

TOME Meeting Summary and Next Steps

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Washington, DC



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Introduction

TOME, Toward an Open Monograph Ecosystem, is a five-year pilot collaborative initiative of the Association of American Universities (AAU), the Association of University Presses (AUPresses), and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) to advance the wide dissemination of scholarship by humanities and humanistic social sciences faculty members through open digital editions of peer-reviewed and professionally edited monographs. On July 31, 2018, the TOME Task Force convened its third annual meeting, one year after the official launch of the pilot, to assess its progress, share lessons learned, and determine an action plan to expand participation in the initiative.

Participants

Forty-five people attended the July meeting at the AAU offices in Washington, DC. In addition to members of the [TOME Task Force](#) (provosts, library deans, and press directors), the group included representatives from open access (OA) e-book platforms (Books at JSTOR, Project MUSE, OAPEN and HathiTrust); TOME's own infrastructure provider figshare/Altmetric; licensing experts from Creative Commons, the Authors Alliance, and university libraries; and several learned societies.

Challenges and Lessons Learned—Campus Perspectives

Challenges

- In some departments, open access publishing is seen as vanity publishing, and there are deans and faculty on participating campuses that need to be shown that TOME publications are fully peer reviewed and taken as seriously as traditional print monographs by review committees.
- Participants are concerned about predatory commercial publishers entering the book market as they have in

journals and muddying the waters around quality.

- Many humanities and social science faculty, as well as librarians, are not fully versed in open access, Creative Commons licensing, or copyright issues.
- Many faculty authors and their presses will want print copies available for purchase, and there remains some concern among faculty about forgoing potential royalties for books available openly online.
- Books take years to complete: it will be a challenge to recruit new authors and maintain interest over the length of the project.

Lessons Learned

- There has been no demonstrable added burden on staff or service at participating institutions (or it was absorbed by the library), and the main labor of the project consists of negotiations between authors and publishers on licensing and copyright.
- Integration into existing campus programs is helpful. In one example, an existing book subvention fund and journal article processing charges (APC) fund were brought into and administered out of the library along with TOME.
- It's helpful to bring related services together under one point of contact, either in the press or the library.
- TOME needs success stories to use in outreach. Participants discussed creating short video interviews with authors for peer promotion of TOME.
- There will be different messaging needs for deans and provosts than for faculty.
- University presses should protect and promote their brand of high-quality, peer reviewed, professionally edited books; i.e., TOME is about developing sustainable financing of OA books, not disrupting the quality review of them.
- There is evidence from other projects that open access books are downloaded more often and by a more diverse readership than paywalled content.

- Graduate students who face high prices and less funding for materials are an important audience for TOME.
- Top-down support for OA monograph publishing is important, including from deans, through prestigious foundation or grant funding, or with endorsement of well-regarded campus centers. At the same time, deep engagement with faculty around OA and digital publishing is critical to success and adoption.
- At least one campus is calling the TOME funds “awards” (rather than subventions) so that faculty can include the awards on their CVs.

Challenges and Lessons Learned—Infrastructure

Challenges

- Achieving scale in production is not cheap and requires the ability to handle many objects in more or less the same way (e.g., same specifications).
- In the print world, there are agents in the supply chain that operate at scale to provide services that move items from publication to the shelf efficiently. There is no such supply chain or agents/service bureaus for digital books.
- With a multitude of platforms, discovery of e-books is still a challenge.
- As this ecosystem matures, TOME will need usage data standards.
- The long-term costs of e-books are unknown.

Lessons Learned

- As TOME and other projects advance, the partners should intentionally create a distribution chain.
- Efficiency and scale are aided by file formats that lend themselves to long term preservation data standards (e.g., EPUB3, not PDF), and other specifications.
- OA books are used much more than paywalled books, even on the same platform.

Five Actions to Expand TOME

1. Recruit a Visiting Program Officer (VPO) to ARL to help manage TOME

- A VPO will put in place a website, content, and communications structure so that all key audiences can learn about TOME, can promote TOME, and can share and use information on TOME in their own institutions. Coordinating with the new working groups, below, this website could include contracts, case studies, position descriptions for scholarly publishing strategy positions, talking points, elevator speeches, slide presentations, video interviews with faculty, and relevant author-facing resources. Once in place, the VPO will also keep track of published books through the TOME Referatory (tome.figshare.com); for now send data to Judy Ruttenberg (judy@arl.org).

2. Create additional working groups within the TOME Task Force

- The TOME Task Force has one active working group in impact assessment. The following additional working groups are recommended:
- Recruitment (of additional institutions)
- Peer review/promotion/tenure
- Best practices (to gather guidelines, contracts, case studies)
- Cost/sustainability subgroup
 - Review and model economics of moving subvention and library collections money around to finance TOME. For example, if a library has money to purchase monographs, and those monographs are openly available through TOME, that money can go to further subventions.

In 2017, a Branding and Marketing Working Group developed explanatory materials for front matter and other shared uses. AAU, AUPresses, and ARL will review these materials with the group members and make recommendations for updating them.

3. Develop and expand a TOME campus road show

- ARL, AAU, and AUPresses will continue to update the standard TOME presentation, adding faculty and/or learned society representatives when speaking in front of groups.
- Road shows will identify the decision-makers within institutions who would facilitate expansion. Meeting participants agreed that advocacy needs to be “top-down, bottom-up, and crosswise.”
- ARL, AAU, and AUPresses will leverage their convening power to promote conversation about TOME, including within and on campuses and with fellow associations.

4. Develop varied and reusable promotional materials for TOME

- Finalize and publicize a succinct mission statement for TOME.
- Recruit a senior scholar to write a compelling piece on open access.
- Develop awareness and engagement strategies for different audiences, including identifying a series of debatable issues and bringing roundtable or panel discussions to scholarly societies, such as the American Historical Association (AHA)/Modern Language Association (MLA) meetings in autumn 2019 or spring 2020.
- Revisit branding TOME as “peer-reviewed open digital monograph publishing” (leading with peer review).
- Promote and publicize TOME to scholarly communications librarians who are not generally aware of this initiative.
- Gather statistics showing greater, diverse readership of open books from other initiatives.
- Work with Creative Commons on guidelines for use of third-party content (e.g., figures and images).

5. Support the TOME research framework for impact assessment

- Support pending research being conducted at the University of Michigan (“Measuring the Impact of TOME: What to Measure and How?”), including its five identified, measurable goals for TOME:

1. Greater Reach of TOME Publications
2. In-depth Understanding of What Constitute “Reasonable” Monograph Publishing Costs
3. Increased Participation in TOME by Institutions
4. Positive Change in Perception of Publishing OA Monographs
5. Utilize the Full Extent of EPUB3 Accessibility/
Digital Innovation Capabilities

Resources

- [TOME at Emory Guidelines for Publishers](#)
- [Authors Alliance, Understanding Open Access](#), guide written for a non-attorney audience
- [Authors Alliance, Understanding Rights Reversion](#)
- [Open Textbook Network impact and benefits](#)
- [MLA Guidelines for Evaluating Work in Digital Humanities and Digital Media](#)
- [AHA Guidelines for the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship by Historians](#)
- [AUPresses Handbook: Best Practices for Peer Review \(monographs\)](#)



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