

Academizines!

A Manifesto

Zach Frazier and Spencer D. C. Keralis

Introduction

The scholarly communications ecosystem is collapsing. Hopelessly polluted by capitalist and neoliberal priorities for research and higher education, the trad publishing¹ ecosystem is now toxic to scholars at every stage of their professional lives. We must abandon this swamp to survive. We must seize the means of scholarly production from corporate publishers and the scholarly journals beholden to them.

Micropublishing has long been the weapon of choice for marginalized and stigmatized communities to combat the oppression of corporate publication. The hegemony of capitalist interests in publishing has silenced and exploited minority creators through tokenistic selection processes and outright censorship.

We reject the premise that micropublishing lacks the rigor of so-called prestige publishing, and further reject corporate metrics for scholarly impact like citation indices and other quantitative measures, in favor of alternative metrics assessing volume of circulation and engagement, and qualitative means of assessing impact.

We offer zines as a powerful form of public writing (Rivers). We believe that creating wider publics for academic scholarship by making our work more accessible is a greater measure of scholarly impact and can improve goodwill for higher education and research in these anti-intellectual times.

Declarations

- ★ Recognize you can control the means of production for your scholarship, and you can share it. (I. Johnson, 2024)
- ★ Exercise your intellectual property rights; don't be coerced by Big Academic Publishing.
- ★ Wider publics (and counterpublics) are good for scholarship (Warner, 2002). Don't hide your light. Distribute your work widely and generously.

¹ We use "trad" here to invoke the spirit of the tradwife trend, and all of the conservatism, isolation, and exploitation it implies.

- ★ Work across, between, and among media. Transmedia scholarship and multimodal communication increases the impact of scholarship.
- ★ Don't fear the remix. Remix and be remixable. Embrace Open Culture licenses.

Principles

1. Micropublishing and other independent and small press publishing are powerful tools for expression, communication, and scholarship.
2. Exercise your rights by using Creative Commons or other Open Culture licenses on your work (Keralis 2018; Creative Commons). Use SPARC addenda to retain your rights in your trad publications.
3. Zine everything. Make zines of your trad scholarship to complement, supplement, enrich, expand, and share that work.
4. Perzines are scholarship; critical autoethnography is legitimate scholarly inquiry.
5. Embrace multi/transmedia micropublishing. Distribute your work across a variety of media, formats, and venues.
6. Don't *just* reposit your zines in special collections, community archives, or local zine libraries. Build relationships with these collectors and seek reciprocity.
7. Remix, collaborate, repeat. Let others know when you use their work, and offer your work for remixing in return.
8. Remix ethically. Make sure you know the licenses under which others have shared their work! If a license is unclear, ask the creator. Seek explicit consent in gray areas (ZLIG 2015).
9. Cite zines everywhere, in your zines and your trad scholarship. Citation politics matter. If you can cite a zine by a real person representing their lived experience, rather than or in addition to citing a study about that lived experience, do so (Gentile *et al.* 2019).
10. Teach zines and zine-making. Critical making (Sayers 2017; Johnson and Salter, 2025) and research creation (Loveless 2019) offer students experiential learning opportunities and help them find their own voices as scholars and creators.
11. Make your zines accessible in as many ways as possible. Keep prices low. Ensure digital zines are compliant with web accessibility standards. Caption video zines. Use accessible color pallets, fonts, and layout for print zines. Don't let bad design exclude readers from your work.

Intentions

To these ends we call on our peers and colleagues in academia – scholars, librarians, staff, and administrators – to take these steps (among others) to transform the scholarly publishing ecosystem:

1. Advocate for new models of scholarly communication and publishing that transcend and transgress corporate models of academic publishing.
2. Support and honor the work of junior faculty exploring alternate publishing pathways.
3. Recognize critical making and research creation as legitimate forms of scholarly communication.
4. Fully embrace Open Access at all levels of scholarly communication.
5. Organize as scholars to support these principles and intentions.

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Additional Resources

- [Digital Media Law Project](#)
- [Openverse](#), Creative Commons Search Portal
- Riso Midwest
- Stencil Wiki
- [Contrast Checker](#) (See *Related Resources* section)