Globalization and the Virtues of Openness in Higher Education

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Openness has emerged as an alternative mode of social production based on the growing and overlapping complexities of open source, open access and open archiving and open publishing. It has become a leading source of innovation in the world global digital economy increasingly adopted by world governments,

international agencies and multinationals as well as leading educational institutions. It is clear that the Free Software and 'open source' movements constitute a radical non-propertarian alternative to traditional methods of text production and distribution. This alternative non-proprietary method of cultural exchange threatens traditional models and the legal and institutional means used to restrict creativity, innovation and the free exchange of ideas. In terms of a model of communication there has been a gradual shift from content to code in the openness, access, use, reuse and modification reflecting a radical personalization that has made these open characteristics and principles increasingly the basis of the cultural sphere.

So open source and open access has been developed and applied in open publishing, open archiving, and open music constituting the hallmarks of 'open culture.' For some theorists, such as law professors Yochai Benkler (Yale) and Larry Lessig (Stanford), this symbolizes a new mode of social production and a form of cultural formation that represents an alternative to capitalist forms of globalization. As a number of economists have remarked this marks the emergence of global science and knowledge as a global public good that rest on an ethic of participation and collaboration based on the co-production and co-design of knowledge goods and services.

As one author expresses the point:

The present decade can be called the 'open' decade (open source, open systems, open standards, open archives, open everything) just as the 1990s were called the 'electronic' decade (e-text, e-learning, e-commerce, e-governance) (Materu, 2004)

And yet it is more than just a 'decade' that follows the electronic innovations of the 1990s; it is a change of philosophy and ethos, a set of interrelated and complex changes that transforms markets and the mode of production, ushering in a new collection of values based on openness, the ethic of participation and peer-to-peer collaboration.

New forms of freedom are occurring in the fundamental shift from an underlying metaphysics of production-a 'productionist' metaphysics-to a metaphysics of consumption as use, reuse and modification. New logics and different patterns of cultural consumption are appearing in the areas of new media where symbolic analysis becomes a habitual and daily activity. It is now a truism to argue that

information is the vital element in a 'new' politics and economy that links space, knowledge and capital in networked practices. Freedom is an essential ingredient in this equation if these network practices develop or transform themselves into knowledge cultures.

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The specific politics and eco-cybernetic rationalities that accompany an informational global capitalism comprised of new multinational edutainment agglomerations are clearly capable of colonizing the emergent ecology of public info-social networks and preventing the development of knowledge cultures based on non-proprietary modes of knowledge production and exchange.

Complexity as an approach to knowledge and knowledge systems now recognizes both the development of global systems architectures in (tele)communications and information with the development of open knowledge production systems that increasingly rest not only on the establishment of new and better platforms (sometimes called Web 2.0), the semantic web, new search algorithms and processes of digitization. Social processes and policies that foster *openness* as an overriding value as evidenced in the growth of open source, open access and open education and their convergences that characterize global knowledge communities that transcend borders of the nation-state. Openness seems also to suggest political transparency and the norms of open inquiry, indeed, even democracy itself as both the basis of the logic of inquiry and the dissemination of its results.

The role of nonmarket and nonproprietary production promotes the emergence of a new information environment and networked economy that both depends upon and encourages great individual freedom, democratic participation, collaboration and interactivity. This 'promises to enable social production and exchange to play a much larger role, alongside property - and market based production, than they ever have in modern democracies' (Benkler, 2006: 3). Peer production of information, knowledge, and culture enabled by the emergence of free and open-source software permits the expansion of the social model production beyond software platform into every domain of information and cultural production.

Open knowledge production is based upon an incremental, decentralized (and asycrhonous), and collaborative development process that transcends the traditional proprietary market model. Commons-based peer production is based on free cooperation, not on the selling of one's labor in exchange of a wage, nor motivated primarily by profit or for the exchange value of the resulting product; it is managed through new modes of peer governance rather than traditional organizational hierarchies and it is an innovative application of copyright which creates an information commons and transcends the limitations attached to both the private (for-profit) and public (state-based) property forms. (See, for instance, Michel Bauwens' P2P Foundation work at the P2P Foundation at http://p2pfoundation.net/3._P2P_in_the_Economic_Sphere).

As the Ithaka Report *University Publishing in a Digital Age* (2008) reveals these broad initiatives in open source, open access, open publishing and open archiving are part of emerging knowledge ecologies that will determine the future of educational resources and scholarly publishing challenging commercial publishing business models and raising broader and deeper questions about content development processes as well as questions of resourcing and sustainability. The new digital technologies promise changes in creation, production and consumption of scholarly resources including the development of new formats allowing integrated electronic research and publishing environments that will enable real-time dissemination and dynamically-updated content as well as alternative distribution models including institutional repositories, pre-print servers, open access journals, that will broaden access, reduce costs, and enable open sharing of content.

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On February 14 2008 Harvard University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences adopted a policy that requires faculty members to allow the university to make their scholarly articles available free online. The new policy makes Harvard the first university in the United States to mandate open access to its faculty members' research publications and marks the beginning of a new era that will encourage other US universities to do the same. Open access means 'putting peer-reviewed scientific

and scholarly literature on the internet, making it available free of charge and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions, and removing the barriers to serious research.' As Lila Guterman reports in *The Chronicle of Higher Education News Blog* Stuart M. Shieber, a professor of computer science at Harvard who proposed the new policy, said after the vote in a news release that the decision "should be a very powerful message to the academic community that we want and should have more control over how our work is used and disseminated (http://chronicle.com/news/article/3943/harvard-faculty-adopts-open-access-requirement).

Open access has transformed the world of scholarship and since the early 2000s with major OA statements starting with Budapest in 2002 movement has picked up momentum and developed a clear political ethos. Harvard's adoption of the new policy follows hard on the heels of open access mandates passed within months of each other - the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the European Research Council (ERC). As one blogger remarked: 'open archiving of peer-reviewed journal literature [is] now on an irreversible course of expansion' not only as US universities follow Harvard's lead but also as open archiving makes available learning material to anyone including students and faculty from developing and transition countries. Harvard's adoption of the open archiving mandate is similar in scope to the step taken by MIT to adopt OpenCourseWare (OCW) in 2001. These initiatives are part of *new strategies to establish knowledge cultures* that will determine the future of scholarly publishing, the form and content of educational resources, and therefore also the future of innovation and research in the digital global economy.

References

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