In the past examples of scholarly publishing have included monographs, refereed journal articles, published conference proceedings, theses and dissertations, and book reviews. New ventures in the electronic publishing of history have expanded the previous list to include electronic equivalents of existing books and print journals, as well as web-based journals and documents with no existing print counterpart. History is a discipline based on original research and usually presented in narrative form as a scholarly monograph. As electronic publishing becomes increasingly more common, there is the potential for marked changes in the way history has been practiced. Hypertext documents need not be narrative in format and can have links in footnotes to original sources (including document files, image files, or even audio/visual files). Because not every subject in history or other disciplines is suited for conversion to hypertext, books written in narrative form and printed on paper will still be available for many years to come. The intellectual content will remain the same though the medium may change dramatically. However, there are issues, not yet resolved, such as quality control and peer review, credit for promotion and tenure, copyright and archival issues, the role of libraries, and others. This essay will discuss current electronic scholarly publishing projects in history or of interest to historians.

Electronic text via the WWW is a general phrase used to describe many types of hypertext documents. To break this down further, let us consider using the following more familiar, terms for particular electronic documents: e-journals and e-books. E-journals can be further broken down into two categories: existing print and electronic-only. There are many existing print journals in history that are now available in electronic format. Enterprises such as Project MUSE, from Johns Hopkins University Press, and JSTOR, from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, make existing print journals from the humanities and social sciences available to subscribing institutions in an electronic format. Another initiative aiming to provide existing print journals in electronic format is the "History Cooperative." This is a joint venture between the OAH, AHA, University of Illinois Press, the National Academy Press, and JSTOR. Since the most
recent three to five years of a given title are not available to subscribing libraries through JSTOR, "The History Cooperative" will make the most recent issues of the AHR and the JAH available to members of these professional societies. There are plans in the works to expand the collection to other titles. 3

Another non-profit organization, OCLC, offers 153 titles in history and history-related disciplines through its Electronic Collections Online (ECO). These journals are electronic versions of existing print journals, some of which are also available electronically from other sources including forty titles from Project Muse. ECO also offers an archiving service for journal titles, but no titles go back further than 1994. 4

Besides these efforts to provide electronic versions of existing print journals to historical researchers, there are many scholarly journals for history, which are available only through the Internet. In the February 2000 issue of Perspectives: the Newsletter of the American Historical Association, there is an annotated bibliography of almost twenty journals, of interest to historians and graduate students in history, existing only on the WWW. 5 Stefan Blaschke has created a comprehensive web page devoted to electronic journals for history. His "History Journals Guide" gives information and hyperlinks to electronic journals, e-zines (electronically accessible magazines written for a more general audience), and existing print journals also available on the WWW. 6 These e-journals are not so very different from their printed kin. They contain articles and/or reviews of scholarly monographs; articles are reviewed for quality by an editor, an editorial board, or by blind peer review; and the articles that are published resemble many that appear in more recognizable formats. Some of the e-journals are published by and for graduate students, giving them an inexpensive way to gain valuable experience in the publishing process.

In 1998-1999 the print American Studies journal, American Quarterly carried out an experiment in electronic publishing that may herald the future for e-journals. Historian Roy Rosenweig served as "guest editor" for this project. The journal issued a call for submissions for research to be published electronically. Eventually, four "articles" were approved for publication after editorial review, and close monitoring and collaboration between the authors and the editors. The articles did not appear in the print version of the journal, but were published on the WWW from George Mason University’s Center for History and New Media. These four articles make extensive use of hypertext’s strengths. One article, on the legality of photographs as evidence in 19th century courts, allows readers to read the article itself, but they may also follow the hypertext links to the full text of many of the cases the author used as sources. The author used "anchor tags" and "frames" features of the web-browser to keep the screen from getting too cluttered. Other authors in this endeavor used hypertext links to show film clips (as opposed to still photos from the old motion pictures), or to link the reader with related sites and sources elsewhere on the WWW. 7

.03. E-Monographs and Digital Books. (return to index)

Just as are several e-journal projects on the web, there are also several endeavors in progress to make monograph-type publications available over the web to the scholarly reading public. Likewise, as some e-journals are really electronic versions of existing print journals, there are also electronic copies of print monographs available. One of the most notable examples of printed works available over the WWW is netLibrary. NetLibrary is a commercial company in Denver, Colorado, that operates very much like a traditional library. Patrons with netLibrary accounts can browse the collection online, and upon finding a desired item, can virtually "check the book out." This allows an individual access to the files for the desired book for a limited period of time, just as only one patron at a time can check out a book from a "brick and mortar"
library. Only one individual per participating institution can have access to a particular title unless access to multiple copies of the same title is purchased. Patrons can read the text at leisure while on-line, print small portions of it for reading off-line, or read the material on palm-sized computers through NetLibrary’s purchase of Peanut Press, a company making e-books available on small, hand-held readers. However, it is a commercial venture and participating libraries and institutions pay a fee for use.8

NetLibrary created digital files for thousands of books. Many of the books in the public domain are listed as "free books," while a smaller number of recently published works are available to those members with accounts established at NetLibrary. The books in the exclusive section come from many familiar names in scholarly publishing and university presses including ABC-Clio, Cambridge University Press, Columbia University Press, Oxford University Press, and University of North Carolina Press. NetLibrary’s resources will probably not satisfy the average researcher. However, for undergraduate students needing books for basic term papers, or the scholar who needs to find a quote misplaced after regular library hours before a manuscript is due to an editor, NetLibrary does have a viable role in today’s college campuses.9

NetLibrary is not the only company offering digitized books. A new company in Houston, Texas, Questia, will begin marketing digitized books, scholarly journals, and reference materials in the liberal arts and social sciences directly to college students in the fall of 2000. Currently, Questia has digitized some 50,000, but over the next three years, the company plans to expand its collection to 250,000 titles. Most of the titles are classic works, long out of print, but there are plans to offer more up to date titles as well. Bibliographies and references to other titles owned by Questia would have connecting hypertext links. The company has amassed over $45 million in capital and is buying the rights to digitize books from publishers such as Harcourt, Duke University Press, and University of Nebraska Press. While NetLibrary markets to college and university libraries, Questia will market its product directly to students who will have to pay a subscription fee for full-text access.10

Commercial companies are not the only ones charting new territory in electronic publications for history. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is sponsoring two projects to bring historical scholarship into the digital age. The first is "Gutenburg-e." Gutenburg-e is a joint venture between the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the AHA, and Columbia University Press. The goal is to turn the best dissertation or first book manuscript into an "electronic monograph of the highest quality." Currently, there are six prizes of $20,000 to be awarded to scholars for the purpose of turning their work into electronic format. Five prizes are reserved for dissertations defended after 1/1997; the remaining prize is for unemployed historians or those working outside of academia.11

The Mellon Foundation’s second venture is the "History-E Book." The Mellon Foundation has joined the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), five other scholarly organizations and seven university presses in this venture. The Mellon Foundation is giving the ACLS $3 million to convert into electronic text 500 of the most frequently cited works and other important historical books which are difficult to find, or are long out of print. These projects, funded by the Mellon foundation and given legitimacy by affiliation with established scholarly organizations, are major steps in having electronic text accepted by more of the historical community.12

.04. Darnton’s New Model "Pyramid" Hypertext Document. (return to index)

There are other versions of electronic text which do not necessarily resemble a scholarly monograph. In a 1999 essay published in the New York Review of Books , Robert Darnton, Princeton historian and immediate past president of the AHA, outlined a model for publishing
historical research electronically and taking advantages of the opportunities offered by the new technology. He offers a model of an electronic publication, easily used by historians, but also by other disciplines in the liberal arts. He admits the infrastructure needed to make the model work is very expensive, but should be feasible. Quality would be assured through the traditional editorial and peer review process and Darnton suggests that this type of publication should initially be undertaken by established scholars to set the standards.  

Darnton's model resembles a pyramid. At the top level, would be a "concise account of the subject," which could also be published as a paperback book. The second level into the document would contain expanded versions of different aspects of the author's arguments arranged thematically. The third level would have the author's documentation, sources, and an annotated bibliography. The fourth level would have various theoretical and historiographical arguments. The fifth level would have "pedagogic" teaching units drawn up. The final level would contain readers' comments, the author's responses, and continuous, open-ended discussions about the work. Hypertext allows readers to explore as deeply (or not) as they wish. Readers would not be limited to the traditional, linear narrative, but could read "vertically, pursuing certain themes deeper and deeper into the supporting essays and documentation." Darnton also suggests readers should have the ability to print out whatever portions they wanted for future examination away from the computer screen. Darnton is very enthusiastic about the potential and possibilities offered by e-publishing, but he is cognizant that the e-book is "a supplement to, not a substitute for, Gutenburg's great machine."  

However, Darnton's suggestion for selective reading could arguably have a detrimental effect on the material's context. Readers concentrating on a singular topic to the exclusion of others risk making critical interpretation errors if they do not also examine the context in which an author places supporting or related material. While these types of errors are already an all too common occurrence, hypertext documents risk encouraging readers to "selectively read" only what they like or agree with. Also, the reader must exercise caution not to wander too far from his or her original purpose for examining the document, hypertext links are not always easy to backtrack—especially when new browser windows are opened. Depending on the capability of the computer and Internet connection used to view the material, readers may find attempting to open too many windows at once will crash systems. If windows are closed to keep a computer's cache from filling, it may prevent a viewer from retracing his or her steps back to the original document.

.05. Publish/Print On Demand Technology: Never Out of Print? (return to index)

There is yet another kind of scholarly publishing afforded by the digital revolution: publish/print on demand. Several companies and enterprises have the equipment to do this type of publishing, Ingram's Lightning Press and Backinprint.com (a joint venture between the Author’s Guild and iUniverse.com) being two of the most notable. The procedure is for an existing book to be taken apart and scanned into a computer, thus re-creating the text of the book as a digital file. As a digital file, it can be recalled and printed with much less time and effort than it takes to reset an offset printing press. The process combines a computer, a scanner, and a high-speed printer. Print runs of books could be smaller so fewer copies would have to be printed, stored, shipped, and insured, thereby reducing publisher overhead. Since scholarly publications are typically printed in smaller numbers than best-sellers, it is easier to print those types of books on an "as-needed" basis. Reviews in scholarly journals are notoriously slow to appear. Orders based on those reviews may never be filled because the requests come too late and the publisher has taken a book out of print because of poor sales. While scholarly presses should be more aware of this time lag than commercial houses, they are still subject to similar stresses and demands of the market. If the book is stored as a digital file (and these files can be created
from manuscripts on floppy disks in addition to input from scanners), as long as the file can be read by the computer, the book will never go out of print. Actual time and costs for printing and binding a book using this process vary depending on the company. It usually takes a very short time to print and bind a book, and the price is usually competitive with trade paperbacks. There are "vanity presses" who will print someone’s manuscript, but these are usually more expensive.\textsuperscript{15}

.06. Caveats for "e-Historians."\textsuperscript{(return to index)}

The far-reaching possibilities of computers and scholarly publishing are not without some caveats. Unresolved issues include those of quality control and peer review, copyright and intellectual property, archival storage and technological migration, and acceptance as evidence of scholarly activity for promotion and tenure.

Peer review and the editorial process have been the accepted methods of quality control in the academic world, with the goals of insuring that only material of an acceptable level and nature of scholarship made it into print. The rewards of publishing accepted material, historically, have been promotion and tenure by the institution for which the historian works, in addition to acceptance by one’s peers. Will the Web now undermine these institutions? The model shown by Roy Rosenweig’s \textit{American Quarterly} project shows that an editor can still have a guiding and refining influence over the creation process of a web-site just as in the revision of a manuscript, and the end result can be considered, "scholarly." However, it is incumbent upon professional associations and individual institutions to set standards and guidelines as to what will be acceptable as "scholarly" work.

Another set of unresolved issues are those centering on copyright and intellectual property. The ground here is ever shifting according to the whims of Congress and whoever has the latest influence over them as interpreted by the judicial branch of the United States government. Peter Givler, executive director for the Association of American University Presses (AAUP), in a response to Darnton's model, suggests that a simple link to a web page other than one’s own could arguably be a violation of the creator of the other page’s copyright and intellectual property. Givler’s reasoning suggests that by creating a link to an outside web page, the author is incorporating the entirety of the outside document into their own work (a far cry from the earlier accepted "fair use" of quoting a few lines or phrases, and citing the source in a footnote). On the other hand, disallowing hypertext links to outside material destroys one of the primary strengths of the WWW.\textsuperscript{16} While Givler’s assertion, that simply linking to an outside Web site violates copyright, may appear beyond the pale, there have been several lawsuits just within the past year with no definitive resolution of the issue.\textsuperscript{17}

Print on demand technology has its own intellectual property caveats. Depending on the wording of the contract and how copyright is assigned, when a publisher takes a book out of print, the author is free to send the book (or subsequent editions) to another publisher in hopes of future sales. However, if a book is stored on disk, the publisher can claim the book never goes out of print since another copy can easily be printed upon receipt of a request. Thus, if the book is never listed as out of print by the publisher, then copyright may never revert back to the author. For this reason, authors should read contracts carefully to see how digital or electronic reproduction rights are covered, and what protections are provided for. While historians are not dependent upon royalties from book sales for their daily bread, these issues should be examined by professional organizations for the precedents they set.\textsuperscript{18}

Finally there are the issues of archival storage and technological migration. The web is still very ephemeral. Servers upon which web sites are located can crash or be changed without warning.
Sometimes when sites change locations or URLs, a redirecting link will be left behind. However, these links will be taken down as more disk space is needed for other files or servers themselves are taken off-line. Computer hackers can wreak havoc on sites taking them out of commission for days or weeks, although academic sites are rarely targeted. Also, unless dates of modification are specifically given, there is little way of knowing if web sites are kept up to date, or what changes have been made as a result of feedback from peers. Print on demand is also subject to storage issues. If a book is stored on a computer, but rarely demanded, will that file necessarily be re-freshed when a new computer is brought online or undergoes a software upgrade? There are some word processing programs that have trouble reading manuscripts done in earlier versions of that very same program. When technology migrates, there may be many orphaned files left behind.

.07. Conclusion. (return to index)

The perils for historians publishing online are many and the rewards are few at the present time. The situation will change over time as electronic text becomes more acceptable, but for scholarly works of history this inevitable change may take awhile. Until that change occurs, quality research can still take advantage of electronic distribution through e-journals, e-books by netLibrary or future competitors, or print-on-demand technology. Traditional narrative histories may be created as web documents with hyperlinks connecting endnotes, glossaries, maps, illustrations, or other resources, although care must be taken that these (or any) documents not become cumbersome. Ideally, libraries would be able to provide access points for researchers to publications in history in all formats: print, hypertext, and whatever the next generations hold. Unfortunately, libraries, faced with decreasing budgets and increasing pressure to deliver information in the most up to the minute format, may be forced to choose between maintaining one format over the other. Future technological developments and budgetary decisions may alter this outlook in a few years and the issue may need to be revisited.

.08. NOTES (return to index)

Please Note: Ordinals below are an anchor which returns one to the proper point in the text.

1 See http://muse.jhu.edu/.
2 See http://www.jstor.org/.
4 OCLC is the Online Computer Library Center, an international library cooperative assisting with cataloging, reference services, resource sharing, and other services. For more details on ECO, see http://www.oclc.org/oclc/menu/eco.htm.
6 "The History Journals Guide" can be found at: http://www.history-journals.de/.
10 Wall Street Journal , 13 April 2000; Houston Chronicle , 16 April 2000. For other information,

For competition rules, topics, and more information, see http://www.theaha.org/gutenberg/Index.cfm.


Ibid.


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