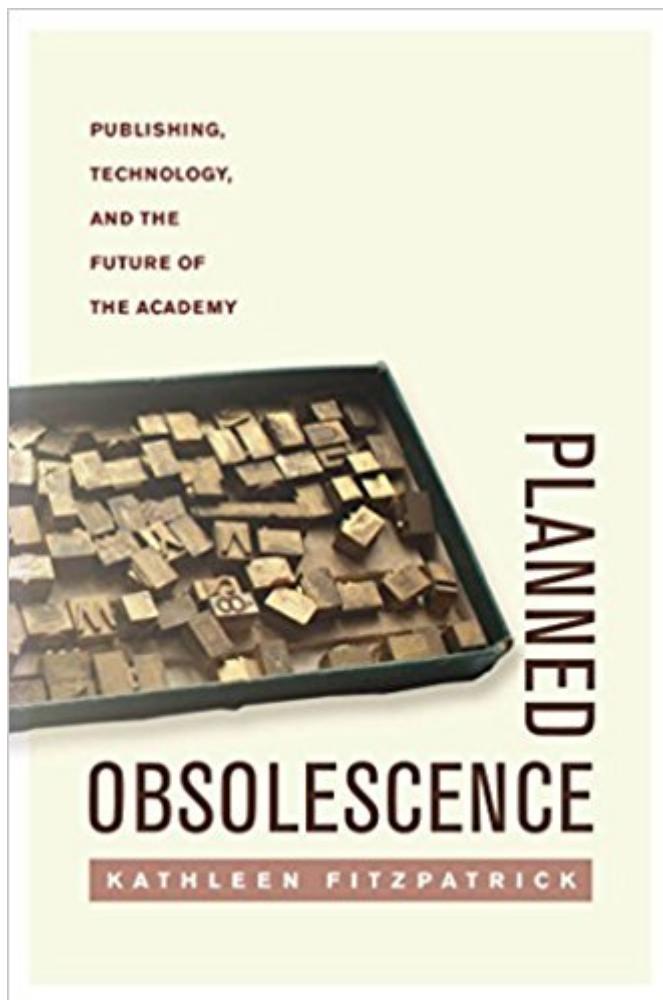


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# Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, And The Future Of The Academy



## Synopsis

Choice's Outstanding Academic Title list for 2013 Academic institutions are facing a crisis in scholarly publishing at multiple levels: presses are stressed as never before, library budgets are squeezed, faculty are having difficulty publishing their work, and promotion and tenure committees are facing a range of new ways of working without a clear sense of how to understand and evaluate them. Planned Obsolescence is both a provocation to think more broadly about the academy's future and an argument for reconceiving that future in more communally-oriented ways. Facing these issues head-on, Kathleen Fitzpatrick focuses on the technological changes—especially greater utilization of internet publication technologies, including digital archives, social networking tools, and multimedia—necessary to allow academic publishing to thrive into the future. But she goes further, insisting that the key issues that must be addressed are social and institutional in origin. Springing from original research as well as Fitzpatrick's own hands-on experiments in new modes of scholarly communication through MediaCommons, the digital scholarly network she co-founded, Planned Obsolescence explores these aspects of scholarly work, as well as issues surrounding the preservation of digital scholarship and the place of publishing within the structure of the contemporary university. Written in an approachable style designed to bring administrators and scholars into a conversation, Planned Obsolescence explores both symptom and cure to ensure that scholarly communication will remain relevant in the digital future. Check out the author's website [here](#). For more information on MediaCommons, [click here](#). Listen to an interview with the author on The Critical Lede podcast [here](#). Related Articles: "Do 'the Risky Thing' in Digital Humanities" - Chronicle of Higher Education "Academic Publishing and Zombies" - Inside Higher Ed

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## Customer Reviews

"[Fitzpatrick] is one of the more persuasive advocates for understanding digital scholarship, and she acknowledges that while tenure and academic career building are still tethered to being published, institutions are starting to rethink and redefine what form that scholarly work can take."-Bret McCabe, *John Hopkins Magazine*"Anyone who is serious about understanding the future of scholarly publishing--and anyone who cares about knowledge and society should share this concern--will find Fitzpatrick's book an essential, thought-provoking, and highly approachable introduction to the conversation."-A *Thaumaturgical Compendium*"This primer on innovations in academic publishing is a must-read for all participants: university administrators, faculty authors, librarians, publishers, technologists, and informed general readers."-P.E. Sandstrom, *CHOICE*"Fitzpatrick is well qualified to discuss alternate forms of publishing and unexpected futures for the academy...Chapters titled 'Peer Review,' 'Authorship,' 'Texts,' 'Preservation,' and 'The University' methodically dismantle arguments for the status quo, with sections debating accepted beliefs and practices such as the anonymous basis of peer review; recognizable, individual authorship; for-profit university presses; and the rejection of open access as a tenable scholarly publishing model."-*Library Journal*"The narrative arc of *Planned Obsolescence* is tight, coherent, eloquent--propulsively staking its territory from micro to macro, personal to global."-Neil Baldwin, *Creative Research Center at Montclair State University: Director's Blog*"At a time of great uncertainty about the future of the humanities, this informed and stimulating book buzzes with excitement for the opportunities that digital technology can offer to humanities researchers...*Planned Obsolescence* is a wonderfully clear and honest assessment of the present state of academic publishing and possible future directions. The digital age offers us a chance to exit the ivory tower and engage in more meaningful collaborations with peers and a more inclusive dialogue with readers. Fitzpatrick's study is a must-read, not just for all of those directly involved - academics, publishers, university administrators, librarians - but also for anybody interested in the future of the humanities."-Alessandra Tosi, *Times Higher Education*"[A] desire for pre-eminence, authority and disciplinary power — is what blogs and the digital humanities stand against. The point is made concisely by Kathleen Fitzpatrick in her new book, *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy*."-*New York Times* - Opinionator Blog"Fitzpatrick's *Planned Obsolescence* — its title a sardonic speculation on

the future of the printed book." •considers how academic publishing might best resolve this challenging dilemma. As co-founder of the digital scholarly network MediaCommons, Fitzpatrick •who lectures in Media Studies at Pomona College in California •is well placed to observe the development of digital culture in academia." -The Los Angeles Review of Books "Thoughtful...Fitzpatrick is well-qualified." -Henrietta Thornton-Verma, Library Journal's "Xpress Reviews"

Kathleen Fitzpatrick is Professor of Media Studies at Pomona College and founding editor of the digital scholarly network MediaCommons. She is the author of *The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television* and has blogged at *Planned Obsolescence* since 2002.

As the conclusion shows the volume suffered thru both the std review and an open peer review and arrived better for this critique. The analysis could have been written today, an indication of academic conservatism. While focused on the non profit academic press, it holds well for the pvt for profit publishers. What was not addressed is the issue binding people to the current system with no clear alternative, the default to the use of scholarly works in the publish/perish/funding measures distorting the arena as one for collegial exchange and diminishing or masking the content as content.

Thank you.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick is a true visionary

A confused volume on what could be an important subject. I never understood what the author was trying to say.

Kathleen Fitzpatrick isn't just one of America's foremost digital humanities scholars. She is a clear-eyed humanist proposing real solutions for the problems of universities and libraries struggling with shrinking budgets and increasing bureaucratic constraints in a stagnating economy. This ground-breaking, approachable, fun-to-read book skims easily between e.g. the benefits of academic collaboration using new digital tools and the mashups of Danger Mouse, proposing a huge range of rational improvements to academic research and publishing. Anyone involved or interested in the future of the academy should read this book right now. Those who've taken their

cues in recent years from such popular death-knells as *The University in Ruins* and *The Last Professors* will find Fitzpatrick's work to be a breath of fresh air, and a stirring defense of Enlightenment values (if not necessarily Enlightenment institutions) for the modern world.

I have to be honest here at the outset and admit that a few of the technical parts of Fitzpatrick's book were a bit over my head, but in a paradoxical fashion, that is one of the strengths of the book. The author is just as comfortable and authoritative in discussing the technical, nuts and bolts aspects of how to transform scholarly publishing as she is in her passionate advocating for the very human--and humane--reasons why the paradigm of scholarly publishing needs to be re-imagined. This breadth of knowledge within the book is its greatest strength. Whether she is writing to university administrators, faculty members of various stripes and at different career stages, university presses, or campus technology officers, Fitzpatrick addresses them with authority, humor, good will and well-articulated arguments in support of a fundamental and profound shift in scholarly publishing. The book is a tremendous accomplishment. The author's new position as the Director of Scholarly Communication at the Modern Language Association is the perfect platform from which she can advocate for precisely the sorts initiatives that she is calling for.

The writing style is very heavy and overdone, so it's a slog to read it. But there were some nuggets of good information in there.

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