

E-Publishing Initiatives in the Philippine Social Sciences

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For over three centuries, scholarly journals have been the dominant mode for disseminating and validating newly-generated knowledge in many branches of learning, including the social sciences. Throughout this period, the technology to produce journals has remained unchanged—'paper' was the sole medium available to and used by publishers across the globe. Technological advancements in the 20th century, however, are challenging the dominance of this platform. The digital encoding of text and the commercial application of the Internet have made possible the publication of journals electronically. The invention of the World Wide Web and the hypertext markup language (HTML) in the 1990s has further aided the production and distribution of electronic journals.

Data from various sources show the exponential growth of electronic journals since initial, experimental issues began appearing in the late 1980s. The Association of Research Libraries documented 2,459 electronic journals as of 1997, a thousand-fold increase from the 27 electronic journals it listed in 1991. Tenopir (2004) counted some 14,600 electronic journals in the web as of

2004.¹ Not a few have predicted the eventual demise of print technology as a consequence of the electronic revolution. According to scholars, we are in the 'transition' or 'bridging' period, or the period between a paper-based dominated publishing environment and a paperless, digital publishing environment (Willis, 1995; Johnson & Luther, 2007). This phase has been characterized as 'anarchic' (Harnad, 1991), with digital publications, particularly online journals, appearing in various formats and repositories, and under different publishing models.

This paper aims to provide a snapshot of this ongoing transition in Philippine scholarly publishing. Currently, little is known about the paper-to-electronic initiatives of journal publishers. This gap will be addressed by looking into the experience of Philippine professional social science associations under the auspices of the Philippine Social Science Council in pursuing an electronic version of their journals. It will discuss the associations' 'tipping points' for turning to electronic publishing, the features and initial impacts of these electronic initiatives, the challenges to electronic publishing, and the