These guides are tools designed for library leaders to use for organizing a summer- or semester-long discussion series. Each guide offers a brief scoping statement, a suggested reading or resource to review, and a set of discussion questions to launch an hour-long informal conversation among library staff.

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Developed by the Association of Research Libraries Office of Scholarly Communication
The complete series is at www.arl.org/sc/brownbag/

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New Model Publications

Discussion Leader’s Guide (May 2008)

Each brown bag session provides an opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of a particular set of issues involved in the changing processes of scholars’ communication efforts. This guide is designed for a simple hour-long lunchtime discussion. Prework will be essential in creating common ground and providing a foundation for the conversation. Distribute the assignment at least a week prior to the session. A list of discussion questions are arranged in sequence below, but feel free to skip some if you want to spend more time on particular questions. It is not necessary to distribute the questions before the session; however, if you think it would be helpful to your group in launching discussion, consider sharing a couple of the questions in advance.

Scoping Statement

The journal and the scholarly monograph are archetypical models for constructing and disseminating scholarly works. In the 21st century we are seeing the dawn of entirely new kinds of vehicles for conveying new knowledge. Multimedia works, works built in wikis, multifaceted resources combining primary source materials with commentary and analysis of those sources, and other novel forms are emerging. Meanwhile genres of formerly limited utility, like conference proceedings and working papers, are taking up more visible roles in conveying research and scholarship.

Goals

Participants will strengthen their understanding of the range of emerging genres and new forms of resources that scholars and researchers are contributing to and drawing on.

Participants will prepare to discuss with faculty the value and significance of new kinds of works and resources in their own fields of study.

Optional Tools for Facilitating Discussion

• A flip chart or white board for brainstorming and gathering responses, particularly for the later questions.

Prework for Participants

(Distribute prior to the session with the directions below.)

Review two Web sites:

• Nanohub: http://www.nanohub.org
  Nanohub is a hybrid resource serving a fast moving interdisciplinary research field that spans basic and applied science. It offers four categories of content: simulate, research, teach & learn, contribute.

• Vectors, journal of culture and technology in a dynamic vernacular: http://www.vectorsjournal.org/
  Vectors is a peer reviewed “journal” that includes submitted and commissioned works addressing social, political, and cultural issues. All projects published in Vectors necessarily must in some way need to be online.

Discussion Questions

1. Nanohub serves a relatively new and highly interdisciplinary research area. How might this be influencing its development?

2. Vectors calls itself a journal. Would you agree that it fits within that genre? Could a case be made that Vectors is fundamentally a different kind of work?

3. What other new kinds of works are you aware of from working with faculty?

4. Nanohub blurs boundaries between works created to convey new research and teaching tools. Why do you think it has evolved this way? Do you think combining learning objects with research reports could be a trend?

5. Neither Nanohub nor Vectors originated with a traditional publisher (like a scholarly society) or in cooperation with a library. What roles might either kind of organization take in promoting the development of new model publications?

6. Scholars have limited amounts of time to devote to authoring activities. Whatever the form of the work, as the range of options expands, authors will have to decide how much time to give to each kind. When might authors prefer to invest time in new kinds of works? In traditional works? What might be the implications for established publications?

Further Reading

Institute on the Future of the Book, if:book Blog
http://www.futureofthebook.org/blog/

