it is difficult for her to receive professional credit from the work she shares under a pseudonym.

Online interactions are different. They provide new windows, compared to traditional ethnographic methods, into human experience. In some circumstances online anonymity can be better than traditional confidentiality offered by anthropologists, in that the responsibility to represent oneself in written form remains with the participant, and not with the anthropologist. People can choose how they want to represent themselves depending on the questions and context.

Using the blog as a research tool

As part of this research, participants were invited to share ideas on the project's blog. The following section discusses the use of the blog in the research setting, particularly how openly accessible documents can be used to disseminate research intentions, to network with similarly interested scholars, and as a feedback tool to incorporate different audiences into the research process.

Over the last few years more and more people have started blogging about anthropology, and these blogs have taken on a number of forms, one of which is the research blog. Erkan Saka's (2006) essay, "Blogging as a Research Tool for Ethnographic Fieldwork", discusses how blogging can be integrated into

the research process such that it compliments traditional peer reviewed, print publication. Publishing and review can take a long time challenging scholars ability to address events as they are happening. Saka points out that blogging provides a means for more timely discussion, often in "the present tense", and that it "... forces the ethnographer to produce on a regular basis... with a constant appeal to narrate what would normally remain fragments of field notes" (Saka 2006:1).

This idea of writing up, and publishing, field notes as the research progresses ties into Eric Raymond's concept, "Release-Early-Release-Often" (Raymond 1997), a design strategy that originated within software development circles as way to better integrate feedback into the developer's design. By releasing a product early and frequently, user feedback can correct and better direct future development. It is an iterative development cycle that hopes to breach gaps between the developer's and end-users' goals. This approach can be adapted to publishing and academic research, in that drafts can be circulated as easily and as widely as the final published work, as a way of soliciting feedback prior to publication. To explore the ability to use this writing strategy in the research setting, notes and drafts of this paper have been shared on the sites blog.

Prior to sharing thesis proposals, outlines, and drafts, on the blog, other blog posts served more traditional ethnographic functions. Blog posts helped to disseminate research goals and intentions, fulfilling the role of the ethnographer

"entering the field". Blog posts also worked to develop rapport with readers, some of which became collaborators in the project, later contributing their thoughts and opinions in the form of blog responses or blog posts of their own. Reading and responding to other bloggers' posts, that are related to ones' research, can be an effective way of developing a network of interested collaborators. This is not to say that one should expect people to jump into the project, or that they will read a hundred page thesis, but rather that aspects of the research can be shared with hopes of starting a dialogue. Who will read what researchers post on their blogs?

Entering the field

The blog can be used to share research intentions. With the help of other interested bloggers, a single post can be disseminated quite broadly. This can work to inform people about a research project while also creating a valuable network of collaborators. Included here are some of the first posts from this project's blog.

From this project's blog

Surviving a masters program
Posted: November 15, 2007 by Owen Wiltshire
Filed under: What is anthropology?

I'd have started with a tale of entry, to locate you in the journey, but its nearing the end of the first semester and I've lost sight – of the beginning, and of the end. What is anthropology? That is a good question, and you might even consider asking it to a grad student like myself. Unfortunately for you, I've been engaging in a history of anthropology, a history that problematizes our curiosity, casts doubt on our past and future integrity. It is a history of colonialism, of imperialism and its effects on anthropological perspectives, and on people around the world. It's

anthropological shock doctrine, a rite of passage perhaps, that motivates a sense of ethic and responsibility as an anthropologist and as a global citizen. So for now I'll sidestep the question, and with much humility, introduce my attempt at an academic blog.

From this project's blog

Research Interests
Posted: November 15, 2007 by Owen Wiltshire
Uncategorized.
2 Comments

I am interested in collaborative research methods, and the growth of anthropology online. [okay hound me for being way too vague, but for now lets look at "method" as in, publishing medium, discussion format, style]. I'm particularly interested in open-access journals, and feel that opening up academic publishing is an enormously important step for anthropology. Of course, I don't know the whole story yet, but prior to beginning this anthropological journey I worked as a web developer for 10 years, and I have enormous bias favoring all open source and open access projects. Delving into the interesting colonial history of anthropology, and into discussions of globalization and neoliberal economic injustice, it's pretty easy to see how it makes sense to make anthropological work freely available to the world that it studies.

In this way I'll be exploring ways to study online communities – in this case communities of anthropologists. Its an exciting time for anthropology online. I've been following anthropology blogs for a year now, and its amazing how fast its growing. Its quite inspiring, and I think reflects a very vibrant community that's just itching to work (and fight) with each other! So while my research proposal is extremely vague, and I've been made aware of this, I'm absolutely confident that the Internet, blogs, and the desire to liberate anthropological knowledge from the world economy are fueling a change in anthropology, and that within this excitement I'll find an interesting "field" of study.

This is also an invitation to all other interested parties who might like to collaborate on research ideas and methods!

These two posts sat quietly for a while, a month at least. But with a little help from other bloggers, the posts above spread more broadly than I'd anticipated.

An open academic audience

Within a month or so, Lorenz Khazaleh of Antropologi.info and Erkan Saka of ErkanSaka.net, two motivated bloggers, had linked to the posts. Lorenz Khazaleh had summarized my research intentions and posted them on his well trafficked site. This helped to disseminate the intent of this research to other interested academics. Through these posts I came into contact with a number of other researchers similarly interested in Open Access publishing (a subject Lorenz Khazaleh and others, have long been covering). These posts, which highlight the work of other bloggers, are called “pingbacks”. I made an effort to reciprocate their kindness by highlighting other interesting researchers and blogs I came across.

Responses and interest from people I'd never met, proved to be quite motivating. It encouraged me to keep on top of a number of issues they were writing about, as well as to keep on thinking about what I'd written. Through this engagement I found a network of people who were willing and interested to talk anthropology in the blogosphere. This is not to say that all dialogue is beneficial to a project, but much of the time it is, and regardless of its contribution, in the context of academic projects, any outside interest is motivating. Balancing out this excitement was the reality that responses to posts I found interesting did not develop immediately, and often they didn’t develop at all.

Existing connections helped in the development of the blog. Alexandre Enkerli, and the supervisor of this research project, Maximillian Forte, both teachers at Concordia University, participated on the blog throughout. Having a few people to develop conversation on the blog helped to encourage others to share their own ideas. This ties in to studies showing that academics' online interactions are influenced by physical proximity:

> The most recent research on this rapidly maturing communication technology offers a more complex picture. Physical proximity and face-to-face interaction remain important determinants to the intensity of communication among scholars and development of collaborative interactions (Koku et al., 2001). (Thompson 2006:42)

Enthusiasm from researchers at Concordia University helped to get the ball rolling. With their participation alone, the blog would have been an effective collaborative space. But in being publicly accessible and open to commentary, the blog invited contributions from people I would never have encountered otherwise. While physical proximity certainly played a role in finding some of the projects key collaborators, dialogue developed with researchers around the world (ie. Malaysia, Singapore, Mexico, the Philippines, the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, Turkey, among others).

Introducing commentary

The main reason for using the blog as a research tool was to seek out feedback. Feedback was sought out from anyone who read the blog and who was willing to take interest in its development. This was done without formally involving them, or imposing expectations on their participation – aside that it be

contained in the form of commentary, that it be related in some way to the discussion, and that it be written in a language I could understand or translate from. In this sense the blog played part of an exercise to utilize commentary as part of an iterative research and writing strategy.

Looking at critiques of ethnographic writing in the past, issues have been raised as to the lack of input of interested groups into the design and development of research. Wallerstein et al. write:

> For unlike the natural world as defined by the natural sciences, the domain of the social sciences not only is one in which the object of study encompasses the researchers themselves but also is one in which the persons they study can enter dialogues or contests of various kinds with these researchers. Matters of debate in the natural sciences are normally solved without recourse to the opinions of the object of study. In contrast the peoples (or their descendants) studied by social scientists have entered increasingly into the discussion, whether or not their opinion was sought by scholars who, indeed, frequently considered this intrusion unwelcome. (Wallerstein et al. 1996:50)

Responses to research, by people lacking a Ph.D., have not been well integrated into the academic publishing process. Anthropologists have however voiced the need to incorporate this dialogue. Caroline B. Brettell writes:

> Reflecting on what she did and did not show to her respondents prior to publication, Lawless (1992) concludes that she should have included her key respondents' interpretations of her interpretation, as well as her own reinterpretation, in the final text of her book "Handmaidens of the Lord." "If we insist upon interpreting other people's interpretations, at the very least, we are obligated to allow them space to respond. At the very most, we stand to learn far more than we ever bargained for." (Brettell 1993:21)

Blogging and other publishing options online can provide, in particular contexts, a means of interacting with people involved in the research. As Johannes Fabian writes:

> One could also point out that setting up virtual archives can be a step toward meeting not only demands and expectations to “return” our research results to the people we study but to initiate discussion of our work as well as additions to the corpus. (Fabian 2008:122)

Integrating a blog into the research process gives people a space to respond, prior to, and after, publication. At the very least, should no dialogue be developed, it can be used to share information and make research more accessible.

Posting drafts of thesis chapters worked to elicit a number of responses from helpful collaborators. Writing about the history of anthropology is challenging, and while journal articles provide an extensive written record, it helped to bounce my representation of that record off a few readers before submitting it to the supervisor. The following table includes a few of the comments received in response to posted drafts of the previous chapter.

From this project's blog
Posted by Socect on October 3, 2010 at 6:07 pm ... I would ask you to reconsider your critique of anthropology-as-handmaiden-of-colonialism, largely following in the tradition of Talal Asad. The problem with this critique is that in moving from a position of marginality – when Talal Asad first proposed it – to one of general hegemony (the paradigmatic story of “what anthropology is”), both inside and outside academic anthropology, Asad’s critique (and more generally Said’s related “Orientalism”) has gone from being revolutionary to reactionary. It is a critique which positively transformed anthropology (a successful revolution!), through further development in both “writing culture” school and postcolonial theory (e.g. subaltern studies). I most often find it used these days, however, to either rubbish anthropology in contrast to sociology, political science, geography and other disciplines, which blithely carry on deeply blinkered ethnocentric, Euro-American projects in the meantime (in places such as Singapore where I work); or within anthropology as a discipline (specifically American anthropology) the critique is used to justify disengagement

with the world; i.e. “studying at home” because “studying abroad” is so morally suspect. I question, however, whether ignorance of “others” (however defined) is really so revolutionary?

You also seem to reinforce and reinscribe anthropology-as-EuroAmerican-undertaking even up to the present day. This ignores the “world anthropologies” movement, which has gained some ground over the past ten years or so. It would seem, in a work about how anthropologists communicate with each other, taking this into consideration would be of substantial importance.
...

The subject of multiple anthropologies proved to be a valuable discussion that I had erroneously cut from an early draft. With this feedback, and a list of articles obtained through an email conversation that would help back it up, a discussion of anthropologies was introduced. Further, his feedback revealed how giving people a place to respond to ones arguments is undeniably positive – so long as one is willing to enter debate with ones readers. Another reader comment pushed me to develop the debate between science and advocacy, a discussion that feeds into the need for public engagement and new audiences:

From this project's blog
A response to the post “A Changing Anthropology”

Posted by Jérémy on August 20, 2010 at 10:35 pm

…

Maybe the idea of “pure science” could be debated a bit more. I doubt that anthropology can ever be “pure science”, or at least I can’t see what the meaning of “pure” would be in this phrase. And the pretense of doing pure “Science” can be used by people who confuse “dominant” and “objective”, and don’t recognize or acknowledge their own politics.

Ideas developed through blog posts as the research progressed, often guided by the thoughtful input of blog readers. Pondering issues related to centering research around an online community of academic bloggers, I wrote a post “Community, the Internet, and Anthropology”, which discussed material I'd read in a journal article. Within a few days I received the following response, which revealed another aspect of the medium's potential.

> From this project's blog
> A response to the post “Community the Internet and Anthropology”
>
> Posted by John Postill on June 26, 2008 at 9:39 pm
>
> Hi OW, many thanks for discussing my article – it’s always a thrill to find that there are actually journal article readers out there!
> I’d like to correct your first bullet point where you say that “Social network analysis overemphasizes relationships at the expense of social capital”. No, if I remember my article correctly, in fact Bourdieu takes issue with social network analysts for overemphasizing the importance of social capital (i.e. who you know) at the expense of other species of capital, such as cultural capital (what you know) or symbolic capital (renown, prestige, etc).
> ...

In the post I had unwillingly “gotten it wrong'. Interestingly, the author of the published article found the post and took time to correct aspects of my interpretation. This shows how it is beneficial for researchers to discuss their work with others. What better place is there to do this than a blog? These comments helped to bring some clarity and perspective to a rough thesis chapter that badly needed editing, revision and ongoing debate. Through this feedback I

was able to refine arguments, at least partially. Peer review has always been an important aspect of scholarship, and this experiment has shown that in some cases, it can be done openly.

At the same time the blog isn't the only means of getting feedback. Existing social networks like online mailing lists and forums are good places to bounce ideas off a specialized audience. Discussions on mailing lists (i.e. the Media Anthropology Network) and on forums (i.e. the Open Anthropology Cooperative) helped to elicit responses from numerous anthropologists already active online. So while writing on a blog can develop feedback and interest, it helps to seek out existing networks to better reach one's audience and to let them know about the research being shared on the blog.

Taking time

Reading and commenting on academic work takes time. While writing the initial research proposal, I sent a draft to Lorenz Khazaleh, hoping to get some feedback on it. He declined the offer, and apologized explaining that he was deep into a project and had no time to even read it. I thanked him anyway, and realized yet another enormous advantage provided by an open blog. Sometimes people are busy, sometimes they aren't. The great thing about blogging as a research strategy is that it invites people to contribute in their own time, without having to be asked. While unwilling to tackle a graduate student's research proposal in the middle of his own projects, other people were.

Given that researchers are not paid to engage themselves in this way, it is fascinating that researchers are spending time “working” in the blogosphere at all. David Price writes:

> The political economy of academia is not structured to reward individuals building things for a common good outside the peer review process. It has long been true that many of the most useful academic resource tools (annotated bibliographies, reference books, and the like) are undervalued or unrecognized by formal academic assessments. For now at least, academic blogs seem to be an electronic extension of this troubling phenomenon. (Price 2010:141)

Anthropologists are rarely paid to review work. On a professional level then, there is tension between a formal publishing record established in peer reviewed presses, and between spending time doing anthropology outside the classroom. Is it fair to expect researchers to maintain an online presence? For many, online interaction hasn't become a part of the rest of their lives, and for them involving themselves on people's blogs requires time they don’t want to give.

Being there

For some online engagement is already a part of their everyday lives, and among this group the act of “being there” takes on new meaning. Rather than being in a remote place, the act of being there, for the Internet ethnographer, is about maintaining a presence online, such that students, researchers, people involved in the research and anyone interested, can communicate with the researcher.

Challenges to getting people to respond

Not accustomed to writing “out in the open”, the majority of my classmates were unwilling to comment on the blog. Instead, one classmate printed the post and mailed me three pages of hand written comments, possibly to prove the point that there are many ways to get feedback and they don't have to involve unwanted public exposure. Not everyone is comfortable writing publicly, even when given the option to write anonymously. For this reason it would be difficult to solicit responses from all sorts of groups that might be involved in a research project. A blog cannot be used in every research setting. And while comments can be “anonymous”, it is not safe to assume the author of those anonymous comments cannot be traced. There are all sorts of ways to identify the author of a comment, be it writing style, common spelling errors, IP addresses, etc. In the case of highly sensitive information, the anonymity of a blog comment would not be enough. Researchers seeking this kind of information online would be better off working with encryption and email.

Censorship

Anthropologists are invested in different political interests. They support particular institutions and ways of thinking. And they are funded by particular agencies that have their own agendas. As open as the blog can be to conversation and commentary, it is simple to censor and close off the blog from that participation. Where anthropologists do not want feedback, the blog can provide a false sense of openness. It is easy to manipulate and direct

conversations to fit the researchers' needs. However, while comments can be censored and tracked, blogs should not be viewed in isolation. Where a researcher might censor comments, it is possible for those censored individuals to post the response elsewhere, i.e. on their own blog. So while anthropology journals may not provide a space for people to respond to work published within, it is true that the Internet provides people with a simple way to self-publish their own responses. So as closed as discipline specific journals may be, there are other places to discuss anthropological work online, and these online places facilitate interdisciplinary discussion.

Professionalism, identity and the blog

A big issue for researchers working “out in the open” is that of professionalism and identity. How should a researcher present themselves while conducting anthropological research? Just as it is easy for researchers to use blogs and other social media to share research ideas in a collaborative fashion, it is also easy to create distance between oneself and possible participants. Doing ethnography is political. The choices a researcher makes throughout the fieldwork process have consequences, sometimes good, sometimes bad. Expressing oneself openly on a blog will have political consequences of some sort. It is easy to upset people. Writing openly can be a productive research strategy, but as with all research methods it comes down to “on the spot” decisions of the researcher:

From the Open Anthropology Cooperative forum
Response to discussion “Ethnographic Blogging”

Reply by Keith Hart on July 7, 2009 at 7:14pm

…

In our pamphlet, *Anthropology and the crisis of the intellectuals* (1993), Anna Grimshaw and I dwell at length on how the project of scientific ethnography has been compromised by the shortening of time and distance in the twentieth century. We argue that the separation of "the field" and "writing up" encouraged bogus intellectual practices such as keeping a secret hoard of private fieldnotes and a lack of reflexivity in relations with those we study. Your example of ethnographic blogging just takes that process one step further. Perhaps you could be less deferential to the keepers of the traditional flame.

I often say that writing a thesis hinges on how you deal with two questions: what is the line of words from beginning to end and how do you choose what to keep in and what to leave out. Your public practice of involving the people you study in what you write breaks up the linearity, even if it doesn't abolish the final problem of the book form. The second question is intellectual and aesthetic, for sure, but above all it is about politics. The issue of 'confidentiality' is just the tip of the iceberg. Everything you write has political consequences, both actual and potential. I would go further, fieldwork results are determined more by the political choices you make on the spot than by any research design. All of this has been obscured by the attempt to construct an 'objective' academic discourse and call it "ethnography".

Is a researcher's blog a place for personal ramblings? Are there academic standards to be maintained? Should this information be shared? Is it okay to ramble about ones' coworkers? Questions like these have caused some worry and anxiety among academics.

Further, people use the Internet differently. There is a divide between people who use the Internet everyday, and those who don't. This distance can result in profoundly different expectations and understandings of people's online behavior. What will a researcher write? Why are they blogging and not working

on a journal publication? What if they embarrass the university? Worries of this sort have driven some hiring committees to look unfavourably on applicants with blogs. Ghost writer “Ivan Tribble” discusses how he and others used researchers online profiles against them:

> Our blogger applicants came off reasonably well at the initial interview, but once we hung up the phone and called up their blogs, we got to know “the real them” — better than we wanted, enough to conclude we didn’t want to know more. (Tribble 2005:2)

Not used to people sharing so much information online, he and others on the hiring committee found applicants with blogs to be lacking in good judgment. He worried that if they were to share so much online, that they might also share the dirty laundry of the department. For this reason his hiring teams tended to reject applicants who maintained blogs. His article stirred up a firestorm in the blogosphere, revealing a divide in academia between those familiar with online tools, and those afraid of them. This is one reason many academic bloggers prefer to write with a pseudonym that protects their identity.

Further, depending on the current political contexts, researchers may not be able to write freely. And what may seem safe to write about now, may become a liability in the future. Christen writes:

> Within these new scenarios for collaboration and exchange come questions (and anxieties) about the properness of sharing - what information can be shared? What should be shared? (Christen 2008)

What information can be shared as a research project progresses? Will sharing it work to develop dialogue? Or will it cut dialogue off? Do researchers even want

to work in an archived setting, where their professional academic interactions are archived permanently, open to the eyes of their friends, family and co-workers?

Publicly archived online interactions create a challenge for those people trying to maintain clear and separate identities online. If a person was to search your name on Google, what do you want them to see? Your research? Your Facebook profile? Enkerli writes:

> From this project's blog
> A response to the post "Writing for ourselves"
>
> Comment by enkerli on September 15, 2008 @ 6:40pm
>
> "If you think about it, we all have different conversational spheres. We all control the "privacy levels" when we talk/write. Many Facebook users have sophisticated ways to deal with those issues (contrary to what some Fb-naysayers have been assuming). But it's also part of our daily lives.
>
> A few examples from a teaching life…
>
> When we lecture, most of us tend to assume that everything we say is on-record. Those of us who do lecture casts (podcasts from lectures) are probably even more conscious of being on-record (because we're actually recorded). But any lecture can and might be recorded by individual students, even if such a practise is explicitly forbidden in the syllabus.
>
> When we hold office hours, we typically want to have as much on-record as possible (to protect ourselves from manipulative students) while students mostly want what they say to remain off-record or at least relatively private. There's even an assumption of something like the "X-client privilege," even though the rules are a bit unclear. Something similar happens with private messages between student and teacher but, there, it's easy for the teacher to keep a trace ("just in case") without jeopardizing the "privileged" nature of the interaction.
>
> Without being "celebrities" by any means, many teachers live "public lives." Some are interviewed by mainstream media, others are invited to public conferences, etc. Those of us who blog are able to create a "public persona" which may be slightly different from our "teaching persona." Wesch's case could be interesting, there. He almost achieved the type of Internet fame afforded a high school student playing with a light-saber. And he's given several public presentations (the LoC one may be the best-known, recently, and it's been used as "evidence

against him"). He remains a teacher. And he probably does read a number of the things which are said about him. Those are all part of the same person's life, but Wesch may have created a specific persona for public appearances and public criticism. If he had been active on WoW or SecondLife instead of YouTube, he might have created an "avatar" (in multiple senses of the word)..."

Michael Wesch's ears must have been burning, for soon after the discussion began he joined in,

From this project's blog
A response to the post "Writing for ourselves"

Comment by Michael Wesch on September 15, 2008 @ 8:22pm

Great commentary here. It is interesting how we construct virtual walls & private rooms in the otherwise wide-open world of cyberspace. Most striking to me is that both of you have noted that people love to attack me (and I'm sure this is true because I know *I* would attack me if it weren't me!), yet I almost never see the attacks. Most take place on mailing lists or in private e-mail chains that I am not a part of (though often somebody alerts me to it so I can enter the conversation). It seems that here would be evidence that not only do we not want to share our work with 15 year-old YouTubers, but sometimes we don't even want to engage in dialogue with each other!

Edmund Carpenter has noted that a change in media can make old realities frighteningly explicit. Maybe the web is now making it frighteningly explicit that anthros actually don't want to talk with everybody, and sometimes don't even want to talk to each other.

More likely though it is just that *sometimes* we don't want to talk publicly (as Alexandre mentions above.) The notion that we as authors might actually want to restrict access to our publications has been an interest of mine for a long time. I think there is some merit to restricting access and having private or semi-private conversations. Even as we push for an increasingly public anthropology, many of us (including me) still see how useful it would be to have perfectly secure "closed-access" forums for professional access only. I know it sounds antithetical to almost everything we do, but there are times that we have sensitive or ethically complex information that is still of great value to the scholarly community but is not appropriate for the broader public.

A semi-private conversation can also be useful to flesh out a few ideas before going fully public … and we're lucky that digital communications offer us so many different possibilities to create these walls and rooms where we can have these kinds of discussions.

Blogging research demands care. Ethical review boards are in charge of monitoring researchers to make sure they act responsibly, but bypassing peer review in order to share ideas as the research develops brings a whole new set of challenges. Unrefereed, it is possible for researchers to step on nasty land mines as they maneuver and interact with informants online. Given the ability to share thoughts and opinions almost instantly, it is easy to slip, writing messages that one later regrets. Part of this is the result of writing quickly, but it is also the result of people never having written in a public medium.

Soliciting feedback online obviously works, but learning to present oneself publicly is tricky when writing "openly". It can be embarrassing when personal identities collide. To give an example of this I offer up a story about a researcher (myself), engaging online in one of the Media Anthropology Network's organized e-seminars. The discussion focused around the use of the blog in the research setting, and I was excited to engage the topic after having started to write an academic blog. But I found the seminar awkward. How should I present myself when writing to a bunch of Ph.D.s? The seminar was more formal than conversations that had occurred on my blog, and there were more participants and readers. Further, the entire discussion was archived and rather permanently hosted on the Media Anthropology Networks website. To this day, I cannot read the comments I submitted. Some were probably okay, but when I look back on it I find my words pretentious and over-excited. This isn't to criticize what I said, so

much as to introduce the issue of maintaining identities online. Blogging research in the open asks that the researcher create a public identity, that it be accessible to all their friends and family, etc. As embarrassing as a drunken Facebook photo can be to the academic, so too is presenting oneself, in an academic fashion, to the rest of the world.

A few disadvantages to sharing work as it develops

Openly disseminating research prior to publishing isn't without its problems. Many are quick to point out that publishers can and do refuse to publish work that has been shared elsewhere. A few publishers want exclusivity over the content. They demand that they control the dissemination of the work and they will not tolerate researchers sharing the work on their own, prior to it being published.

But this attitude isn't universal. A few publishers welcome the broader dissemination of academic work, realizing that through better dissemination the publishers achieve better reputations. Duke University Press for example welcomed the publication of Christopher Kelty's book “Two Bits: The Cultural Significance of Free Software” (2009) in both Open Access and print formats.

Beyond the issue of exclusivity, openly sharing work prior to revue makes it impossible to have blind peer review. Gender and ethnic biases have been revealed among editors and publishers in the past. To correct this, peer review is often done “blind”, where reviewers and authors communicate indirectly through

an editor. The reviewers, not knowing the name of the author, are less likely to be influenced by gender and ethnicity. But sharing work online as it progresses exposes the researcher's identity. The researcher could avoid this issue by writing pseudonymously, but to do so would make it difficult for others to credit their work. Further, once published under the persons' real name, it is then possible to identify the researcher's “pseudonymous” blog. Because of this pseudonymous academic bloggers are less likely to share and discuss their current research.

In conclusion ethnography, as a research approach that focuses on the involvement and participation of the researcher, is perfectly suited to studies done online. As Hine argues, ethnography has always been adaptive – necessarily as a way of engaging changing research contexts. With the Internet there are numerous ways to engage people, and one interesting distinction made here has been between online ethnography and different forms of “textual analysis”. It provides a way to create documents in collaboration with others, knowing that the information contained will be made public. While not being perfect, blogging research is a new strategy for creating and disseminating ideas. It also provides ways for people to participate in anthropological research, and ways for people to represent themselves. But writing openly in public is a new experience for most people. Researchers exploring this means of engagement are sure to step into a few embarrassing circumstances - just as they always have doing fieldwork. Only in this case the interactions might end up archived

permanently. Interacting online as a researcher can work to break through to new audiences and to engage new participants in the research setting. It is a great way to disseminate academic ideas, and to get feedback on one's work. It demands that researchers write in public, although not necessarily for the public, which demands practice, ethical concern for those involved, and a fair bit of identity management.

IV. Making research accessible

> Every year [the faculty] get lists of journals with a request as to what we can cut, not add. Our institution pays NO money to subscribe to any journal listing service. No JStor and very few books, most dating to the 1960's. I loan students my own books, sometimes never to get them back. Honest.
>
> To suggest that my students can "find articles" to post to a common wiki, ain't going to happen. I hope that they can discuss an issue on a specified set of readings that I provide. And I still maintain there is precious little on the internet that is useful for students of cultural anthropology (the archaeologists do much better, IMHO). (Pamthropologist 2008)

Thus far we've explored a number of reasons for making research more accessible to anthropology's various audiences. We've addressed how anthropologists working in different institutions with their own interests and agendas (different anthropologies) can benefit from better access to each other's work. We've also touched on the need for more collaborative research methods that work with issues relevant to communities other than that of the anthropologist. Given these changing approaches and audiences, how is the Internet fueling change in the way anthropologists disseminate their work? One significant change comes with the Open Access movement, whose members seek to remove the price-barriers that block interested parties from being able to access the latest peer reviewed research. The Internet provides simple publishing tools that allow researchers to disseminate their work better and farther than most academic journals had in the past, but the academic publishing industry has been slow to take advantage. What issues arise in trying to make peer reviewed published research freely accessible online?

By making research accessible online, researchers disseminate their work across disciplinary and institutional boundaries, and they make their work accessible to students and researchers within their discipline who have limited access to academic journals. But even within specialized disciplines, there are issues with the pay-to-access model for disseminating research. Many university libraries do not have access to, nor do they have the budget to access, every journal and book available. In this way the scholarly publishing system isn't ideal. It is a challenge for students and researchers at many institutions, to access the latest research.

One major issue hampering the dissemination of academic work is that academics unnecessarily give publishers exclusive rights to disseminate their work. Thankfully more and more publishers are allowing researchers to share their work. More common than the journals that do not allow researchers to share the work, are researchers who remain unaware of their options.

Given how easy it is to publish online, why should anthropologists be satisfied with the limited audience catered by most subscription based journals? In his post, “Six Anthropologists and the Internet”, Lorenz Khazaleh discusses how it has been a challenge to get anthropologists to embrace the Internet and Open Access (OA) publishing:

> More and more anthropologists have started blogging and discussing their research interests with a wider audience. They use the internet as a library, as a tool for learning and teaching, as a space where they conduct fieldwork. They exchange knowledge, build networks across disciplines and continents. Last but not least, the internet is perfectly suited to inform the general public about what anthropology is about.

> Nevertheless, the symbolic capital associated with the Internet and Internet publishing is fairly low: "It should be a political cause for academics to heighten it, both through using the Internet for one's own publications and by increasing the prestige of the Internet by using it actively", anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen writes. Kerim Friedman agrees and adds: "The biggest challenge is to get Anthropologists to embrace Open Access in the same way that physical scientists have. (Khazaleh 2006)

Why is “the symbolic capital associated with the Internet and Internet publishing fairly low”? One argument is that the ease of publishing online has opened the door for all the material that had previously been unpublishable. Work too controversial, distasteful, or even bizarre, can finally be shared free of the control of biased editors and jealous reviewers. Yes, the anthropologist is finally free to share ideas uncensored and this means that previously rejected work now has a home.

With all sorts of unreviewed, uncensored, politically charged material being shared online, the importance of Open Access to research becomes clear. The most prestigious places to be published are the least accessible (through a subscribing library). The least prestigious places (everything else), such as blogs, websites, and other social media, are open to all. If peer review is meant to filter out the best research, why is it then the material that is most restricted? The lack of access to quality peer reviewed research online, motivates a group of academics who seek to make quality peer reviewed research available online.

Open access publishing

> Putting something on the Internet doesn’t make it good (sometimes it means the opposite). But the fact that we can publish this way, and the fact that we are doing so, opens up an opportunity to rethink the meaning of publication and the role of scholarly societies in the process. One of the spurious

> criticisms made of OA is that it threatens peer review. The logic behind this argument is related to 1-click publishing—that OA means bypassing the entire infrastructure of publishing, which includes much more than just making something available. However, no OA advocate would ever support this claim; OA is supposed to be about making really good research really widely available. (Kelty 2008:1)

Taking advantage of opportunities provided by the Internet, a vocal community of scholars have been pushing to make their research freely available online. Open Access (OA) publishing aims to improve the dissemination of peer reviewed academic work. Peter Suber defines it as “literature [that] is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions.” (Suber 2007). This has caused some friction with established publishing institutions who depend on revenues charged for access to the work.

Open Access advocates claim that scholarship is meant to be shared as widely as possible, and that the business strategies publishers have followed are in conflict with the goals of academic researchers. Researchers are unable to access all the material produced for the simple reason that no library can afford the costs to subscribe to all the academic journals out there. Why can't researchers use the Internet to share their work with each other? Limiting access to research reduces the effectiveness and impact of that research. Quite simply the issue is that subscription based journals are not disseminating the work they publish as well as they could, in that a researchers website can disseminate it better.

Open Access publishing can improve the impact of scholarly research. It improves citation rates. It makes it easier to find. It lets students and researchers

studying at institutions with shrinking library budgets access and make use of the latest peer reviewed research. It also lets researchers around the world, at institutions subscribing to different journals, find and make use of each other's work. It might also be a business strategy that saves a struggling academic publishing system, for as Alex Golub argues, the existing toll-access publishing model is broken:

> If you think that making money by giving away content is a bad idea, you should see what happens when the AAA tries to make money selling it. To put it kindly, our reader-pays model has never worked very well. Getting over our misconceptions about open access requires getting over misconceptions of the success of our existing publishing program. The choice we are facing is not that of an unworkable ideal versus a working system. It is the choice between a future system which may work and an existing system which we know does not. (Golub 2007:6)

Open Access publishing can disseminate peer reviewed work better, but it is a challenge to cut out an industry's revenues while also being economically sustainable. Changing the way scholarly societies and publishers make money isn't easy.

While scholarly societies struggle to adopt better strategies for disseminating academic knowledge, hundreds of Open Access journals have been created. Some of these are traditional subscription journals that went Open Access, and others have adopted Open Access from the start. Researchers have many choices as to where they share their work. There are Open Access journals covering almost every academic specialization. But within each discipline some journals are considered to be more important places to be published than others. Harley et al. write, "... peer-reviewed prestige publications

are the “coin of the realm” in tenure and promotion decisions” (Harley et al. 2008:6). Researchers need to consider the prestige that publishing in a particular journal brings. Publishing in the right journal can make sure that the right people recognize the work. And while hundreds of Open Access journals have been created, the most important places to be published, the prestige journals in anthropology, have been unwilling or unable to adopt a pure Open Access publishing model. Waltham writes:

> The Discussions and conclusions section of this report articulates the finding that a shift to an entirely new funding model in the pure form of Open Access (author/producer pays) in which the costs of publishing research articles in journals are paid for by authors or a funding agency, and readers have access free online, is not currently a sustainable option for any of this group of journals based on the costs provided. The sources of external funding required for such a model are also not clear and may not be available even as broadly as in STM disciplines. (Waltham 2009:5)

Moving to a pure open access model is not possible, Waltham argues, and others agree. Stacy Lathrop writes that the AAA, in keeping a subscription based model, is simply doing what it needs to do to sustain itself:

> Reading through old AAA Bulletins, Newsletters and Reports, a reader quickly discovers that at times when the AAA has reached bumpy finances, decisions were made by the executive board to assure publications are sustainable. (Lathrop 2007:7)

While not embracing a strict Open Access publishing model that might threaten the sustainability of a large scholarly society other ways of achieving Open Access have been better received. Journals can disseminate individual articles online, rather than the entire journal, by allowing authors a choice and charging a fee to make the article Open Access. Waltham's study, which generalizes across

a number of social science and humanities disciplines, reveals some promising numbers for Open Access adoption. He writes:

> There has been a dramatic increase in the percentage of publishers offering optional open access to authors, from only 9% in 2005 to 30% in 2008. This applies to a total of 1,871 titles. 53% of these publishers have enabled an open access option for all of their titles. However, the takeup of the open access option is low; of those publishers which have offered this option for two or more years under an author-pays model, 52.9% had a take-up rate of 1% or less, 73.5% had a take-up rate of 5% or less, and 91.2% had a take-up rate of 10% or less. (Waltham 2009:11)

Having outsourced the publishing and dissemination responsibilities to Wiley-Blackwell, authors publishing in the American Anthropology Associations journals have the option to pay prior to publishing the article, for it to be shared freely online. Researchers then need to find a way to pay to publish their article, be it through funding agencies, grants, or their own pockets.

Recognizing challenges to changing publishing business models, Open Access advocates recognize different ways of achieving Open Access. Steven Harnard discusses the differences between “Green” and “Gold” Open Access, arguing that giving researchers the rights to archive their work online, outside of the journal, is the most important goal:

> What the research community needs, urgently, is free online access (Open Access, OA) to its own peer-reviewed research output. Researchers can provide that in two ways: by publishing their articles in OA journals (Gold OA) or by continuing to publish in non-OA journals and self-archiving their final peer-reviewed drafts in their own OA Institutional Repositories (Green OA). OA self-archiving, once it is mandated by research institutions and funders, can reliably generate 100% Green OA. Gold OA requires journals to convert to OA publishing (which is not in the hands of the research community) and it also requires the funds to cover the Gold OA publication costs. With 100% Green OA, the research community's access and impact problems are already solved. (Harnad 2007:1)

With “Gold Open Access” the journals themselves make research freely available online. They have found other ways to generate income. “Green Open Access” represents another strategy, of maintaining a journal's pay-to-access subscription model, while leaving broader dissemination of the research up to the author. Green Open Access gives researchers the right to archive their own work, providing a way to maintain library subscriptions to scholarly societies, while also allowing researchers to make use of the Internet to properly disseminate their work. The number of journals allowing authors to retain the copyright to their work is promising:

> In 2003, 83% of publishers required copyright transfer, in 2005, the figure stood at 61%. In 2008 this has dropped to 53%, and those which only require a license to publish have increased from 17% to 20.8%. (Waltham 2009:11)

More and more journals are allowing authors the right to disseminate their work on a personal website or on an online repository. This is referred to as “self-archiving”, and authors have the choice of archiving their work in a number of different places online. There are institutional repository's affiliated with particular universities, and there are discipline specific archives, like the Mana'o Anthropology Archive (which still carries an institutional brand).

The Mana'o self archiving repository

As part of this research I encouraged a number of professors at Concordia University to archive their work online, and with permission I submitted one professors essay to the Mana'o Self Archiving Anthropology Repository. The process is simple, and had been laid out to me prior in Kerim Friedman's

post/pamphlet “Self-Archiving For Anthropologists Made Easy” (2008). To archive an article to Mana'o a few steps need to be followed. First, the author must have the copyright permissions to post it online. Second, the author usually needs to have a pre-print version of the article. It's not okay to download your own an article from Jstor to post on your own site. Journals tend to keep the copyright on their edited version. The difficulty getting through these first two steps has been enough to block many academics from making their research accessible online. Thankfully, self archiving repositories maintain a small staff that does this for you. Email them the article and their librarians will double check the copyright and archive it online. Yes it is that easy.

Open Access documents are free to access, but there are still a lot of costs involved to verify, catalog, and host these documents. Spearheaded by anthropologist and Savage Minds (a popular anthropology blog) writer Alex Golub, the Mana'o repository was one of the first anthropology specific Open Access repositories. But having limited resources, the Mana'o project's servers ran into occasional trouble. Access to the servers was sporadic, and when I went in to show a professor their new archived article, we were unable to access it. This goes to show that disseminating research online is not free. Open access makes it free to read, but it still requires resources. There are numerous costs surrounding the dissemination of academic work, and as the system works now, most of that money, while coming from libraries and funding agencies, has been long controlled by the publishers.

Access to the Mana'o site continued to degrade until eventually, among relatively few outcries, the operators announced they might be shutting down the repositories doors. Thankfully after a few months in limbo, the archive found a new home and new servers, managing to reopen its doors in the Fall of 2010. I discussed the future of Mana'o with the curators of the repository over email:

By email, Aug. 2010

Owen Wiltshire: What were the greatest challenges involved in keeping the archive alive?

Alex Golub: The biggest problem the archive faced was spare cycles -- everyone (especially me, the main energizer for the project) simply doesn't have the time to spend to give it the time it deserves, unfortunately (this is why these answers are so brief). I think of this as a post-tenure project I foolishly started before tenure. However, since I am going up for tenure this year (and will hopefully be successful!) hopefully my biography will catch up with my ambitions. Real change is the work of years, even if the lifecycle of publicity about it extremely short.

John Russell: Copyright was the greatest challenge for me. It's time-consuming to check articles to see if we can put them up or not. We turned down a good number of items because the publishers didn't allow authors to post in a subject repository, or only allowed pre-prints but the depositor just had a post-print. If authors don't get on the ball with authors' rights, then the future of self-archiving will be a hassle. It's also worth recognizing that virtual worlds exist because of real world labor. The Internet makes scholarly communication easier, but we tend to forget that there's a lot of work going on to provide the infrastructure. Maintaining the Mana'o infrastructure was a big challenge. Not just the technology infrastructure, but the people, too.

O: What is the future of self-archiving for anthropologists?

AG: I could be TOTALLY wrong, but as far as I can tell there are two issues at play: first, where documents will be located. There is such a proliferation of online spaces, ranging from Scribd (typically used to archive _other people's_ published work, as far as I can tell) to personal homepages with CVs and self-archiving, that Google is the closest we have to 'confederated search'. The lack of a hegemonic site will not be remedied in the future as far as I can tell -- and I'm not sure it will. PDFs are not high-def video -- you just don't need big iron in the center to host them.

Second, there are legal/cultural/norms issues. Publishers have been spectacularly unsuccessful in keeping bootleg PDFs from circulating, either in various online sites or simply via email, so the law does not (so far) appear to have teeth. Apathy and fear that one's work will be read are the biggest reasons that keep anthropologists from publishing, as far as I can tell. I think its sad that PDFs are going the way of MP3s -- the cultural norm is to share, but the legal requirement is not too. The cost is that a generation of scholars are being raised to think that the law is an ass, not to take seriously the rights of authors, or to believe that the law legitimately reflects democratic consensus about what is right and wrong. I hope Mana'o can provide an aggressive, ethical way to get people to share more and more which respects both the public's right to know and the author's right to be known.

Why has a repository for a discipline with so many been left up to so few? With so many anthropologists writing so much, surely there are resources available. Why hasn't the American Anthropological Association and its members stepped up to create an online archive? Pondering these issues on this project's blog, I received a response letting me know that the AAA was indeed debating the introduction of a self-archiving repository but that it would take some time to plan and implement,

From this project's blog
A response to the post "OA in Anthropology. Some more notes."

Comment by Hugh Jarvis on May 14, 2009 @ 3:50pm

The CFPEP Cmt [Committee on the Future of Print and Electronic Publishing] on which I serve is actually looking into the possibility of an archive now, but it's just in a very preliminary exploratory discussion phase right now — so please don't get your hopes up. Doing that sort of project right takes an enormous amount of planning, support, and of course money!

(The CFPEP took over the duties of two previous AnthroSource working

committees during a general realignment of AAA workflow.)

FYI, the CFPEP is also exploring ways to index more content, outside of just AAA publications, so an AnthroSource search might find a much broader world of anthropological content as well. Again, we're just exploring options right now.

We're looking generally at all suggestions or needs expressed by AAA members. For self-archiving, you are right, the author's agreement is pretty buried. i found it in the manuscript submission site's additional resources! [PDF]

Also see your right to reprint an article under "Information for AAA Authors". (I'm going to ask if it would be possible to make these documents more visible on the AAA site.)

Where there have been challenges forming discipline-specific archives in anthropology, institutional repositories have been fairing a bit better. Concordia University has been implementing its own self-archiving repository, to cater to Concordia researchers. In speaking with researchers at Concordia, I got the impression they would be more open to archiving their work with the Concordia repository, than other options elsewhere.

The Concordia self archiving repository

As this research neared its end, Concordia Universities own repository came online. Of 146 documents listed under "Sociology and Anthropology", on the Concordia University Spectrum Self Archiving Repository, 144 are masters theses. Only 2 articles that have been published in anthropology journal have been archived, both by the same professor. Other teachers at the university maintain large archives of their work online, on their own websites, but none of their work exists in the university repository as of yet. I was wrong to assume an

institutional repository would motivate the faculty to embrace Open Access. We can even say, given these numbers, that the faculty at Concordia are actively resisting the use of the institutional repository.

Mandating Open Access

Self archiving repositories have yet to be put to use by the majority of anthropologists, and it has been a challenge to harness academic resources collaboratively such that a discipline specific repository might become a central resource for anthropology. Authors continue to publish in closed access journals, even when given the option to go Open Access. Even when the journals explicitly allow authors to share their work on a repository, and when it only involves emailing the article to the repository, many researchers still do not try to improve the dissemination of their work.

Further, few authors realize that they have the rights to archive versions of their work online. Some simply do not see the point of doing so, being happy with the way their work has been published. For these reasons Open Access advocates are pushing universities and funding agencies to mandate Open Access publishing. Below are Open Access mandates adopted by Harvard and MIT. The key difference between the two was that at MIT the faculty unanimously approved it:

> *The Harvard Mandate*
>
> The Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Harvard University is committed to disseminating the fruits of its research and scholarship as widely as possible. In keeping with that commitment, the Faculty adopts the following policy:

Each Faculty member grants to the President and Fellows of Harvard College permission to make available his or her scholarly articles and to exercise the copyright in those articles. In legal terms, the permission granted by each Faculty member is a nonexclusive, irrevocable, paid-up, worldwide license to exercise any and all rights under copyright relating to each of his or her scholarly articles, in any medium, and to authorize others to do the same, provided that the articles are not sold for a profit. The policy will apply to all scholarly articles written while the person is a member of the Faculty except for any articles completed before the adoption of this policy and any articles for which the Faculty member entered into an incompatible licensing or assignment agreement before the adoption of this policy. The Dean or the Dean's designate will waive application of the policy for a particular article upon written request by a Faculty member explaining the need.

To assist the University in distributing the articles, each Faculty member will provide an electronic copy of the final version of the article at no charge to the appropriate representative of the Provost's Office in an appropriate format (such as PDF) specified by the Provost's Office. The Provost's Office may make the article available to the public in an open-access repository.

...

The MIT Mandate

MIT Faculty Open-Access Policy

Passed by Unanimous of the Faculty, March 18, 2009

The Faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is committed to disseminating the fruits of its research and scholarship as widely as possible. In keeping with that commitment, the Faculty adopts the following policy: Each Faculty member grants to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology nonexclusive permission to make available his or her scholarly articles and to exercise the copyright in those articles for the purpose of open dissemination. In legal terms, each Faculty member grants to MIT a nonexclusive, irrevocable, paid-up, worldwide license to exercise any and all rights under copyright relating to each of his or her scholarly articles, in any medium, provided that the articles are not sold for a profit, and to authorize others to do the same. The policy will apply to all scholarly articles written while the person is a member of the Faculty except for any articles completed before the adoption of this policy and any articles for which the Faculty member entered into an incompatible licensing or assignment agreement before the adoption of this policy. The Provost or Provost's designate will waive application of the policy for a particular article upon written notification by the author, who informs MIT of the reason. (Suber 2009)

Open Access mandates push researchers who have not yet taken the time to make themselves aware of the possibilities and needs for Open Access, to share their work. But professors are also struggling with administrators at universities. Telling researchers how to publish their work is bound to bring about negative reactions.

But as the unanimous approval of the MIT mandate shows, many faculty are well informed and excited to disseminate their work openly. Having mandated Open Access, researchers at these universities who seek to publish in a closed-access journal, will need to fill out a form explaining why their work won't be included in the universities archive. This puts the responsibility to disseminate work squarely on the researchers, who, for numerous reasons continue to resist making their work accessible.

Open Access and anthropologies

Open Access improves students' and researchers' access to research that is locked up in expensive journals, but it also helps disseminate work around the world, and from around the world. The increased accessibility Open Access publishing brings, makes the variety of international publications more visible. Gutam et al discuss an issue where research published under "local" presses, tends to get little international exposure. For those willing to incorporate work (ie. search through Open Access journals) published internationally, Open Access makes that research easier to find. Gutam writes:

> Even as the government makes huge investments in science and technology, research publications produced by Indian institutions are not easily available or accessible, thus undermining the visibility and ranking of these institutions. The adoption of an open access policy can close the gap between research outcomes and their dissemination. (Gutam et al. 2010:1)

Libraries attached to universities in Canada subscribe to most of the American Anthropology Association journals, but they do not do the same for research published in other parts of the world. In this way Open Access dissemination strategies improve access to international scholarship.

Onta and Harper discuss the importance of recognizing these other venues, especially when researchers are pushed professionally to publish in prestigious venues:

> Publishing in prestigious places was simply a way of getting established within the discipline, so if you had a book with Oxford University Press (OUP) it was better than having a book with an unknown publisher. If you look at the life cycles of some well known researchers, you can see their earlier work published with OUP and then later books are published with relatively unknown publishers as they were in the position in their careers where they no longer needed the backing of such prestige. This is one aspect. Secondly, my work on the UK researchers on Nepal (Onta 2004a, 2004b) revealed a tension in the decision making process of where to publish. On the part of many of my respondents there was a recognition that their work ought to be available in Nepal. They were concerned with accessibility in two senses. (Onta and Harper 2005:2)

Their article discusses the need to support a variety of publishing options and for more publishing venues to be established around the world. It does not address Open Access publishing directly, but it does reveal the pressures that limited access to, and limited dissemination of, research imposes on scholarship. They write:

> So in conclusion, to understand our academic enterprise better, we need to pay more attention to the geography of publishing and its politics; the view, if you like, of the world from the perspective of the circulation of our texts tells

> us much about the political economy of academia. We should be more aware of the implications of where we publish for the diversity of publication ventures; what we do can undermine that diversity, or, strengthen it. (Onta and Harper 2005:10)

This ties into the relationship between the different "Anthropologies" discussed in Chapter 2. Accepting the plural "Anthropologies" as an answer to correcting ethnocentrism in the discipline, would require some form of exchange between them, else they simply be a disparate group of anthropologies all equally ethnocentric. Yet a 2009 study reveals that of 25 articles published in a recent issue of American Anthropologist, 19 authors came from the U.S., 3 from the U.K., 2 from Canada, and 1 from Australia (Waltham 2009:9). This is quite revealing of just how "centric" some anthropologies remain. There is clearly a need for diverse publishing venues.

Discussing this relationship between "anthropologies", Thompson writes:

> Syed Farid Alatas (2003) has argued that in international social science scholarship an academic division of labour exists between those who produce ideas and theory, on the one hand, and those who engage primarily in empirical work, on the other. He describes global academia as characterized by a 'centre–periphery continuum or structure of academic dependency', particularly in – but not limited to – the social sciences and humanities (Alatas, 2003: 610, fn. 5). Scholars based in what Alatas calls the 'social science powers' – particularly the US, UK and France – are disproportionately represented in the production of new knowledge and theory building, while scholars in 'semi-peripheral' countries (e.g. Japan, Germany, Australia) and academically 'peripheral' nations (especially in the Third World) are less visible in international scholarship and tend to be confined to doing work that is empirical rather than theoretical and that is focused on their own countries rather than comparative. (Thompson 2006:41)

In this way the publishing system has acquired ethnocentric characteristics after being institutionalized in European and North American social science programs. It is interesting then to look at the creation and adoption of Open Access journals,

which have developed quite differently. Forte (2008) points out that Open Access publishing in anthropology is “centered” in the periphery. He writes:

> Either way, open access publishing in anthropology is primarily not a North American phenomenon, and in the case of Anthropology listings that exclude Ethnology, it is primarily not a North American/European phenomenon. Indeed, the very Directory of Open Access Journals itself is not a North American innovation, but rather a Scandinavian one, and the host for it is Lund University Libraries. The innovations in the distribution, dissemination, and circulation of anthropology are coming in large part from the so-called periphery and semi-periphery of the world system, and outside of the disciplinary centre of gravity in terms of the accumulated mass of anthropologists and anthropology programs in the U.S. and western Europe. One can only speculate about what that will mean should the predominant mode of anthropological publishing in North America (commercial print, by subscription) collapse under the weight of its own contradictions and unsustainability. Suddenly the centre of anthropological publishing would shift to currently non-hegemonic entities. (Forte 2008)

Open Access publishing is improving international access to research. Scholars in “the periphery” are creating new journals and institutions to support their own research agendas, and Open Access can help those new, less prestigious journals disseminate work internationally – if researchers are willing to spend the time researching what is made available online. Perhaps this is why some researchers question the prestige of Open Access journals. So many new journals are being created outside what is considered to be the “center” of academic publishing. Clearly there was a need for more publication venues, but will scholars make use of them, either by publishing in them, or by taking the time necessary to search for and through them?

Anthropology, open data, and the militaries

Among Open Access advocates it is expected that academic research will be read by an academic audience. The model of distribution is still of expert writing to expert. It is not the intention of Open Access advocates to drastically change the audience of academic work. Yet as a glass tower Open Access research is open for all to see, and others have found interest. Academic research is interesting to many outside academia. Governments and militaries use academics and the information academics make available, as weapons of war. In this way Open Access publishing might work, even if by accident, to invigorate some new, and some old-want-to-be-forgotten, audiences.

It is difficult for anthropologists to distance themselves from imperialism, the military, and war. Research focused on 'others' is of particular interest to the military and to foreign policy and as such anthropologists find themselves unwilling bed partners with political efforts to subjugate, and control, the people with which the anthropologist has worked. Anthropologists share all sorts of obscure details about the communities in which they study. While a study might be about indigenous musical instruments, it might also include all sorts of "ethnographic data", such as the names of influential people in the community, or a map of a village, with locations of where these people live. As anthropology researchers go out into the world studying 'otherness', they are turning their experiences with political groups whose interests are not shared by the American or Canadian military, into well indexed, easy to search databases. There are

concerns then, among anthropologists and communities involved in anthropological research, of making information more accessible than it should be.

Who is going to benefit most from Open Access to information? Academics and anthropologists? Communities involved? Or will the information being shared be picked up by others, to be used in unexpected ways? Making information free to access liberates knowledge from economic binds, but it happens to be the largest institutions that are most able to harvest this information. Take for example the way the governments have put controls in place to monitor Internet traffic. Writing about particular topics can automatically flag that information for government censors. A researcher writing on their blog about Falong Gong or some such politically targeted group, should be aware that what they write will magically find its way into government censors hands. The dangers of making information about political groups public is an issue anthropologists have long been dealing with, and one that is magnified with the ability to find and filter information made accessible online.

In conclusion the Open Access movement is helping to make peer reviewed research more accessible online by removing the price barrier. Improving access to research internationally is one benefit, as is the improved dissemination to researchers working in institutions that do not have access to expensive scholarly databases. Further anthropological research is interdisciplinary, and it makes sense to make research accessible beyond the

specialized audiences catered to by most journals. But getting researchers to embrace Open Access is difficult. Even when presented the option, and when asked only to email the name of the article, many have chosen not to make their work available online. Further, many researchers remain unaware of their options. For others, the existing system works well enough, and they do not want to make their work freely accessible. Part of this resistance to making research accessible might relate to the issue of public exposure and to the discomfort and lack of professional reward that public visibility brings. Further, as clear is the need for improving the dissemination of anthropological work, it is important to explore the audiences involved. Open Access is not about public engagement even if it's about improving the discipline's visibility. Making research available on a self-archiving repository is not really a way of “giving back to communities”, unless the research is relevant or interesting to them. It also isn't about getting feedback from public audiences, and it doesn't invite collaboration from groups outside academia. It is, more simply, about improving the dissemination of peer reviewed academic work. This makes Open Access publishing a great way to open the door for others to become aware of what anthropologists write, but it isn't about writing for public audiences. Beyond Open Access, some anthropologists are using the Internet to reach new audiences, and to do this anthropology is being presented in new ways.

V. Anthropology in public and public anthropology

Anthropology being made accessible online can be seen as taking two directions. There is “public anthropology”, where researchers target audiences outside academia and then there is “anthropology in public” where researchers address disciplinary audiences. The audiences anthropologists are choosing to consider when they disseminate their work depend very much on different theoretical positions within anthropology. Writing “public anthropology” is done for various reasons; to address current events, as part of collaborative methods where researchers work on issues relevant to others, and to reject the scientistic goal of creating “knowledge for knowledge's sake”. Public anthropology can be an attempt to engage anthropology as a vehicle for social critique and change, at least in terms of manifesting public interest and dialogue. It is for these reasons that anthropologists seeking a public anthropology are not satisfied with the kind of anthropology, nor the audience, catered to in most journals – and in this way, Open Access publishing is not a form of “public engagement”.

Bloggers writing about topics related to anthropology can help to disseminate research before and after it has been published (again, anthropology in public), and they can explore new styles that appeal to new audiences (public anthropology). Blogs and other online publishing tools open the door for anthropologists to target different audiences.

But holding allegiance to the discipline, to the people involved in the study, and to “society at large” is an awkward and arguably impossible task. Writing about discipline specific subjects is rarely of interest to those outside that discipline. A person might wonder, “Why are you talking about Wallerstein? I thought this paper was about disseminating knowledge on the Internet!”. When researchers write for public audiences, outside the peer reviewed presses, using no specialized argot, questions are raised as to how the work should be judged. Wouldn't it then simply be journalism of an academic kind?

The less involved a piece of writing is with its own discipline, the harder it becomes to identify the work. What makes an anthropology blog, an anthropology blog? That the author discusses anthropology? That the author is an anthropologist? These questions reveal some of the challenges researchers interested in writing for other audiences might have. Taking an academic essay and posting it online is not an act of public engagement, and writing an article about current events, rather than contributing to disciplinary debates, is not always considered academic work.

Wesch meet Ruby

I can think of no better example to illustrate the difference between public anthropology, and anthropology in public, than to compare the work of two prominent anthropologists whose approaches online are of two different kinds. Both embrace the Internet. Both make use of different media, and both have written about the use of these media in anthropology. Both have also archived

numerous articles online. But the two disagree quite fundamentally as to what anthropology should look like.

Michael Wesch, professor at Kansas State University, engages his students in the production of YouTube videos. The videos have been well received by the YouTube community, having been viewed millions of times. For the most part they were well received in academia as well, but some challenges have been raised. Jay Ruby is an anthropologist who has explored the use of different media in anthropology, and he is a renowned contributor to the field of visual anthropology. For him, too much of the discipline is sacrificed when it seeks recognition from outside. When someone suggested he publicize his work on YouTube as Wesch had done, he was quite dismissive with his reply. The following blog post addressed the question of targeting different audiences, while also working to strike up some interesting conversation:

From this project's blog
From the post “Writing for ourselves”

Posted by Owen Wiltshire on September 15, 2008 @ 3:18pm
Filed under: "Writes of Passage", A Changing Anthropology, Making research accessible, New audiences, new participants, new ways of speaking
Tags: academic audience, listserv to blogsphere, more attacks on Wesch, sharing knowledge, youtube audience

As this research project progresses I keep coming back to the question “who are we writing for?”. Clearly there are a lot of different answers to this question, but I have been quite surprised to hear how few academics I speak with actually want their work to be shared publicly. For many academic writing isn’t meant to be read broadly – it is written with a specific audience [supervisors, tenure promotion committees] *as a kind of rite of passage as opposed to an act of sharing knowledge.*

This came up again during a recent seminar hosted by the Media Anthropology

Network. I didn't follow the seminar closely enough to summarize it here, but what struck me was the response to a suggestion to make a Youtube video to publicize the project being discussed. The response to this suggestion was quite dismissive -

> Contrary to David's opinion I find Michael Wesch's Youtube work to be slick, superficial. He is too much like a second rate McLuhan. As to his suggestion that I "prepare a youtube version of at least part of the Oak Park project – that way it can engage and interact with a whole other audience." I actually cringe at the idea. What little I know about YouTube is that consists mainly of stupid pet tricks, stupid human tricks and million of really really bad rock bands. I know there are some really interesting clips and that some of Rouch's films are available there but the "whole other audience" that David alludes to consists mainly of 15 year olds and that is not exactly who I had in mind as a new audience. Perhaps I am showing my age but too much of the material available on YouTube is too adolescent for my tastes. Before I retired I even thought the undergrads I taught had values that I abhorred. God knows what the people who love stupid pet tricks would do with my work? I prefer not to know. (Ruby 2008)

So here we have a perfect example of the kind of academics who simply do not want to share their work with a broader public (although the project does have a website even with his dislike of the youtube audience). For them anthropological productions are a very specific, specialized form of knowledge which are of interest only to a select group of academics.

The point I want to make is that anthropology journals are not "failing" to get ideas out there, since many authors simply do not want to share them in such a public fashion. The "pay to access" model works very well for many academics who want to filter out members of the public, or for those who see anthropological writing as being of little interest to anyone but other anthropologists.

…

10 Comments so far

Leave a comment

For Jay Ruby, Youtube isn't the right audience for anthropology. For Michael Wesch it is, at least for some anthropological work. In pushing scholarship to address public audiences anthropologists like Ruby feel that something is lost. Does it matter that a piece of work is popular? What gives it academic value? How, without referencing other academic work, can you call it anthropology? In

this way changing the audience of anthropological research is a challenge for the discipline, in that the style and content change with it – and what is left isn't yet recognizable as proper academic work.

Ignoring the issue of academic value, writing with, and for, other audiences can improve the visibility of the discipline. Wesch, and anthropology, received popular recognition when Wired magazine gave him the “Rave” award in 2007, based on the success of his class-produced Youtube videos. Clearly there is something to be said for popular, engaging, anthropological productions that don't fit in an academic journal.

And there is more to public anthropology than YouTube. Researchers focused on different specializations in anthropology are engaging different public audiences. Wesch is interested in social media and their role in society. It makes sense for him to address audiences on YouTube. Other anthropologists work in the blogosphere, Twitter, and other social media, developing audiences around their particular interests and research directions.

The changes occurring in anthropology online aren't all about audience either. Openly accessible media are being integrated into the research process as we saw in Section 3. Sharing work prior to publishing gives time to incorporate feedback. But working out in the open is a challenge for researchers. Increased visibility can cause researchers a lot of anxiety, especially those unfamiliar with online interaction. Professional and personal identities collide online. Not every researcher wants their academic life to dominate their public profile. Further,

sharing ideas openly poses a number of ethical challenges, that researchers have long dealt with, but that end up being magnified with the unreviewed, quick to publish and archived nature of the Internet. Not all information is meant to be shared, even if scholarship is.

It should be no surprise then that many researchers hesitate to share their work online, or anywhere more than they have to. Those already with jobs have nothing to gain, at least professionally, by sharing their work beyond the traditional presses. Those who do share their work online do so for a number of different reasons. As discussed in chapter 4, Open Access advocates push for better dissemination among experts. Many Open Access journals exist in anthropology, and more and more universities are introducing their own self archiving repositories. Further some anthropologists seek to develop a kind of public anthropology, one that presents anthropological research in new ways, to audiences outside academia. Blogging and other communication tools provide freedom for anthropologists to experiment with different styles of presentation.

To conclude, there has been an explosion in terms of how much "anthropology" is being disseminated. Much of this comes with the growing and changing university system discussed in chapter 2. Exploring this growth of anthropology online, it has been interesting to note, and explore, the differences between "public anthropology" and "anthropology in public", even when such a divide isn't always so clear, as became evident exploring the anthropology blogosphere. Blogs and other social media that let anthropologists share work in

seconds, outside the peer reviewed presses, are opening up room for anthropologists to experiment with audience and style. It also opens the door for a lot of unreviewed and unrefined work to become more visible. In discussing the issue of making research accessible online, one clear problem is that what is considered the best work, in that it has been carefully reviewed, edited and published, is the least accessible work. Arguably, most of the freely accessible work available online comes from students, and the lack of faculty papers on the Concordia repository backs this statement up to some degree. Open Access advocates seek to correct this in part by making that quality peer reviewed material equally accessible. But then there are debates in the discipline, manifesting from the disciplines ethnocentric nature, that push anthropologists to publish less like physical scientists, and more like journalists. It is there, among those seeking to write for audiences outside academia, that the Internet provides the greatest opportunities for the discipline to reinvent and relocate itself as a "public interlocutor". The Internet is clearly fueling change in anthropology, but with few professional incentives, technical hurdles, and understandable anxieties of public exposure, many researchers refrain from working "out in the open".

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