Introduction

This survey was carried out as part of OAPEN-UK, a Jisc and AHRC-funded project looking at open access monograph publishing. Over five years, OAPEN-UK is exploring how monographs are currently produced and used, and how this might need to change if open access monograph publishing were to become more widespread.

OAPEN-UK has worked extensively with stakeholders who have an interest in monograph publishing – researchers, librarians, university managers, publishers, learned societies, funders and e-book aggregators. This survey is part of a package of work with academics, understanding their approach to monographs as both authors and readers. But it contains important messages that will be useful to anyone with an interest in developing open access models for monographs.

The survey was carried out using SurveyMonkey in summer 2014. It was distributed via social media and targeted emails using OAPEN-UK and HEFCE networks. We achieved a total of 2,231 usable responses from humanities and social science researchers based in the UK.

The survey builds upon four years of research already undertaken by OAPEN-UK to try to understand how monographs fit into academics' working lives. Previous research suggests that academics value the monograph very highly, as both authors and readers, but that they are concerned about its long-term sustainability (as are many others involved in publishing academic books). We have also sought to address more specific areas where our existing research has shown unanswered questions about open access for monographs. These include researchers' willingness to change publishers from book to book, issues around rights and licensing for open access monographs, the sustainability of open access models which continue to rely upon print sales for some of their revenues and researcher attitudes to open access.

Within each section of the report, we have presented some headline findings from the survey. We have then tried to explore what these findings might mean for any attempts to move towards open access for monographs. Open access for monographs would represent a significant cultural change for researchers, and policy-makers need to recognise their priorities and concerns around monograph publishing and open access more generally. More importantly, perhaps, the survey raises some issues that will need to be addressed if open access for monographs is to become more widespread.

The report is broken down into four main sections:

- The role of the monograph
- Publishing monographs
- Reading monographs
- Open access

The role of the monograph

As authors

Humanities researchers are more likely than those working in social sciences to have published a monograph. The further a researcher has progressed in their career, the more likely they are to have published a monograph.

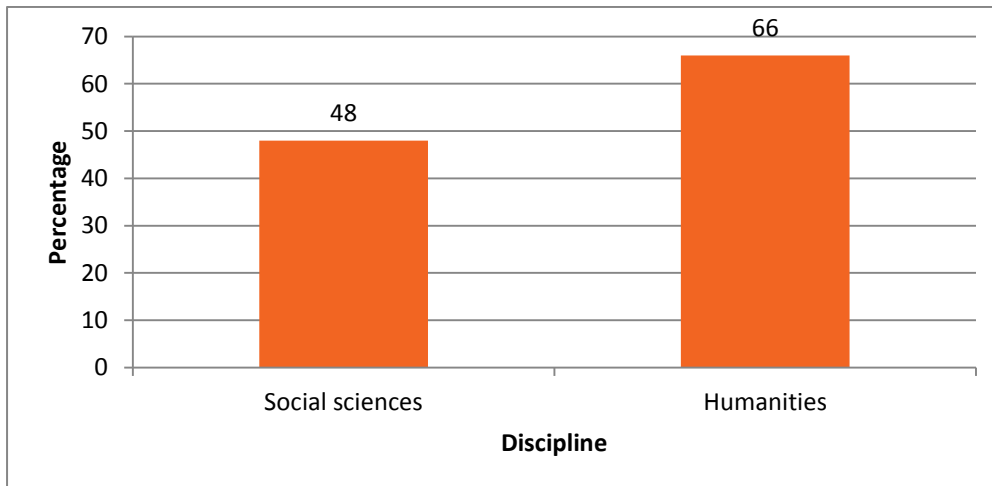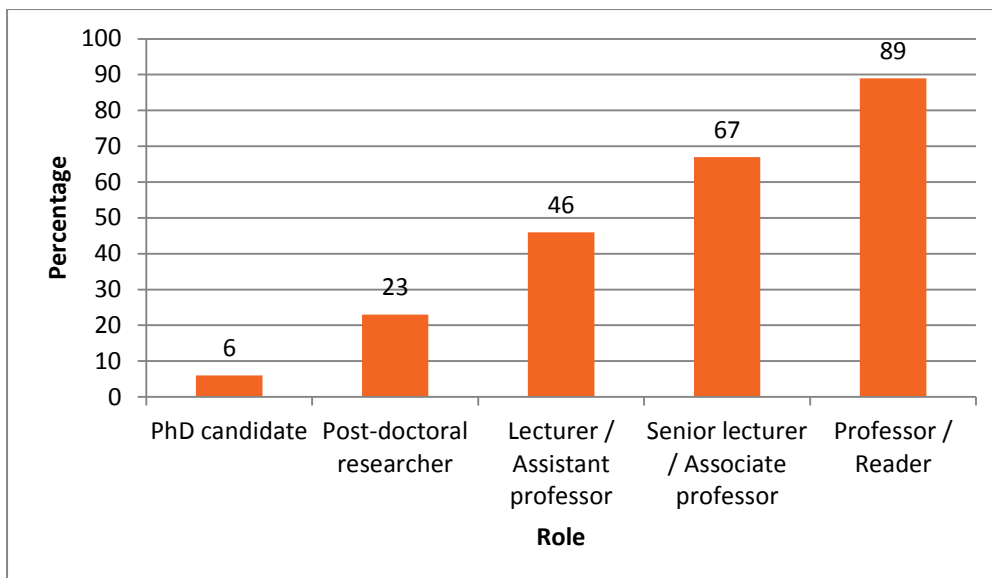**Figure 1: Researchers who have published a monograph, by discipline**

Figure 2: Researchers who have published a monograph, by career stage

Researchers who have published a monograph are, on the whole, more likely to have published a single-authored monograph (91%) than a co-authored monograph (37%). But older researchers are progressively more likely to have published a co-authored monograph – perhaps because collaboration opportunities grow as their reputation becomes more established. (Note the very small base for PhD candidates, which probably makes any conclusions drawn from this data unreliable). And researchers in the social sciences are more likely to have published a co-authored monograph than those in the humanities, probably reflecting disciplinary norms.

Table 3: Researchers who have published single or co-authored monographs, by career stage

	PhD candidate	Post-doctoral researcher	Lecturer/ Assistant professor	Senior lecturer/ Associate professor	Professor/ Reader
Single-authored monograph	50%	92%	93%	89%	92%
Co-authored monograph	50%	20%	17%	28%	49%
Base	16	49	230	337	636

Table 4: Researchers who have published single or co-authored monographs, by discipline

	Social sciences	Humanities
Single-authored monograph, written by me alone	82%	96%
Co-authored monograph	57%	25%
	462	823

Publishing a monograph is linked to publishing other types of output as well. Respondents who had published a monograph were more likely to have also published almost every other type of book output. Edited collections (as editors) were the most common type of alternative output, while critical editions, published creative outputs and catalogues are relatively rare – probably because these are field-specific outputs.

Figure 5: Other book outputs published, by monograph publication
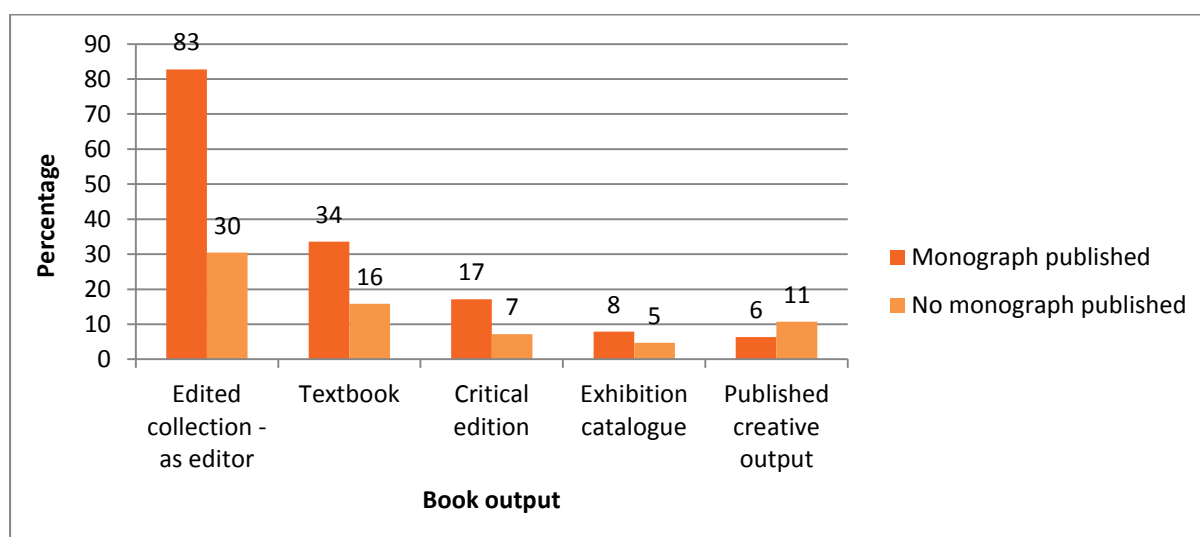
Among researchers who had published a monograph, 69% said that at least one of their published books was based upon their PhD.

HSS researchers consider it important to produce monographs; overall, they are second only to journal articles. When broken down by discipline, monographs are considerably more important in

the humanities than in the social sciences (95% and 72% of respondents respectively rated them as 'important' or 'very important' outputs in their discipline). The same is true for other book outputs such as book chapters, edited books and critical editions. Career stage also seems to make a difference: junior respondents are less likely than senior researchers to consider a monograph 'important' or 'very important'. This difference by career stage is less evident for other types of book output.

Table 6: Researchers who consider it 'important' or 'very important' to publish research outputs, by discipline

	Total	Social sciences	Humanities
Journal article	98%	99%	98%
Monograph	84%	72%	95%
Book chapter	75%	65%	83%
Edited book (as editor)	65%	57%	71%
Conference paper	48%	49%	46%
Critical edition	35%	22%	45%
Textbook	23%	27%	19%
Working paper	14%	21%	8%
Dataset	13%	18%	9%
Published creative output	11%	7%	14%
Exhibition catalogue	10%	4%	14%
Base	2229	953	1258

Table 7: Researchers who consider it 'important' or 'very important' to publish research outputs, by career stage

	PhD candidate	Post-doctoral researcher	Lecturer /Assistant professor	Senior lecturer /Associate professor	Professor /Reader
Journal article	98%	100%	99%	99%	99%
Conference paper	77%	60%	48%	46%	34%
Monograph	75%	84%	84%	84%	90%
Edited book (as editor)	64%	70%	69%	65%	62%
Book chapter	79%	74%	75%	77%	74%
Critical edition	42%	33%	34%	36%	33%
Textbook	31%	18%	22%	24%	20%
Working paper	33%	17%	11%	12%	8%
Exhibition catalogue	12%	10%	9%	10%	10%
Creative output	19%	8%	9%	10%	9%
Dataset	16%	15%	10%	11%	13%
Base	242	210	492	502	713

As readers

Nearly two-thirds of respondents had read a scholarly book in the few days preceding their response to the survey: the proportion was higher in the humanities (69%) than in the social sciences (52%).

Most respondents agreed that access to monographs, book chapters and edited collections was important or very important, though the proportion regarding monographs as important was higher in the humanities than in the social sciences. The same cannot be said of some other book outputs: access to edited books and book chapters was considered almost equally important in both disciplines. Access to critical editions, on the other hand, was much more important in the humanities than in the social sciences, while access to textbooks was more important in the social sciences than in the humanities. There were no strong differences by career stage.

Table 8: Researchers who consider it 'important' or 'very important' to access research outputs, by discipline

|	Total	Social sciences	Humanities
Journal articles	100%	100%	100%
Book chapters	97%	96%	98%
Edited books	97%	95%	98%
Monographs	94%	89%	98%
Conference papers	60%	60%	61%
Critical editions	58%	41%	71%
Textbooks	49%	56%	43%
Working papers	33%	45%	23%
Datasets	31%	41%	23%
Exhibition catalogues	21%	11%	29%
Published creative outputs	18%	11%	23%
Base	2226	951	1257

When asked about the last book that they read, 74% of respondents said that their main purpose in reading it was for research and writing. There were no major differences between researchers working in the humanities and those working in the social sciences. Career stage showed some differences: for example, lecturers and senior lecturers were more likely to have read their last book for teaching, and less likely to have read it for research and writing.

Table 9: Purpose of reading last book read, by career stage

	PhD candidate	Post-doctoral researcher	Lecturer/ Assistant professor	Senior lecturer/ Associate professor	Professor/ Reader
Research and writing	89%	79%	69%	69%	77%
Teaching	3%	6%	17%	13%	4%
Current awareness/keeping up-to-date	4%	6%	6%	9%	9%
Internal or external presentations	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
To review it	3%	6%	6%	7%	8%
General interest	0%	3%	2%	1%	2%
Base	244	209	492	504	716

Overall, the majority of respondents (52%) read a few chapters of the book, rather than reading the whole thing, although researchers in the humanities (40%) were slightly more likely than social scientists (34%) to read the whole book. As researchers progress in their career, they become more likely to read the whole book rather than a few chapters, although even at the most advanced career stage the split is only equal: reading the whole book never becomes dominant. It is also possible that there is an interaction effect at work here: as Table 10 shows, researchers reading a book in order to review it are more likely to read the whole thing, and professors are twice as likely as PhD candidates to have read their last book for this purpose (see Table 7). But this would not account for all the variability. Looking at a single chapter, or the introduction and/or conclusion only, remains a marginal way of reading books across career stages.

Figure 10: Amount of last book read, by career stage
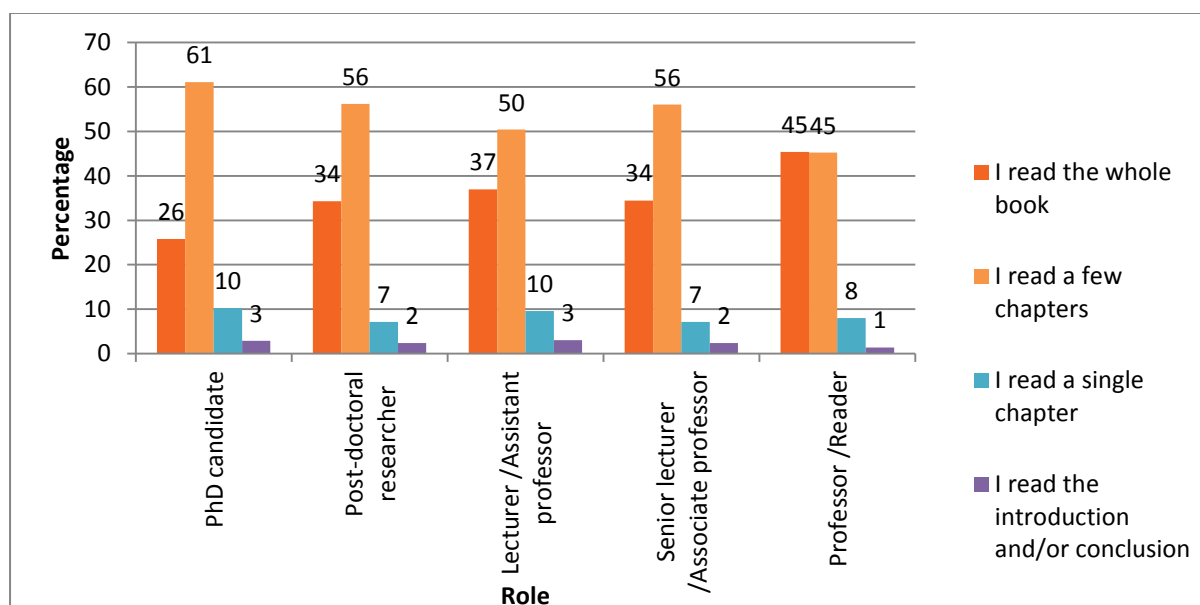
Respondents who read their last book for research and writing, teaching or presentations were very unlikely to read the whole thing, preferring instead to read several chapters. Those respondents who

were writing a review were – perhaps reassuringly - much more likely to read the whole book. Note the small bases for presentations and general interest – this particular data is best treated with some caution.

Table 11: Purpose of reading last book read, by amount of last book read

		How did you read this book?				
		I read the whole book	I read a few chapters	I read a single chapter	I read the introduction and/or conclusion	Base
What was your main purpose in reading this book?	Research and writing	35%	55%	9%	2%	1654
	Teaching	19%	64%	13%	4%	204
	Current awareness/keeping up-to-date	43%	48%	5%	4%	170
	Internal or external presentations	12%	71%	12%	6%	17
	To review it	88%	11%	1%	1%	145
	General interest	62%	32%	3%	3%	34

We also asked survey respondents to characterise how closely they had read their last book, or portion of that book. If reading the book for research and writing, respondents were relatively likely to pay close attention and to read in great depth – the same is true if they were reviewing the book. If reading for teaching or current awareness, they were more likely to read only to understand the main points. Again, note the small bases for presentations and general interest – this data is best treated with some caution.

Table 12: Purpose of reading last book read, by attention paid

|		And with how much depth/attention did you read the (section of) the book?			
		In great depth, paying close attention	With some attention, to understand the main points	Skimmed it to get an overall impression	Base
What was your main purpose in reading this book?	Research and writing	58%	38%	4%	1656
	Teaching	36%	52%	11%	204
	Current awareness/keeping up-to-date	36%	56%	8%	170
	Internal or external presentations	41%	59%	0%	17
	To review it	68%	30%	2%	145
	General interest	45%	45%	9%	33

Publishing and access- where is the challenge?

Open access is seen as beneficial because it makes it easier for researchers to read their colleagues' work – an essential prerequisite for doing work of their own. But responses from this survey suggest that researchers face more of a challenge in getting books published in the first place than in getting access to books that have found a publisher. Of respondents who said that it was important or very important for their career to publish monographs, 50% felt that it was difficult or very difficult for someone at their career stage and in their discipline to do so. Conversely, of those who said that it was important to be able to access monographs, only 10% felt that it was difficult or very difficult to do so. For comparison, the respective figures for journal articles were 41% and 5%: this is clearly a problem that affects other types of output, but monographs are in a slightly worse position than journals.

Figure 13: Researchers who say it is both important and difficult to publish or access monographs and journals
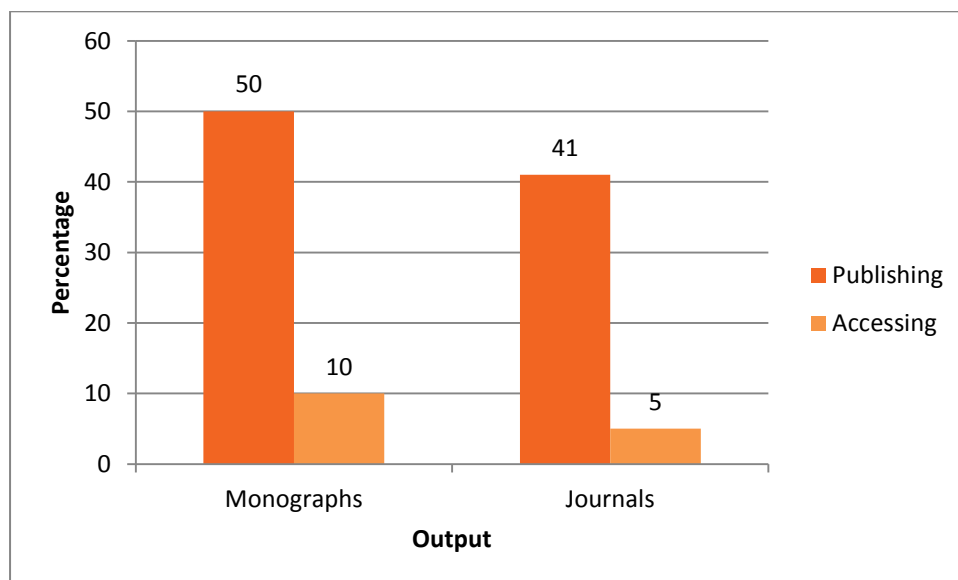

Thinking about a good monograph written by someone at their career stage (a question which was phrased so as not to ask about personal experience, although it is likely that personal experience will nonetheless have influenced responses), senior respondents are much less likely than those who are starting their academic careers to believe it is difficult to get published. The same holds true for edited books, book chapters and critical editions. This is unsurprising: it is likely to be easier for an established researcher with a strong reputation to acquire a book contract than for a post-doctoral researcher seeking to publish their first monograph. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 2, senior researchers are more likely to have successfully published a monograph, which may affect their perception.

Figure 14: Researchers who consider it 'difficult' or 'very difficult' to publish a high-quality research output, by career stage
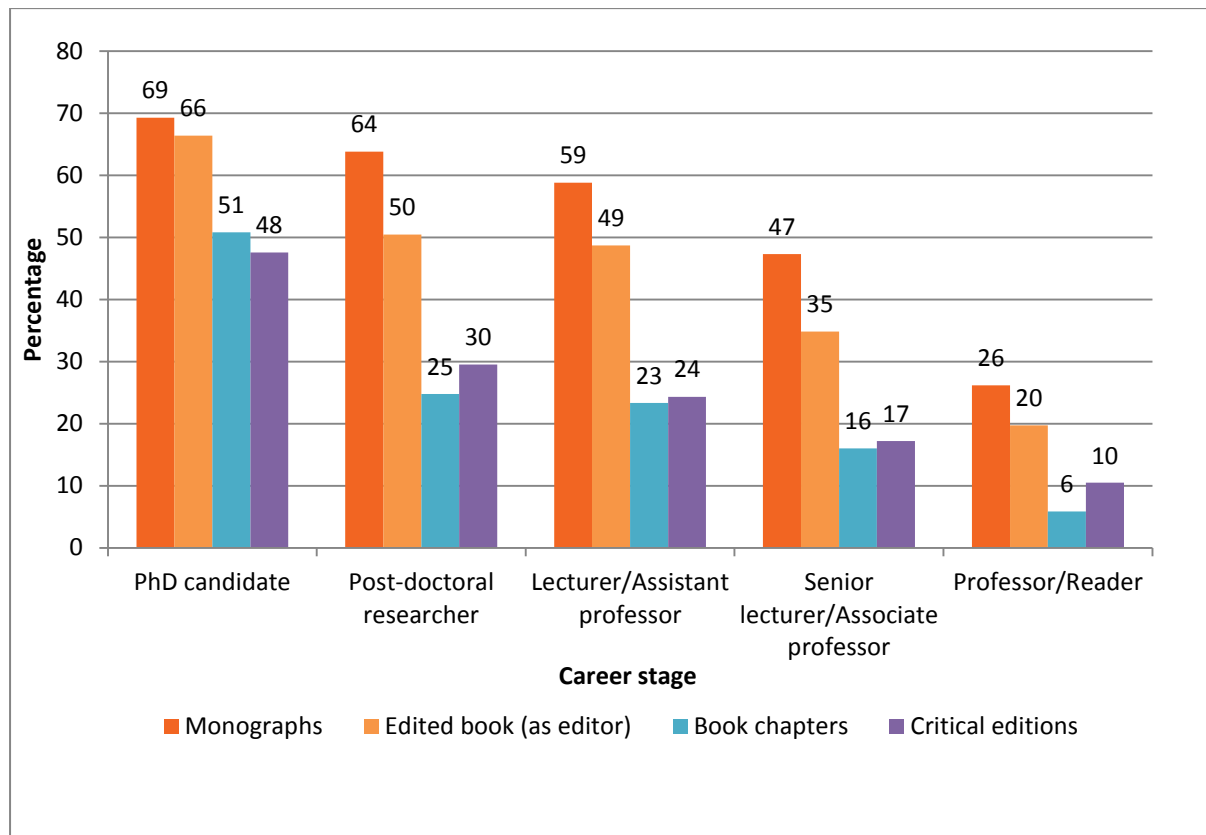
Two-thirds (67%) of respondents felt that monographs were easy or very easy to access. Respondents working in the humanities found monographs easier to access than those in the social sciences: the same is true for edited books, book chapters and critical editions. The biggest access problem in both disciplines is conference papers (this is in line with earlier research on the subject). Perceptions about the ease of accessing various research outputs do not vary much by age or career stage.

Figure 15: Researchers who consider it 'easy' or 'very easy' to access research outputs, by discipline
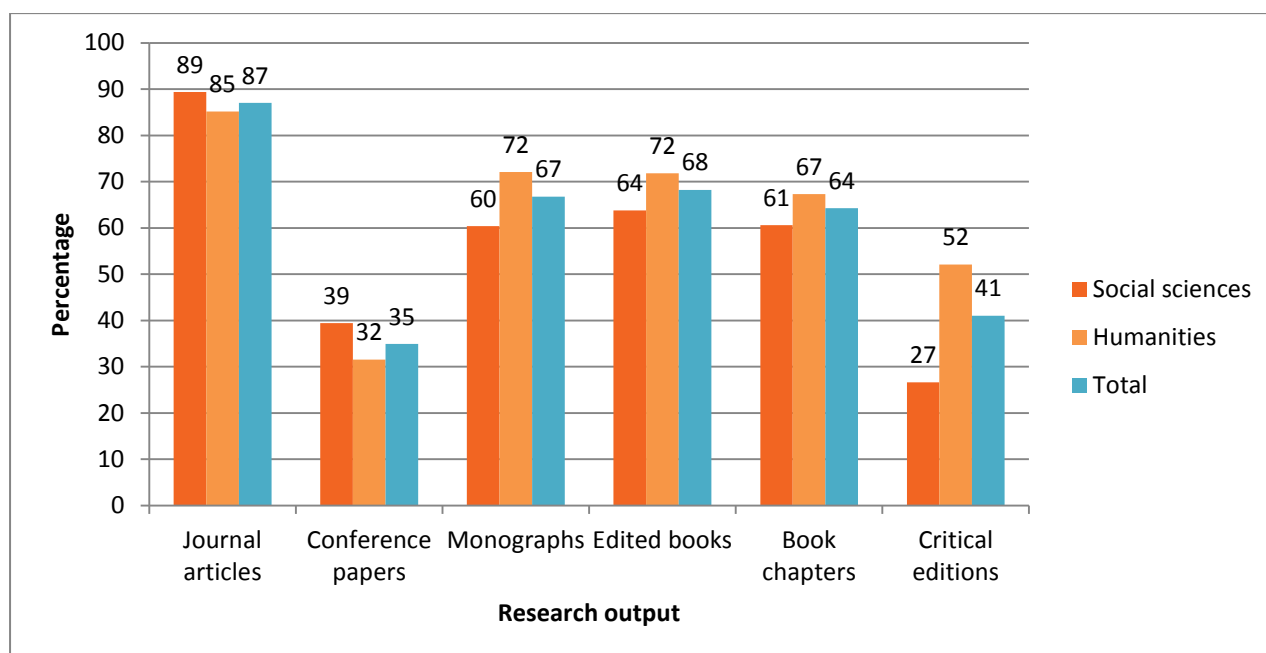
The role of the monograph - what does this mean for open access?

Monographs remain really important outputs for HSS researchers. As both authors and readers they value them very highly. Although there are variations across disciplines and career stages, the monograph remains important for all researchers. Therefore, any attempts to move towards open access for monographs will need to be handled sensitively, and with reassurance that changes will not make it harder for researchers to publish, discover and read monographs.

Any bodies considering moves towards open access for monographs should bear in mind that the real problem – as researchers themselves see it – is more about being able to publish a monograph in the first place, not with getting access to books that have found a publisher. Although the data cannot tell us anything about the objective reality of how difficult it is to publish a monograph, researchers clearly think that it is difficult for a good quality monograph to find a publication outlet – something which may restrict the progress of scholarship. This, rather than access, appears to be the problem that needs to be solved in the monograph publishing environment, and any moves towards open access will need to show how they are trying to address this problem.

Some commentators have expressed concern that open access deposit of PhD theses (as is now the policy in many UK universities) may lead publishers to reject book proposals based upon that same PhD thesis. This has not been tested empirically and the survey cannot tell us much about it, but it is worth noting the high proportion of respondents who have published a book or part of a book based on their PhD thesis.

Publishing monographs

Choosing a publisher

Of the respondents who had published more than one monograph, only 12% had used the same publisher for every book. The most common reason given for changing publisher was that the new book was on a different subject and therefore better suited to an alternative publisher. Career considerations were also important, such as acceptance by a more prestigious publisher, or a perceived necessity to publish with a range of publishers. Such motivations are largely outside the publisher's control but others were not: for example, better services, or improved royalty or contractual arrangements with the new publisher.

Figure 16: Reasons for changing monograph publisher
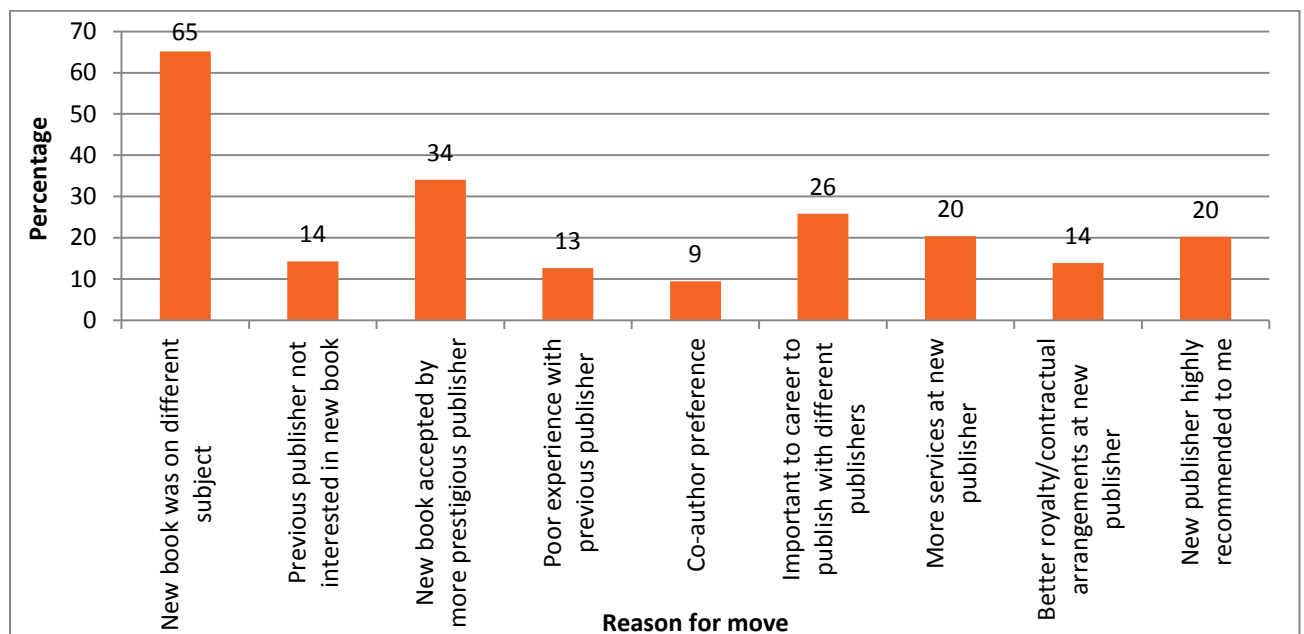
The more senior a respondent becomes, the more likely they are to change publisher because of a change in the subject of their work or because their previous publisher is not interested in their new book – this probably reflects the natural development of an academic career, where research develops into new areas over time, as well as the changing interests of publishers.

Differences between the humanities and the social sciences were not pronounced in most areas, but humanists were much more likely to consider it important for their careers to publish with a number of different publishers (31% of humanities scholars and 18% of social scientists chose this option). Social scientists, on the other hand, were more likely to change publishers in order to follow the preference of their co-authors – probably reflecting the greater incidence of co-authored monographs in social science disciplines (13% of social science researchers and 7% of humanities researchers).

Of respondents who had published at least one monograph, 51% had published a monograph with a university press and 49% had not. In the humanities, 57% of respondents had published a monograph with a university press, while 41% of social scientists had done so - this may reflect the

relatively high number of university presses which publish humanities monographs, and the relatively limited opportunities for humanities authors to publish in the more commercial presses available to social scientists.

29% of respondents worked at a university which currently has a press. Of those respondents, most were positive about the reputation of their press within their discipline: 62% said it was well regarded or very well regarded. Most respondents were willing to consider publishing with their university's own press (and many had already done so), although a minority would only do so once they had left the university in question. Even those who felt that the press was averagely (or even poorly) regarded in their discipline would consider publishing with it in future.

Figure 17: Researchers' attitudes to publishing with their own university press
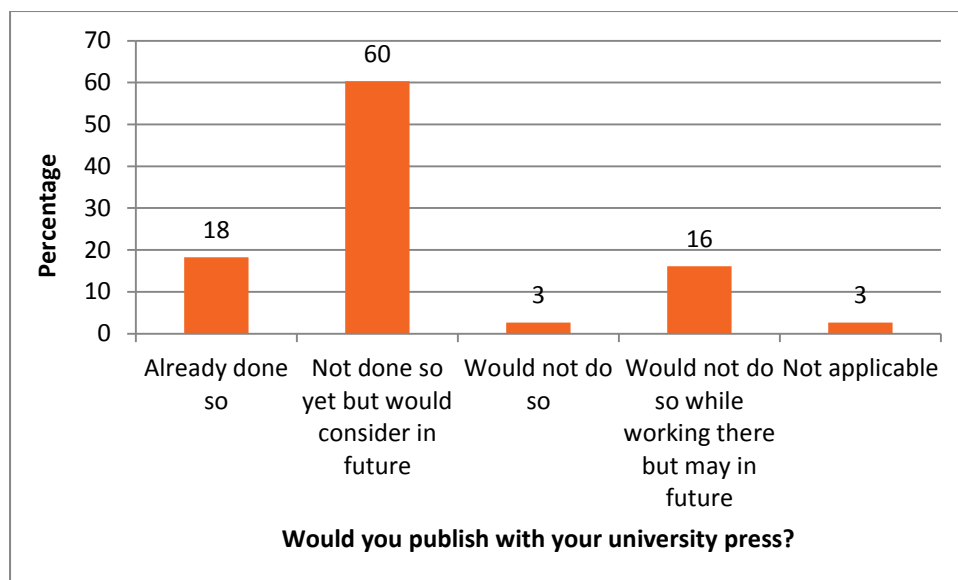
Third party rights

36% of respondents had not used third-party content in the books that they have published – 46% of social scientists and 29% of researchers from the humanities. For those who did use third-party content, it does not always seem to have been an easy experience. 37% felt it was generally difficult or very difficult to handle the practical issues around securing third-party rights, while 32% felt it was difficult or very difficult to pay the costs associated with using third-party rights. 12% of respondents who had used third-party rights had publishers who dealt with the practical issues, and 11% had publishers who dealt with the costs: the rest were left to handle these issues themselves.

Licences

An encouraging 62% of researchers knew what a Creative Commons licence is, a proportion which was very similar in the humanities and the social sciences. There appears to be a particular peak in awareness among postdoctoral researchers (71%).

Use of Creative Commons licences is low, but this may reflect their relatively recent spread into academic publications. Overall, 22% of respondents have published some of their work (journal articles, books, datasets, creative work or any other outputs) under a Creative Commons licence. 10% of respondents could not remember which Creative Commons licence they used, and a further

25% did not know or could not remember whether they had used a Creative Commons licence – perhaps justifying perceptions that authors do not always read their contracts particularly carefully.

Disciplinary differences were not particularly pronounced, although social scientists (26%) were slightly more likely than those in the humanities (19%) to have used a Creative Commons licence. This may reflect the relatively recent spread of Creative Commons licences within academic publishing along with the higher volume of publication in the social sciences – a social science researcher is perhaps more likely to have published a journal article in the period since Creative Commons licences became a common option than a humanities researcher. It may also be related to the increased impact of funder mandates in the social sciences.

Publishing books - what does this mean for open access?

The high number of respondents who have changed publisher over the course of their careers may be taken as encouraging for new open access presses, who must attract authors away from other publishers if they are to build high-profile lists. And the reluctance to publish with one's own university press, identified in previous research, is not so evident in this survey: many researchers working at universities with a press were willing to consider publishing with that press, even where its reputation was not outstanding. This might be seen as encouraging for institutions that are considering offering support to their researchers by establishing an open access publishing operation either alone or in partnership with other universities.

But a note of caution must be sounded. Many researchers changed press to move to a more prestigious publisher, or one where their new book fitted into existing lists. Newer publishers will not necessarily have the prestige or reach to attract authors, even those who are looking for a change. This survey did not cover questions about how researchers select a publisher, only what motivates them to change, but other studies strongly indicate that prestige and reputation are very important to researchers, and this must be set against the findings from this survey.

Most researchers do not seem to expect publishers to deal with third-party rights and costs, but overall there seems to be a perception that these are relatively difficult to negotiate and fund (among those who have used third-party content). Given that third-party rights holders are often more cautious about licensing their content for open access publications (due to uncertainty about how licensing works and how to set appropriate fees), publishers of open access monographs may need to provide more support to researchers to help them through the negotiation and payment process.

The familiarity with Creative Commons licences is encouraging, but the low levels of experience and, particularly, the tendency to forget which licence has been used (or whether one has been used at all) mean that open access monograph publishers using this licensing regime still need to ensure researchers fully understand their rights and obligations.

Reading books

The vast majority of respondents (87%) used a published print copy of the last scholarly book that they read. This did not vary much by career stage, age or discipline. This tallies closely with the proportion of respondents (87%) who prefer to read in print. But the proportion of respondents who say that they use electronic scholarly books was not much lower (83%), suggesting that researchers are happy to use e-books even if they are not their preferred format.

Figure 18: Researchers who use electronic scholarly books, by preferred reading format
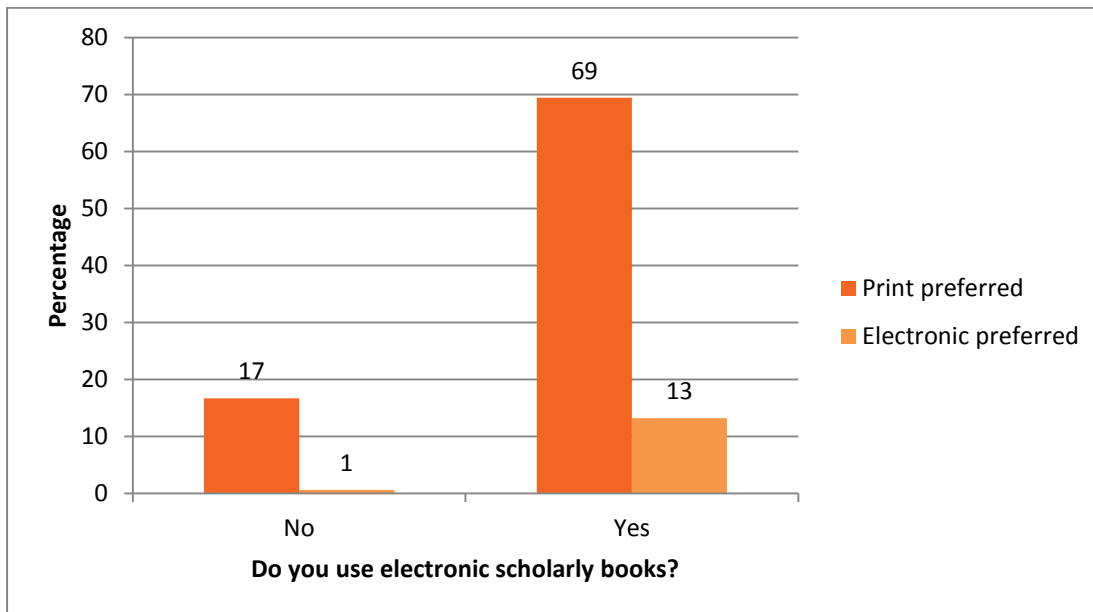
More experienced researchers seem less inclined to use electronic scholarly books, although 75% of professors do use e-books in the course of their work. Researchers in the humanities (85%) were slightly more likely to use e-books than those in the social sciences (80%): this may be because some social scientists are simply less reliant upon books and more likely to use those (such as textbooks) that are not commonly available in electronic format.

Career stage also seems to affect preference for print over electronic books; junior researchers are more likely to prefer e-books over print (although the proportions remain low).

Figure 19: Reading format preference, by career stage
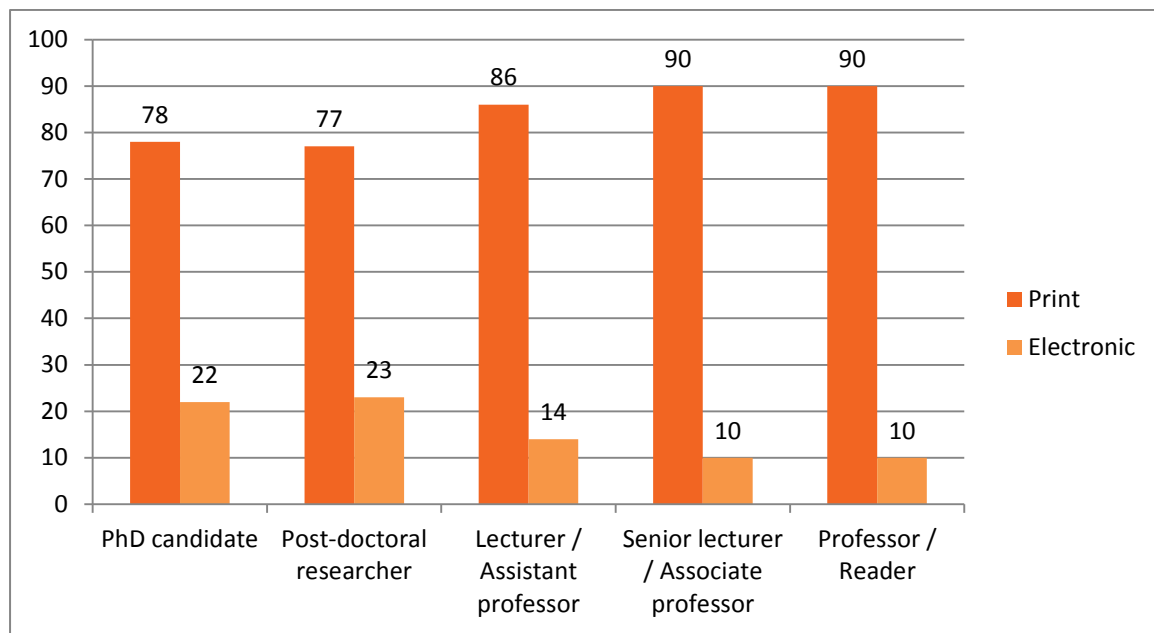
The most common way for researchers to access the last book that they read was to buy their own copy, followed closely by borrowing from the library. The more senior a researcher is, the more likely they are to buy their own copy: conversely, more junior researchers were much more likely to use the library to access a book.

Figure 20: Method of acquiring last book read, by career stage
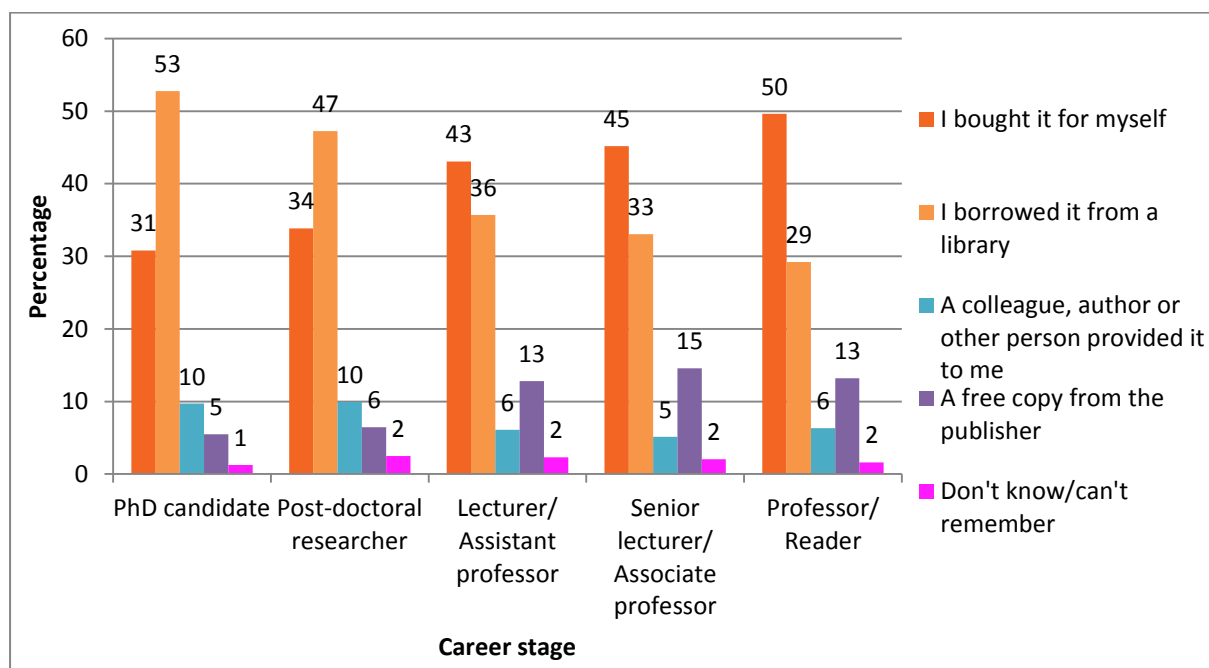
There is a sharp distinction between researchers in the humanities and social sciences: social scientists are more likely to buy a copy of the book, whereas humanities scholars are more likely to have borrowed it from the library. This may be associated with the number of books that humanities scholars read, compared to their colleagues in the social sciences.

Nearly half of researchers who read their last book in print bought their own copy. But 59% of those who read it on an e-reader, tablet or other mobile device bought their own copy – although a much smaller absolute number of researchers, this suggests researchers who use device-specific e-book formats are willing to pay for them.

Figure 21: Method of acquiring last book read, by discipline
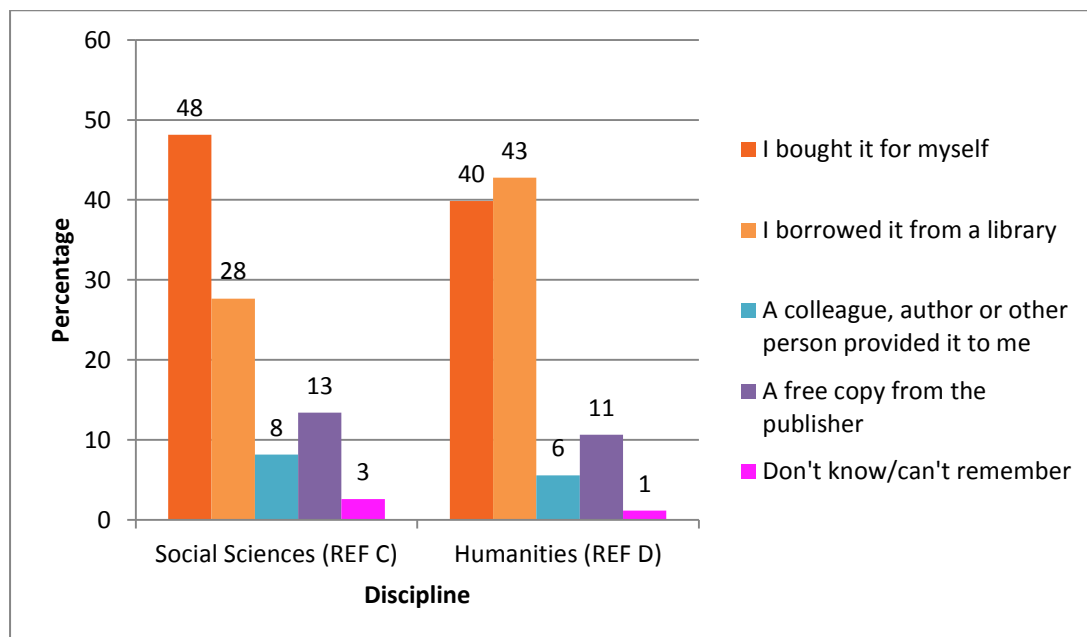
Reading books - what does this mean for open access?

The continued dominance of, and preference for, print suggests that business models based upon a free electronic version (whatever format that may be - HTML, PDF or e-book) and a paid-for print version could be sustainable for publishers, as there is certainly a market for print books. Moreover, while not many respondents were using mobile devices to read books, those who did were particularly likely to have bought the last book that they read. This suggests that it may be feasible to charge for device-specific formats as well as print copies, and making the HTML or PDF available for free.

The difference between newer and more experienced researchers in their use of, and preference for, e-books appears striking, but the preference for e-books is relatively low even among the most enthusiastic groups. It may be that a large disruption is yet to come, but at present the change appears slow, and this should mean that existing print-based business models remain viable for a few years.

Open access

Encouragingly, 62% of respondents felt themselves to be 'familiar' with open access, with just 1% saying that they had never heard of it. There were no clear trends by career stage, age or discipline.

On the whole, respondents were positive about the principle of open access for journals, but slightly less so for books. They felt that implementing open access would be difficult for both types of outputs, but especially for books.
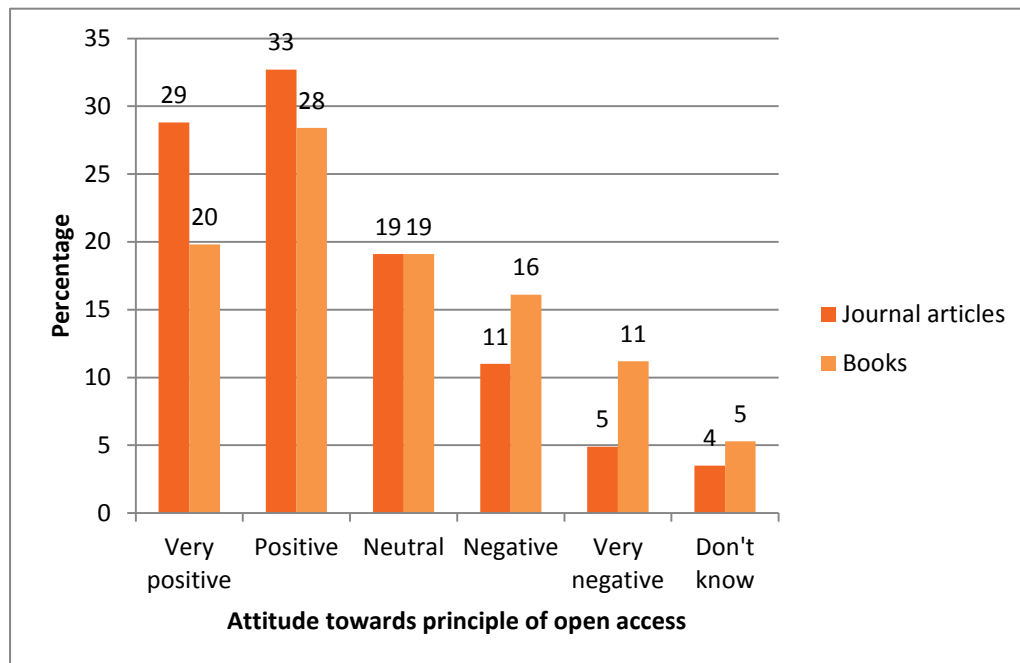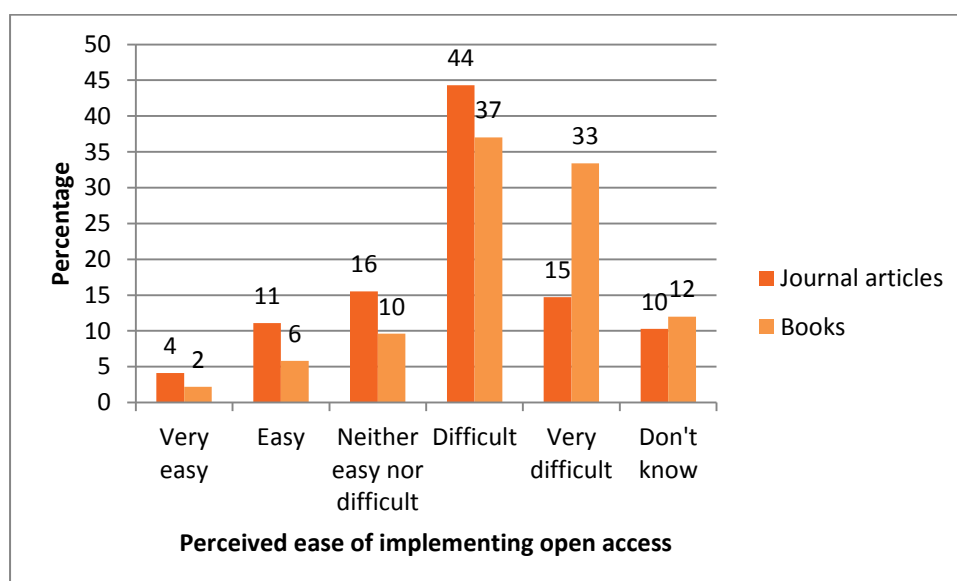
Figure 22: Attitude towards principle of open access

Figure 23: Perceived ease of implementing open access

The difference between junior and senior researchers is very striking on this set of questions. 71% of PhD candidates are positive or very positive about the principle of OA for books, while only 36% of professors are. The differences for journals are less pronounced (78% and 51% respectively), but still evident. Similar patterns appear when respondents were asked how easy they thought implementing open access would be for both types of output, but the overall numbers here are very low.

Figure 24: Researchers who feel 'positive' or 'very positive' towards principle of open access, by career stage
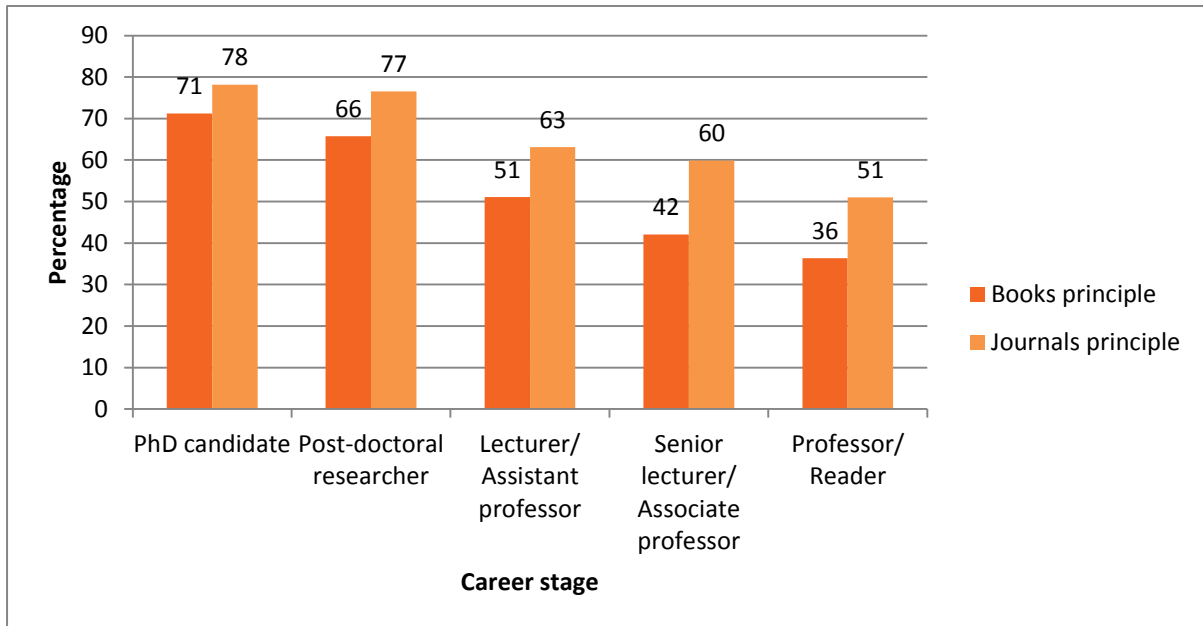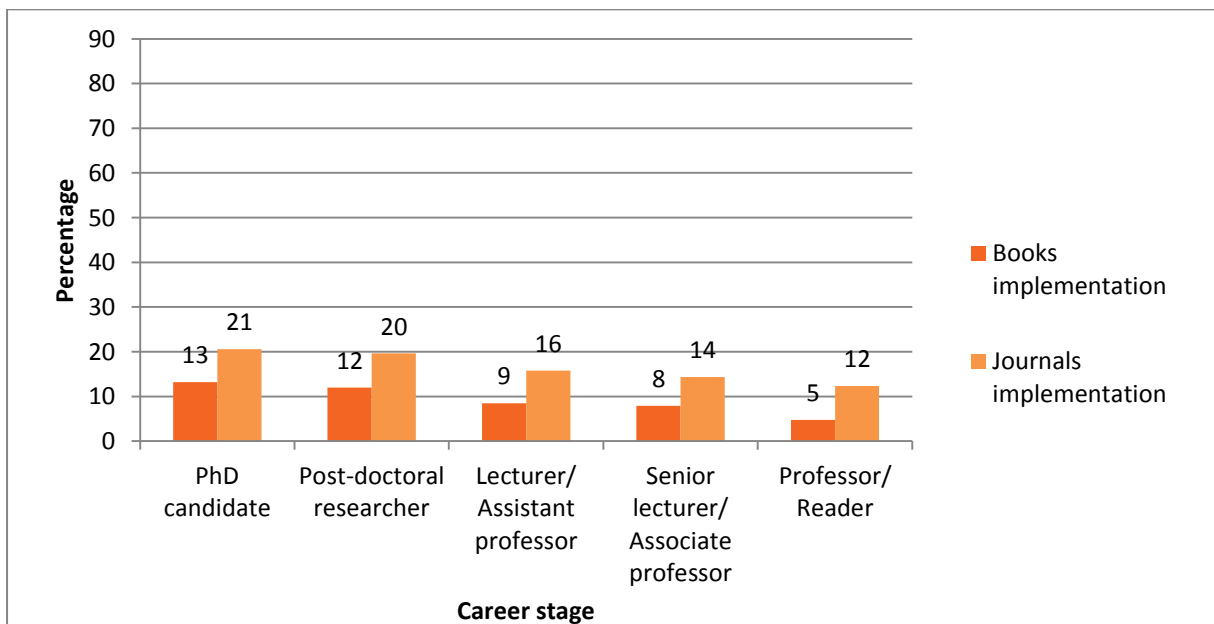

Figure 25: Researchers who think implementing open access will be 'easy' or 'very easy', by career stage

Discipline also plays a role in attitudes towards the principle and practicality of open access. Humanities researchers are less likely than social scientists to feel positive or very positive about the principle of open access for both journals and books. Similarly, humanities researchers are less likely than social scientists to feel that implementation of open access will be easy or very easy, for both books and journals.

Figure 26: Researchers who feel 'positive' or 'very positive' towards principle of open access, by discipline
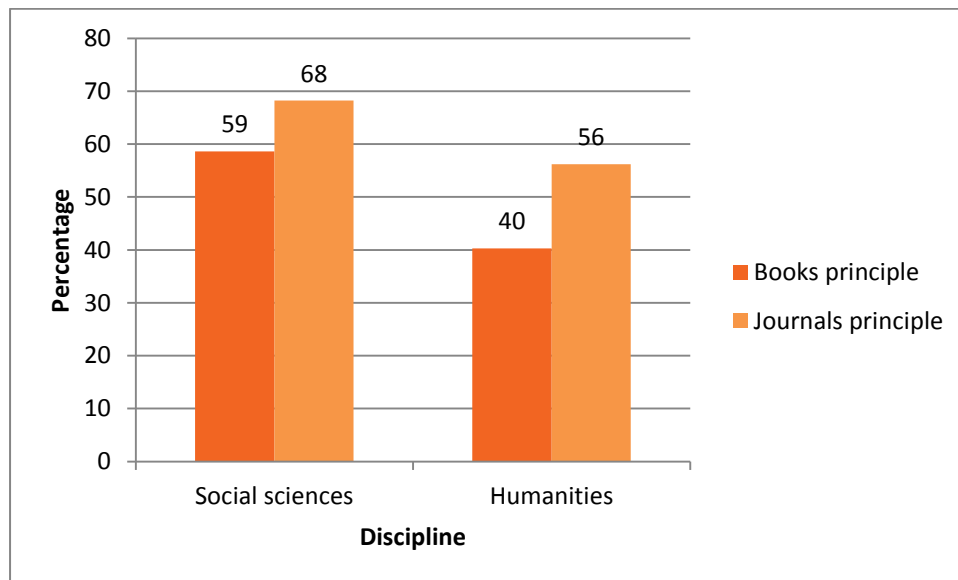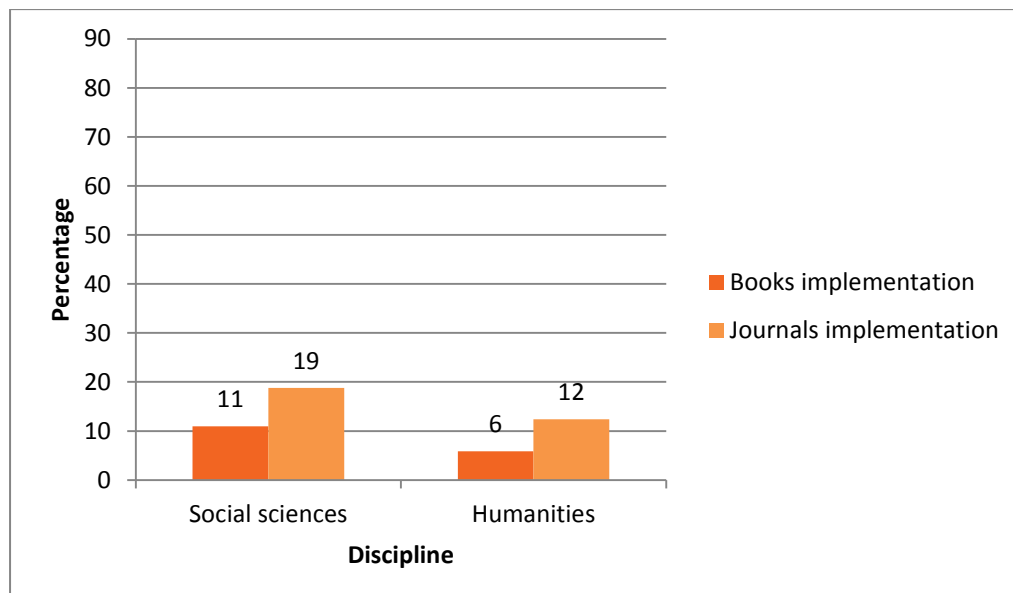

Figure27: Researchers who think implementing open access will be 'easy' or 'very easy', by discipline

There seems to be a correlation between how positive researchers feel about the principle of open access, and how easy they think it will be to implement. 22% of respondents who felt positive about the principle of open access for journals also thought it would be easy to implement: only 2% of those who felt negative about the principle of OA for journals felt it would be easy to implement.

Note, though, that even among those who were positive about open access for journals the majority did not think it would be easy to implement.

There is also a correlation, although not a perfect one, between researchers' attitudes to the principle of open access for journals and for books. 72% of researchers who felt positive about open access for journals also felt positive about open access for books, while 84% of those who felt negative about the principle of open access for journals felt the same way about books. But 13% of those who felt neutral about open access for journals felt positive about open access for books, while 37% of those who felt neutral about open access for journals felt negative about open access for books.

What does this mean for open access monographs?

The findings in this section suggest that books and journals are seen differently in terms of open access – both attitudes towards the principle, and ideas about how easy the principle will be to implement. Although many researchers feel similarly about books and journals, some have become convinced about open access for journals but remain unconvinced about books. Both advocacy for and implementation of open access for books may need to be carefully tailored to meet the specific concerns and requirements of academics, recognising that these could be different from those they have for journal articles.

The striking differences in attitude depending on age and seniority, and the less striking but still important differences between humanities and social science scholars, are very important. In general, senior researchers tend to be more open to innovation in scholarly communications techniques than their more junior colleagues, but the case of open access seems to be an exception. It is also worth remembering that more senior researchers are advising their junior colleagues on publication options; they may hold influential positions on editorial boards or in learned societies; and they may have more opportunities to communicate their view (and have it listened to) within their academic community. Thus, anybody seeking to encourage a move to open access for monographs will need to ensure they are working with senior researchers to understand and mitigate their concerns, while also recognising and encouraging the more positive attitudes that can be found among junior researchers.