

Humanities-e Books

Review Number:

793

Publish date:

Tuesday, 1 September, 2009

Date of Publication:

2007

Publisher:

American Council of Learned Societies

Publisher url:

<http://www.humanitiesebook.org/>

Place of Publication:

New York, NY

Reviewer:

Mark Herring

Second only to movable type, as far as libraries are concerned, is the emancipation of journals from their printed-texts. Gone, or nearly so, are those titles irregularly delivered, with their maddeningly unanticipated supplements, infernal name changes and gargantuan space requirements, in lieu of their let-freedom-ring electronic environments. Electronic journals are both unparalleled and unprecedented. Nothing has changed access and delivery more than this change from print to electronic. While not every obstacle has been cleared up, most have. Electronic journals still cost as much as ever but their space requirements, access delivery, frequencies, title changes and so on have either been resolved or absorbed by their electronic environments. Print journals proved the perfect medium for this switch. Their information tended to be more immediate than monographs, but that immediacy was often hamstrung by their print cycles. Monographs might be delayed by years, but journals, in an ideal world, could render information gleaned only last week. The electronic medium allowed for this. While even a small library had to watch which titles it purchased (some journals might number their issues in scores if not hundreds for a given year), electronic access obviated this concern nicely.

If a given journal decided to publish 12 times a year while coming out with a dozen thematic supplements, librarians winced at the logistics required to manage such whimsy. While the electronic medium has not solved this entirely, it has made such things much more manageable. Of course, electronic access has brought with it both latent and manifest challenges, but most of these problems have been resolved to everyone's liking. Even library hours no longer obtain as an electronic journal can be delivered 24/7, as the phrase has it. E-reserves, though still kibitzing with copyright, added yet another welcomed dimension to the electronic medium. Only students have opined about this, as 'the library was closed' is no longer a legitimate excuse, if it ever was. In short, everything about the advent of electronic journals, now more than two decades old, has been a treasure trove, a godsend to scholars and left librarians, students and patrons alike applauding wildly while declaiming, 'Encore! Encore!'

For better or for worse, the professoriate rarely leaves well enough alone. Was it Mencken who said an intellectual is someone who says a stupid thing, twice? If the electronic medium was good enough for journals, it'll be gold for everything else, right? Sir Berners-Lee's HTML invention, along with domain

names, made this one-electronic-medium-fits-all even more of a surety, but through no fault of his own.⁽¹⁾ Perhaps it is the American fascination with one silver-bullet solution for everything, but if we are to blame, we have the rest of the globe right there shooting with us. Once the electronic medium moves from journals or ephemeral websites to the less transient, more perdurable forms of scholarship, the problem becomes much more a sticky wicket, if I may be permitted this colloquialism (even though I have never seen even a minute of a cricket match – yes, I know, my profound loss). It isn't that scholarly tools other than journals can't be successfully digitized; it's just when it's done – and it is at every turn now – it's not often done well or thoughtfully, and echoes Chesterton's jibe, if not entirely his meaning, that 'a thing worth doing is worth doing badly'.⁽²⁾ But all that may be changing for the better.

Enter *Humanities-e Books* (*HEB* for short), a site (<http://www.humanitiesebook.org/index.html> [2]) maintained by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). *HEB* may give all digitizing naysayers a chance to utter a sigh of relief. Relief, because if journals are the perfect medium for electronic access, then *HEB* under the auspices of the ACLS, is an example of how to do everything other than journals right. The site grew out of a concern about humanities publishing raised by Richard Darnton among others.⁽³⁾ Something must be done, or so they felt. There had to be a way to save humanities publishing *and* produce a scholarly site. *HEB* may not have been exactly what he had in mind but it sure meets many of his earlier criteria!

For almost 100 years, the ACLS has promoted the humanities in general and humanities scholars in particular, long before Darnton or anyone else thought they should do. The mission of the ACLS is 'the advancement of humanistic studies in all fields of learning in the humanities and the social sciences and the maintenance and strengthening of relations among the national societies devoted to such studies' something it has been doing long before digitization became all the craze.⁽⁴⁾ The ACLS is a private and nonprofit federation consisting of 70 national scholarly organizations, and is at the vanguard of promoting American scholarship nationally and internationally in the humanities and related social sciences. *HEB* is but one small part of the overall work of the ACLS which, in addition to *HEB*, also funds many scholars in the humanities and related social sciences. For example, in 2009 alone, ACLS awarded more than \$10 million to over 300 scholars. The ACLS also promotes and facilitates peer review in the humanities and related social sciences. The ACLS's current president is Pauline Yu (since 2003). She succeeds a number of equally notable scholars, such as Stanley N. Katz, Frederick Burkhardt and R. M. Lumiansky. The ACLS is funded by public and private foundation grants, endowment income, dues, government contracts and individual gifts. Since 1997 the ACLS Fellowship Campaign has sought more and larger gifts to fund scholars' stipends. The ACLS relies on annual subscriptions from individuals and libraries to its publications and programs, and herein lies its strong connection with *HEB*.

HEB is one of the ACLS's main programs or initiatives in the scope of things ACLS is not yet out of infancy. But it is a precocious child, nonetheless. Begun in 2002 with a grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation (and how many scholarly endeavors would not be but for this fine philanthropy!) and additional help from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, *HEB* became a rarity: it became self-supporting in 2005 as a not-for-profit scholarly publishing venture. In 2007, it became ACLS Humanities E-Book. But why bother? Why did ACLS conspire with Mellon to launch such a site given both the complexities and the cost of such Web ventures, not to mention their strong record of failure and their characteristic technological corner-cutting as far as users were concerned?

Earlier I made mention of the 'trouble' in humanities publishing. Many scholars have opined about this, but few entities have done anything about it. It has become as proverbial to complain about the cost and upkeep in humanities publishing as it is about the weather, and with the same result: everyone complains yet no one does anything about it. ACLS recognized the problem and sought to address it. Can humanities publishing be saved? The jury is still out, but suffice it say that while the humanities are rich in resources for just this sort of an electronic venture, they are being left behind, shall we say, by their scholarly counterparts, *viz.*, the sciences, pure and applied, as well as economics.⁽⁵⁾

HEB may change all that, not by being the only game in town, but by being one of the best. *HEB* contains

2,200 titles to date, adding about 500 annually. Such a venture, in the wrong hands, might be notable but only for its cherry-picking and little else. For example, anyone with access to a reliable server and Internet provider could initiate a site with dozens of very familiar, very public domain titles, instituting a site not based on scholarly and students' needs but on what can be done cheaply and quickly. Many sites have done just this, and, if the truth be told, a fair number of mass digitization projects now on tap or underway begin and end in this dismal fashion. A number of reasons can be brought to bear as blame, but most of them go back to the nature of the Web itself: it is, or rather has become a medium of the moment, the narcissistic, and the dreadfully pornographic, but rarely a medium of the best and brightest as Berners-Lee originally hoped. Yes, certainly exceptions can be found, and if the recent spate of books on this topic is any indication, many authors are trying to convince us that any negative attitude about the Web *can only be Luddite*.⁽⁶⁾

Not so *HEB*. The 2,200 titles were chosen along very carefully selected criteria. *HEB* chose titles published from 1820 to the present, titles in that time frame that are important to both scholars and students, works considered 'vital' by scholars, frequently cited titles and something that has long been considered part of the scholarly cadre of works.⁽⁷⁾ Some might reason that *HEB* chose its beginning 200 years ago in order to allow it to 'beef up' its holding with out-of-print titles. Certainly there is some of this and that is, after all as it should be. Some great books go out of print through no fault of their own. But over 80% of the titles are currently with a publisher, and 85% still under copyright.⁽⁸⁾ Countries with rational copyright laws, or with ones less restrictive than those in the US (which is just about every other country), cannot appreciate what a grand and very difficult undertaking it is to secure copyright permissions.⁽⁹⁾ While 2,200 are accessible now, over 6,000 have been identified for possible inclusion later. In any event, this assures scholars and students of only the best in humanities scholarship, both now and in the past.

By summer 2009, 19 scholarly organizations or learned societies comprised the *HEB* working group for title selection. Among those 19 are the African Studies Association, AHA, College Art Association, the Linguistic Society of America, Organization of American Historians, Society of Biblical Literature and the Society for the History of Technology. If learned societies aren't enough to rivet the attention, those scholars choosing in various areas should be. These include Steven Feierman, Sheldon Hackney, James McPherson, Erik Olseen, Walter Kaegi, Ronald G. Witt, Jose Vasconcellos, Richard Bulliet, Carol Gluck, Susan Mann, and T. G. Wilfong, to name but a few. All of this name-dropping isn't for its own sake but to try to paint a careful picture of how well and how thoughtfully the ACLS has gone about its work to put together people and books to create the best possible site. Suffice it to say that numerous other groups and organizations work together to make *HEB* one of the best – if not the best – electronically accessible sites in the humanities. It surely stands as an equal to JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org/> [3]), MUSE (<http://muse.jhu.edu/> [4]) and other contenders to this throne. JSTOR is a much larger database while Muse is a smaller one. (Whether all such groups as these should form one giant electronic humanities conglomerate will be addressed below.)

Nor is *HEB* short on either award-winning titles or award-winning writers. Among the top monograph awards included in *HEB* are: American and National Book, Toynebee, Bancroft, Pulitzer, Atlantic, Hopkins, Birdsall, and more than a dozen others. To secure this many award-winning titles is surely enough to attract the attention of even the most casual of readers. But none of this is meaningful if readability and navigability are impossibly difficult. *HEB* scores well on both accounts. The page-image scans are of a high resolution and easily readable.⁽¹⁰⁾ The default is set to page-image scans and tiff-to-gif. OCR is 99.99% accurate, and that's important because OCR is still an unusually idiosyncratic function in this day of mass digitalization. One would think by now that word-recognition software, especially on new or electronic texts, would be 100% accurate, but that's simply not the case. This is a puzzling case of the technology lagging behind practice as even 99% accuracy isn't always the best, especially if the glitch occurs at a most strategic point. For years, for example, transcription errors bedeviled translations and manuscripts. OCR errors may well be leading us into a new kind of 'transcription error' as more and more texts go online, and fewer and fewer originals remain.

While page resolutions are extremely readable and easy on the eyes, users must realize that page resolutions in general rarely fly higher than about 50-60% of printed-page resolutions.⁽¹¹⁾ This accounts for some

moderate to significant eye-strain for some users of online access, so the higher page resolutions can be made to be, so much the better for all users. While this is likely to change (and may even be better than this figure by the time this review appears), higher and higher resolutions should be the goal to increase ease of use. Further, as mentioned in an earlier review (on Gutenberg-e), the long-term health effects of long-term computer use are only now getting some treatment in the research. The more quickly we address these potential problems the better. *HEB* has addressed one problem that is bedeviling Kindle (and others) now, and that is access for the visually impaired.[\(12\)](#)

Many scholars will cheer *HEB*'s use of XML features, or those features that allow for interactive links, including videos, audio, and so on. For example, some XML texts (there are about 350 of these online already) allow users to listen to scores of music in texts where that has been embedded. The use, too, of zoom-images is also a welcome feature. Scholars can now, for example, even view manuscripts carefully without having to go to the location where those manuscripts reside. Cradle-scanning has also been used on rare texts, and this is to be applauded. But make no mistake. Scanning a text *will* damage it to some extent. The amount of damage that occurs may be less machine error and more user error (especially if outsourced). Google, for example, uses scanning in India and other Third World countries because labor is so inexpensive. Quality control becomes a serious issue even when the most up-to-date and state-of-the-art scanners are used. *HEB* uses the University of Michigan's Scholarly Publishing Office along with Digital Library Production Services for technical support.[\(13\)](#)

HEB uses simple searching, Boolean, series and proximity searching capability with highlighted terms in HTML context. In short, searching is simple and very user-friendly. Many scholars may approach the use of a new database with the underlying fear that whatever it is they wish to find may be there but they may not understand the search engine or how to get at what they want with the engine provided. *HEB* has taken much of the guess work out of that by making searching simple and intuitive. It's the so-called 'little' things like this that make *HEB* a treasure trove to the rising academic or established scholar. Early iterations of collections such as these required a laborious, Job-like patience to find what the collection contained. It did not make what treasure remained hidden there any less valuable, but it did make it seem like unmined diamond veins, full of great potential but by and large valueless until drilled. This searching is only further heightened by the fact that articles are linked to JSTOR, Project Muse, the History Collection and others. The collection also contains a number of important series, among them the Gutenberg-e collection, *Guide to Historical Literature*, The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman, College of Art Associations Monographs, the John Harvard Library and the Records of Civilization. (In spite of the inclusion of possibly America's greatest overrated poet, Walt Whitman, the series holdings are valuable to scholars just beginning or those well into their careers.) Searchability is no small beer, either, though some might think it's only important for wizened scholars just now discovering the Web. Yet it remains equally important for students, too, as they are a great deal *less* savvy than we are led to believe. Recent reports indicate a far greater *inability* to do more sophisticated manipulation of software and investigation of the Web beyond their normal ken.[\(14\)](#)

Numbered paragraphs in the online titles make referencing them a great deal easier. At one time, one of the more substantial complaints against online collections was their intractability of citation. The scholar using them was forced to reference the entire work or entire chapters. Paragraph numbering, however, has reduced that as a complaint, coupled as it is with the current footnote/endnote allergy of today's printed counterparts. Printed works today, if they have any such notes at all, are typically buried so far in the back of the text that finding them requires only slightly less effort on the part of the reader than the author substantiating the claim. This is hyperbole, of course, but only of degrees not substance. Long-gone are those very convenient footnotes located at – *mirabile dictum* – the foot of the page. With today's HTML and 'roll-over' conveyances, electronic texts may be *better* noted. Printed texts, at least in the humanities, began seeding their eventual obsolescence with kowtows such as this to the ease of publishing.[\(15\)](#)

Equally important is the price of this collection. Self-supporting ventures sometimes mean the support falls entirely on the backs of subscribers. But *HEB* is most reasonably priced at US\$ 450–\$3,125, based on FTE, full-time equivalent students. This means that libraries with 4,999 or fewer students will pay at the low end, those with 5,000 –to 9,999 students in the middle range, and those with 10,000 or more at the top end.

Moreover, that price *is guaranteed for three (3) years*. This guarantee cannot be overemphasized. One of the maddening ‘tricks of the trade’ with many vendors is to charge a very low or reasonable entry price for newcomers to a database and then double the cost thereafter, when its users (mainly library patrons) have grown used to it and so will mutiny if it is removed. I would be the last to complain about democratic capitalism, but this common pricing practice (low on the front end, high on the back end) borders on robber-baron tactics. Three cheers for *HEB* and its most reasonable pricing structure. Kudos, too, for the low price since many databases, even small ones like this, can cost as much as a modern appliance or automobile. *HEB* is well within the reach of any library. Since the global economy has now tanked, stimuli notwithstanding, such news is indeed good for all concerned. Even more helpful is the cost to individuals, a mere \$35 annually for any member of any one of the 70 learned associations.

For those libraries and scholars who must have the text in hand (and one can anticipate research when nothing else but the printed text will do), POD, or print-on-demand is also available. The cost is between 11 and 15 cents a page – about what one would expect to pay for an academic tome – and the wait only about two weeks. This is also now available in the UK/EU. Those wishing to buy the text can contact UM or Amazon.

Another feature, and one that many users would not see or even care to know, is *HEB*’s concern about metadata – literally, data about data. If one opens a web page and clicks on ‘view’ and then ‘source,’ one can see what codes went in to making that page. At the header or top of the page is where metadata often appears, a tag line to which someone has added possible headings or subject headings. One reason pornographers have been so successful in reaching those who would never be tempted by their offerings is their understanding of metadata. In some cases, pornographers have dumped veritable dictionaries of terms into the metadata to be certain even unwary users will find them whether they want to or not. In any event, scholarly databases using carefully chosen metadata means that users will find what they want. One can make these data too narrow or too broad: too narrow and no one can find it, too broad and it comes up on every search. That *HEB* has addressed this concern is yet one more small feature underscoring this enterprise and its attention to detail. *HEB* prides itself by adhering to its own demands: ‘Only well constructed digital collections that pay special attention to collaboration, and the quality, interoperability, and depth of their content can even hope to begin to achieve this goal.’⁽¹⁶⁾ It’s safe to say that *HEB* has achieved this benchmark of success exceedingly well.

In addition to these essential matters, *HEB* has taken some pains to consider how something should be displayed electronically. All too often mass digitization projects follow along the same, or similar, lines of their printed counterparts by using the page as the unit of measuring text. But *HEB* considers the unit of ‘chunky text’ to be the natural division by chapter or section rather than page (page units being unnecessary for the electronic format as they are required in the printed ones). This allows for the aforesaid granularity in metadata as well as providing some guideline for displaying the text. Of perhaps no interest to anyone other than a librarian are the free MARC records provided by *HEB*. MARC records are the electronic version of the once-printed ‘catalog card’ and so provide libraries with a ready way to add the 2,200 titles *in toto* to their catalogs. It’s an important point as many libraries might take months to include the titles in their catalogs, unnecessarily delaying the use of them by students and scholars. Too many electronic initiatives fail because vendors do not take into account how long before purchased materials will be searchable to *their* users, and in some cases this can be not weeks but months. Granted, Google has made this much less important than it once was, but it is still an important matter.

Most recently, *HEB* has announced a new initiative with a dozen other university presses to ‘scale up its collection and distribution model.’⁽¹⁷⁾ *HEB* is also launching an experiment with handheld devices (Kindle, Sony, iPhones, etc.) and how those devices deliver scholarly materials (links, pop-up and so on). This investigation will continue through the coming year with a white paper release date of early 2010. (If I may offer my humble advice: try to make the platform of delivery compatible with *all* handheld devices and resist the temptation to limit it to one.)

Much of what has been written here is in praise of *HEB* and the work of the ACLS, and what follows in no

way is meant to discount any of that. But two concerns remain, and those are important ones that should not be overlooked. One is sustainability; the other has to do with mass digitization projects themselves.

It may seem silly to raise the issue of sustainability with respect to *HEB* since it not only has the backing of Mellon and the ACLS but has, since 2005, remained essentially self-supporting. All of that is well and good. But the issue of sustainability also resides in the presence of what can be called the Balkanization of noncompeting resources.

A quick search of the Web reveals many such entities like *HEB*. Some of these are much larger, others smaller. Nearly all, however, are struggling to remain viable, while others have already gone the way of all digital flesh. So what's to come of these sites if they fail? Where do the resources go, and who owns them? It's a question that begs answering. Too much of the Web-based presence is a 'do or die' proposition, and many of the smaller (and some larger) ventures are following the latter rather than the former. This is not to say that print-based medium did not also experience its fair share of what we in library work call 'dead and defunct titles.' But we also have many examples of the twenty, thirty and 500-year reign of print-based resources. We are still waiting for that first digital presence of a database lasting longer than 30 years. This is an issue that *HEB*'s own newsletter addresses better than I could:

In the face of Google, go-it-alone, single-publisher solutions (however defined) have not – and will not – work. While a multipolar system of independent entities will maintain innovation and incubate diversity of talent and approach, it's time to bring together these disparate resources – the JSTORs, MUSEs, *HEBs*, Hathis – into a cross-searchable, unified system of journals, monographs, primary-source collections, preliminary research findings, pre- and post-publication peer review. Issues of governance, finance, distribution and archiving are daunting. They can, must and will be worked out. There is no longer any alternative.[\(18\)](#)

The sad fact of the matter is that with the exception of Google (and again, nothing is certain in the digital world), not many others will survive the dog-eat-dog cyberworld. It costs too much merely to get material online, to say nothing of keeping it up, archiving it, making it readily searchable, and so on. *HEB*'s newsletter author is more sanguine than I am. Certainly it must be worked out. Whether it will or not remains a mystery, and that mystery may well prove to be the undoing of many digital sources, not to mention the whole e-book enterprise.[\(19\)](#)

The second issue has to do with mass digitization projects in general. When they first began to show up on the scene, the talk centered on digital preservation. Everyone knew then what we know now: these images will not last forever, and certainly will be around for a far shorter duration than printed texts to which many in the professoriate, at least in the US, appear to be suddenly allergic. Digital preservation is still a topic, but it is not a key, foremost, or primary one. Now, almost no one talks about it or raises it as an important issue. It isn't because we have solved the problem of image degradation in tiff and gif formats. It's simply that this is a matter no one wants to discuss for a number of reasons. It's unglamorous for one, and it only adds to the rather substantial costs. But the trouble remains. We have not solved the problem of long-term digital preservation, and it does not look like we will, at least in the short term. When I raised this matter at a cyber-conference it was not greeted with much more than ho-hum, not-so-polite throat-clearing and a general, 'Next question'. Finally a technician stood up and said he wanted to allay my fears. 'We'll fix all that', he said. 'Consider it done.'

That was ten years ago.

September 2009

Notes

1. Sir Berners-Lee's original idea about the Web included more things like blogging and less what we now have (pornography, ads-a-million, business applications, and narcissism run amok). Said Berners-Lee, 'I feel that the web should be something, which basically doesn't try to coerce people into putting particular sorts of things on it.' See Mark Lawson, 'Berners-Lee on the read/write web', *BBC News*, 9 August 2005 <[Back to \(1\)](#)>
2. G. K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World* (New York, NY, 1910), p. 320. This book is also available online, e.g., [Back to \(2\)](#)
3. See, for example, his concern in Robert Darnton, 'Google and the future of books', *The New York Review of Books*, February 19, 2009 <[Back to \(3\)](#)>
4. <[Back to \(4\)](#)>
5. A host of articles is now appearing regarding the future of publishing – all publishing – not just humanities publishing. See, for example, Scott Jaschik, 'Change or die', *Inside Higher Ed.*, 15 July 2009 <[Back to \(5\)](#)>
6. I mention only three such books, though I could name 20: James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds* (New York, NY, 2005); Jeff Howe, *Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of Crowds Is Driving the Future of Business*, (New York, NY, 2008); and the most hagiographic, Jeff Jarvis, *What Would Google Do?* (New York, NY, 2009). All of the books are very well written and argued well but tout the 'genius' of crowds over the individual genius. Ostensibly, all three men travel in crowds far different from my own, and I spend as much of my time outside the university setting as in it. [Back to \(6\)](#)
7. For more on this see <[Back to \(7\)](#)>
8. For more see <[Back to \(8\)](#)>
9. Here's a small example. Amazon placed Orwell's works on its Kindle for purchase but without the requisite DRM (Digital Rights Management) as touching copyright. Orwell's works – in what is an ironic twist – have now been erased from all Kindle holders of his works. See Brad Stone, 'Amazon rrases Orwell', *New York Times*, 17 July 2009 <[Back to \(9\)](#)>
10. This may well be on the way to improving even more, at least as far as reading digital texts on e-book readers. E-Ink page screen technology (technically known as electrophoretic display) is all the rave now, but 3Qi screens are on the way and may prove even better. Better because 3Qi refreshes screens faster, meaning that pages will turn faster and display more quickly, utilizing the low energy of the E-Ink technology but with a non-blinking LCD look. For more, see Tom Peters, 'Keep your eyes on the screen', *Smart Libraries Newsletter* <[Back to \(10\)](#)>
11. We still don't know what this means in terms of long-term use, but we do know a number of minor problems from long-term computer usage. These include the obvious eyestrain but also encompass general stress and other physiological issues: headaches, upset stomach, vertigo and so on. I mention this in passing only because we need now to be thinking of these issues before all or virtually all (no pun intended) scholarly materials are converted to electronic-only, or even electronic-mainly, formats. It will serve us little to discover in another decade or so a potential threat to access for a not insignificant percentage of scholars who cannot tolerate online access. [Back to \(11\)](#)
12. Marc Beja, 'Advocates for the Blind Sue ASU over Kindle use', *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2 July 2009 <[Back to \(12\)](#)>
13. More about this and other features can be found at <[Back to \(13\)](#)>
14. I mentioned several such books and articles in an earlier review on the Gutenberg-e but mention another that has only recently come to light. See Erica Hendry, 'Students may not be as software-savvy as they think, study says', *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 20 July 2009 <[Back to \(14\)](#)>
15. My comments here are only slightly tongue-in-cheek. I am bewildered by the 'notes' in modern books that appear in the back of text as 'notes to pages 456–567'. It might have been easier simply to tell the reader 'good luck' or to write the author if they want them – an amazing convention I am now seeing in some modern texts. Scholarly works by Panofsky or Frazier, for example, would never be published today. I'm reminded of the scene in *Amadeus* when Emperor Joseph II says to Mozart about 'The Marriage of Figaro, 'Too many notes'. I fear the same will be said henceforth by publishers to any scholar who wishes to substantiate claims. See Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, MA, 1997). [Back to \(15\)](#)
16. <[Back to \(16\)](#)>

17. This news comes to me via an email of the *HEBookNews*, 3, 3 (Summer 2009). It was not available on the website at the time of this writing. [Back to \(17\)](#)
18. <[Back to \(18\)](#)
19. E-book readers are beyond the scope of this review but are not entirely tangential to it. For example, if collections like ebrary, netLibrary, Questia and the rest are to survive, they must adapt to the so-called 2.0 world of PDAs, cell phones and wireless delivery. Ebrary has done that recently and others will not be far behind. But all of them attempting the same sort of delivery apart from one another, or in a noncompetitive manner will simply mean that all will fail or struggle. It is neither the best of all possible worlds or one that I like, but there it is. See Jennifer Howard, 'University presses can hang together to make e-books, or all hang separately' *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 55, 42 (24 July 2009), A11. See also Jill Hurst-Wahl, 'Are digitization providers in financial trouble?', 6 July 2009 <[Back to \(19\)](#)

Other reviews:

[5]

Source URL: <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/793#comment-0>

Links

- [1] <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/item/3772>
- [2] <http://www.humanitiesebook.org/index.html>
- [3] <http://www.jstor.org/>
- [4] <http://muse.jhu.edu/>
- [5] <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews>