

**Submission to the Information Futures Commission in response to the  
consultation paper ‘Scholarly Information in a Digital Age: choices for the  
University of Melbourne’**

*This response has been prepared by representatives of the Publications Committee, in  
the History Discipline of the School of Historical Studies and has been endorsed by  
the Head of the School of Historical Studies.*

Information Systems’ e-Scholarship Research Centre is planning to establish an exciting new publishing venture, called Melbourne E-Scholarly Publishing (MESP). It is proposed that the University Library take on the role of a publishing service provider through e-publishing. The resulting e-publications will be indexed online and fully searchable. As well as availability through a web-based interface, MESP are also investigating the provision of on-demand hard copy format of publications (preliminary investigations suggest these could be as little as \$10/copy).

This new publishing enterprise has several advantages for researchers in the Humanities:

- publications will be DEET-recognised, resulting in DEET points with direct financial benefit for Schools in the Faculty of Arts;
- Schools will be able to publish/continue publishing journals and conference series which contribute to Schools’ scholarly culture and their profile in the wider academic world;
- it will provide opportunities for publication in the increasingly crowded and competitive field of scholarly publishing, especially for PGR and ECR;
- scholars published by MSP will retain copyright and therefore will not be excluded from publishing their work in the future with other publishers.
- it will give scholars – especially ECR and PGR – opportunities to develop skills in web-based publication (copy-editing, formatting etc) through collaboration with the e-publishing service.

The School of Historical Studies strongly supports this new venture. In particular, the School would like to advocate strongly for the allocation of University funding for grants to encourage researchers, including postgraduates, to use this e-publishing service.

Funding could also be used to pay for associated publishing expenses such as copy-editing, photographic material, copyright permissions, and so on.

The School has had previous experience with e-publishing through a venture at RMIT which, unfortunately, has now been discontinued. The advantages of the MSP proposal would be to allow the School to continue its highly successful conference and monograph series, keeping the service in-house at the University of Melbourne.

The School is especially proud of its monographs and of its Conference Series - the latter published since 1995 with sixteen volumes in the series (<http://www.history.unimelb.edu.au/publications/conference-seminar.html>). This series has provided an excellent mentoring opportunity between our staff and our many postgraduate students, many of whom have been involved in the mechanics

of copy editing, and production and who have had the opportunity to work with scholars from outside the University as well as the opportunity for knowledge transfer.

MSP's proposal would allow this series to continue seamlessly, and would continue our excellent mentoring of postgraduate students. The ability to print on-demand would remove the difficulties of estimating print runs and the online indexing and searchability of MSP would greatly increase both the accessibility and reach of this research.

Prof. Joy Damousi, Head, School of Historical Studies

Dr Catherine Kovesi, Chair of School of Historical Studies Publications Committee

Dr Joanna Cruickshank, Senior Research Associate, School of Historical Studies

Ms Amanda Barry, PhD Candidate, School of Historical Studies