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# **Who Guards the Gates? Feminist Methods of Scholarly Publishing**

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As demonstrated by recent studies on bias in academic publishing, the traditional tiered system of peer-reviewed journals reproduces social hierarchies in terms of race, class, and gender.<sup>1</sup> Often, marginalized voices and methods are dismissed as less important, less rigorous, or too narrowly focused. These dismissals perpetuate the myths that only certain scholarship constitutes legitimate knowledge and only certain scholars can count as “knowers.”

In this essay, we explore how digital publishing can intervene in these processes and serve as a form of feminist activism. We take as our focus the *Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy* (*JITP*), founded in 2011 to expand the perspectives and standpoints that count as scholarly knowledge production and provide graduate students with editorial experience. As three long-standing members of the journal’s editorial collective, we have firsthand knowledge of how *JITP*’s publishing methods were developed through debate, struggle, and dialogue, including many missteps and failures along the way. We argue that *JITP*’s collaborative knowledge practices of inclusive editorial governance, open access, and open peer review are fundamentally feminist, as they diversify scholarly voices and increase access to the material channels in and through which knowledge circulates. At stake in our reflective analysis is a broader claim that extends beyond the parameters of our work with one particular journal: that feminist digital publishing methods can expand what counts as knowledge production.

## Historical Context

Academic publishing, like the publishing industry more broadly, has historically privileged a narrow range of voices. As early as 1950, author and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston penned “What White Publishers Won’t Print,” describing the ways Black writers were subjected to white publishers’ standards of what counts as acceptable or “authentic” Black writing (143). In response, marginalized writers have taken on positions as editors and created their own journals, publishing houses, editorial collectives, and access models in order to counter the racism and sexism of publishing and share a broader array of stories (Smith 11; Beins 1). For example, in 1965, Black poet Dudley Randall established Broadside Press to publish the work of Black poets such as Gwendolyn Brooks, Audre Lorde, Nikki Giovanni, and Sonia Sanchez, facilitating the rise of The Black Arts Movement. In the 1970s, the Women in Print Movement emerged as “an alternative communications circuit—a woman-centered network of readers and writers, editors, printers, publishers, distributors, and retailers through which ideas, objects, and practices flowed in a continuous and dynamic loop” (Travis 276). In 1980, Barbara Smith and Audre Lorde created Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press in order to “make visible the writing, culture, and history of women of color” (11). Kitchen Table was grounded in the idea that “freedom of the press belongs to those who own the press” (11). As Mary E. Hunt argues, this involvement in publishing can be understood as a form of “feminist praxis”<sup>2</sup> that challenges social hierarchies. Drawing on Hunt’s work, we explore how digital publishing and editorial practices can build on these longstanding activist traditions.

In academic publishing, new journals and platforms have historically emerged to circulate the voices of those who are marginalized in different fields, to create spaces for conversations that are absent from established journals, and to explore different modes of production. In some instances, new journals were formed to circulate knowledge in new disciplines: for example, *American Quarterly* was founded in 1949 to share research in the novel, interdisciplinary field of American studies, and *The Radical History Review* emerged in 1975 to highlight politically engaged historical research. As scholars have shown, feminist research is rarely published in top-tier journals, and feminist claims are often dismissed as implausible or inconsequential (Intemann et. al., 932). As a result, journals like *Women's Studies Quarterly* (1972), *Signs* (1975), and *Hypatia* (mid-1980s) emerged to create spaces for feminist scholarship that was not always welcome in traditional academic journals on social theory and philosophy.

More recently, the affordances of low-cost digital tools and publishing methods have increased scholars' abilities to create new journals and platforms, democratize information, and experiment with digital research methods. For example, in the field of writing studies, both *Kairos* and *Enculturation* were established in 1996 to explore the possibilities for digital scholarship. In the field of philosophy, the online, peer-reviewed journal *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* was founded in 2015 "to improve the presence and impact of women and feminist philosophers" ("About the Journal"). *Hybrid Pedagogy* was established in 2011 as a platform for scholarship that focused on the undervalued intellectual work of teaching.<sup>3</sup> While not journals per se, Humanities, Arts, Sciences, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory (HASTAC) and FemTechNet (2012) are organizations and platforms established to share pedagogical knowledge, create interdisciplinary dialogues, and bring together communities that are broader than traditional academic journals, including not only scholars but students and activists as well.<sup>4</sup>

In this vein, *The Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy (JITP)* was founded in 2011 to promote "open scholarly discourse around critical and creative uses of digital technology in teaching, learning, and research" (Jacobs, "About"). *JITP* is an academic, open-access, peer-reviewed journal that is published bi-annually and, at the time of this article's writing, has published twenty-one issues. These have included general issues as well as special themed issues on topics such as disability studies, ePortfolios, mentorship and collaboration, and augmented and virtual reality. The journal also has five short-form sections, including Assignments (short narrative reflections about authors' teaching experiments and efforts to put theory into practice in their classrooms) and Tool Tips ("examinations of a digital tool or a set of comparable tools that you have used in a class"). The journal regularly appears on lists of scholarly journals in the field of digital humanities.<sup>5</sup>

*JITP* was founded by City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center Professor Stephen Brier and a group of Graduate Center students, faculty, and staff.<sup>6</sup> At that time, Brier had been directing the school's Interactive Technology and Pedagogy Certificate Program (ITP) since its inception in 2002. After nearly a decade of teaching students about the economic, social, and intellectual history of technology and supervising

digital projects, Brier found that his colleagues still did not take digital pedagogy seriously as intellectual work. Instead, they treated it as a form of mere skills training that would help PhD students gain employment. Thus, *JITP* was founded both to publish the innovative research of graduate students in the certificate program and to counter the more widespread devaluation of pedagogy and digital scholarship.

From the outset, Brier had three primary ideas for creating a successful and sustainable journal. First, Brier was determined that the journal would not have an elite, exclusive, and hierarchical editorial board consisting solely of tenured professors but would instead embrace collective decision making through the model of an editorial collective. Drawing on his experiences working with the editorial collective of *Radical History Review*, Brier proposed an egalitarian model for an editorial collective led primarily by graduate students. As the minutes for one of the first meetings note, “Steve says that he wants to be involved in the journal, but doesn’t want to take the lead—he wants students to take charge” (“Minutes”). Second, Brier insisted that the managing editor position be a paid graduate student position and negotiated with the Graduate Center administration to ensure that funding for that position would continue, even after his eventual departure from the journal. Finally, while research has historically circulated in expensive and exclusive print journals, Brier and the journal’s earliest editors<sup>7</sup> wanted the journal to be open access (freely available) to expand access to information. That decision was influenced by Kathleen Fitzpatrick’s *Planned Obsolescence*, which argued that such practices could help reconnect research to the public good and reinvigorate relationships between universities and larger publics.

## Expanding What Counts as Knowledge Production

*JITP* participates in the longstanding feminist tradition of expanding what counts as knowledge production in terms of content (what counts as a legitimate subject of research), authorship (who counts as an expert), and form (how research is presented). Since its inception, the journal has sought to publish research on subjects that are often excluded from academic peer-reviewed journals, such as reflections on pedagogical praxis and the use of educational technology in the classroom. These and related areas often fall under the domain of “teaching”—historically understood as women’s work—and not “research.”

In the prestige economy of higher education, research is prioritized over curriculum development and pedagogy. Research has often been understood as the production of new knowledge and ideas, while teaching has been understood as mere “social reproduction” (Bourdieu and Passeron 1): the transmission of a society’s values, rather than a meaningful form of intellectual work that produces a particular “product.” Drawing on scholars such as Lorraine Code and Mary E. Hunt, we contend that publishing research on pedagogy is a feminist intervention in these academic hierarchies that privilege research over teaching and theory over practice. Code argues that feminist projects have established and maintained a strategic skepticism that has transformed discussions about inequality in power and authority across a range of subjects, including scholarship (63). This skepticism emerged as feminists (as well as other marginalized groups) repeatedly confronted epistemic obstacles—especially the presumption that research-oriented scholars have a greater claim to credibility than teacher-scholars—when trying to contribute to knowledge production. *JITP* was

established to promote research on innovative teaching methods and to counter the more widespread devaluation of pedagogy and digital scholarship. By publishing research on topics that have been historically coded “female” experiences and “feminine” ways of thinking, we not only capture the wealth of knowledge about the art of teaching, but we expand what counts as important and influential in academic life.

*JITP* also aims to expand who counts as an expert. By publishing scholarship related to pedagogy and curriculum development, *JITP* acknowledges the credibility of those who have expertise in teaching: graduate students, librarians, archivists, K–12 educators, industry professionals, and members of communities that are often excluded from elite journals. Across the US, the majority of teaching is performed by overworked and underpaid adjuncts, lecturers, community college professors, untenured professors, and graduate students, often without healthcare, benefits, or job security. Women and people of colour make up a higher percentage of this group. While women and other marginalized groups have gained greater representation in higher education, it is primarily in lower-ranked positions with higher teaching loads rather than research intensive positions. Publishing research on pedagogy can help reduce this prestige gap (Niemann et al.).<sup>8</sup> This commitment to publishing research derived from actual classroom experiences and teaching practices resonates with Hunt’s idea that feminist publishing can highlight the knowledge that emerges from activist organizations, not just traditional scholars with advanced degrees (104). By challenging these hierarchies, feminists have successfully broadened who counts as an author of scholarship.

This expansion of what counts as knowledge occurs at the level of form as well. As noted in our mission statement, *JITP* works “to change what counts as scholarship—and how it is presented, disseminated, and reviewed—by allowing contributors to develop their ideas, publish their work, and engage their readers using multiple formats” (“About”). In addition to welcoming multimodal submissions, *JITP* has five Short Forms sections that focus on the impact of digital tools on teaching practices and curriculum development. For example, the Assignments' section values the teaching materials we create (from syllabi to lesson plans) and our reflections on teaching as meaningful forms of intellectual work that others can use as a model. Syllabi, assignments, and classroom activities are research products that require scholarly labour: research into existing methods (a form of literature review), drafting, revision, peer review, and a methodological approach are required for success. Publishing course materials validates this labour, and also raises the important point that scholars—not institutions—should own the teaching products they create. In addition, our Teaching Fails section publishes reflections not only on teaching successes, but also failures—“assignments that didn’t work out, readings, projects, or digital tools that none of your students understood”—to engage teacher-scholars in discussions about teaching praxis. Rather than sweeping these mistakes under the rug, this section invites scholars to share their mishaps so we can all collectively learn from them. It also reflects our efforts to value process over product.<sup>9</sup>

Likewise, our inclusive editing practices are grounded in the notion that authors in a range of different subject positions and communities—women, people of colour, Indigenous people, LGBTQIA+ people—produce and

share knowledge in different ways. Yet academic publishing tends to support only a narrow conception of what counts as knowledge production, one that has historically been determined by affluent, white men. Traditional scholarly editing practices often work against authors, forcing them to make their knowledge conform to a standardized, exclusive form of scholarship that may be at odds with their own knowledge practices. In doing so, scholarly editing serves a kind of gatekeeping function. By contrast, *JITP* tries to work with, not against, authors to support their creative processes and their relationship to the knowledge they are sharing. Through our inclusive editing practices, we aim to expand what counts as knowledge production and those who count as knowledge producers.

## Inclusive Editorial Governance

Another way *JITP* challenges exclusive publishing practices is through our inclusive editorial governance. In traditional academic journals, editorial leadership lies in the hands of established and senior scholars, who are seen as essential for a journal's identity and prestige (see, for instance, [The Journal of Philosophy](#), [Ethics](#), or the [Conference on College Composition and Communication](#)). By contrast, our editorial collective values the insights of graduate students, alternative academic (alt-ac) professionals, librarians, archivists, and faculty of all ranks and offers them opportunities to help shape the message, ethos, and content of *JITP*.

The *JITP* bylaws stipulate that, at any given time, there should be between 21 and 25 active members of the editorial collective and that roughly half of these members should be graduate students. Although this stipulation itself does not guarantee equal participation and recognition in editorial leadership activities, *JITP* is committed to including *all* active members of the editorial collective in the editorial process. We also prioritize recruiting scholars of colour for our editorial collective and scaffolding pathways for diversity in leadership positions within the journal. We know there is much work still to be done to increase the diversity of academics more generally; by trying to change our editorial collective for the better in this respect, we aspire to serve as a model for both editorial and academic leadership going forward.

Relatedly, we know that it is not enough to include members in name only; doing so perpetuates epistemic barriers that discount the experiences of those who are in historically marginalized positions as irrelevant or not fully informed. Iris Marion Young identifies this as a feature of “internal exclusion,” where those who have access to decision-making bodies still lack effective opportunities to influence the thinking of others—especially those who occupy dominant positions (55). Women, LGBTQIA+, and non-white scholars have historically occupied these internally excluded roles in academia and (many still find themselves in such roles). This sidelining has also targeted graduate students who, in their roles as adjuncts, teaching assistants, and research assistants are not seen as fully capable knowers and are generally excluded from genuine participatory roles.<sup>10</sup>

As an editorial collective, *JITP* aims for the feminist ideal of *genuine inclusion*, rather than mere inclusion in name only. Genuine inclusion requires those that have previously held dominant positions in political and

institutional hierarchies to share that power with groups that have occupied less powerful positions (Tronto 142). In academic settings, this means striving to achieve equal representation in decisional bodies (such as graduate councils, curriculum committees, grant committees, and editorial leadership in scholarly production), and to acknowledge the contributions of historically marginalized groups as essential for shaping what counts as knowledge. By including historically marginalized scholars as equal contributors to the mission and governance of the journal, *JITP* espouses a commitment to these feminist aims of genuine inclusion in editorial leadership. In this sense, our editorial collective functions as an inclusive democratic body. Governance of the journal is shared among all active members, who make important decisions regarding the journal's ethos, content, direction, and membership policies. Decisions—on everything from the topic of each issue to the production process and the constitution of journal membership—are openly deliberated and decided upon together through majority voting.

*JITP* is structured to maintain genuine inclusion despite membership changes over time. First, we require that our managing editor be a graduate student, and we ensure as a collective that they receive compensation for their work. The managing editor holds a paid graduate assistant position at the CUNY Graduate Center and is awarded a significant multi-year fellowship (complete with healthcare benefits) with weekly workload caps, as stipulated by the Professional Staff Congress (PSC-CUNY) Union contract. The graduate assistant fellowship is the highest-level non-teaching fellowship awarded by CUNY and guarantees a twelve-month contract in which (at the time of this publication) no more than 450 hours of non-teaching work may be performed over the contract period. The contract helps to ensure that our managing editor is not exploited for their labour and also provides stability and predictability in employment. To further ensure stability, the editorial collective also liaises with administrative members of the CUNY Graduate Center, such as the chair of the Interactive Technology and Pedagogy certificate program or the director of the Teaching and Learning Center, to maintain funding of the graduate assistantship line during yearly budgeting processes.<sup>11</sup>

As the sole waged employee of the journal, the managing editor is responsible for overseeing the entire production process, as well as for corralling all other members of the Editorial Collective to pitch in when necessary. The Managing Editor's direction and focus shape the journal's workflow at any given time and are constitutive of the journal's success. To ensure that our managing editor is not overly burdened (especially since they are a graduate student), our editorial collective continually examines and retools our production process to ensure that the workload is manageable.<sup>12</sup> This extends to the Governance and Oversight committee, which was established in 2014 as a committee of the editorial collective's senior scholars to mentor the managing editor and to step in when they are confronted with a situation that is beyond the scope of their position or could jeopardize their precarious positions.

All other editorial collective memberships and contributions to the production process are voluntary. This is why we as a collective find it so important to distribute the workload for each issue as evenly as possible. In our commitment to feminist publishing methods, we strive to protect our members from exploitation—

especially those members who occupy precarious academic positions more generally (hooks 5). We are especially cognizant of how much work we ask of our graduate student members, knowing full well that graduate students are often the most exploited group in academia. To this end, when graduate students are given more demanding roles in the production process, they are almost always paired with someone else—either another member of the journal or an external scholar—to help balance the workload (we try to extend this pairing or grouping to all members of the editorial collective when possible, as means of respecting all members' time).<sup>13</sup>

Editorial collective members are expected to attend regular meetings and are encouraged to participate in ongoing editorial and operating discussions at these meetings (and/or on our private discussion forum). To encourage genuine participation, editorial collective members are typically brought into one or two long-standing committees in their first year (including the Copyediting, Staging, and Communications and Outreach committees), and are given an opportunity to advance to primary editorial work (such as Short Forms content editing or issue editing) in their second year (and in years beyond). Newer members are able to learn about the journal's production processes through the relationships they establish with other members on these committees, which come to resemble mentorship relationships. Because the journal values and solicits the input of newer members, there are supports in place to make participation easier and more inviting. As such, our editorial collective scaffolds pathways for graduate students and junior scholars to gradually take on more authoritative positions within the journal, preparing them for other collaborative endeavors in and outside of academic life. Additionally, by diversifying production roles to specific committees, we ensure that each editorial collective member has the opportunity to “learn the ropes” of journal production by actively producing an issue. In doing so, we also reduce the overall production workload for each issue, thereby decreasing the chance of exploiting any particular member's labour.

By diversifying production roles, we also ensure that, for any given issue, many members of the editorial collective have had the opportunity to shape the production of the issue. Whether it is by proposing a theme for an issue, by editing a general issue, by setting the style in which the journal publishes, or by determining issue layout, editorial collective members' contributions are substantially represented in each issue. By steering graduate students, junior scholars, librarians, archivists, and alt-ac professionals toward different editorial roles, the journal ensures that fresh perspectives and a variety of interpretative frameworks guide the scholarly output of the journal. As a result, the journal has transformed discussions around legitimacy in pedagogical experience, expertise, and innovation.<sup>14</sup>

A recent example illustrates how the structure of the journal helps to promote feminist outcomes. In an editorial collective meeting in May 2020, members expressed concern over the impact that COVID-19 has had on women and communities of colour.<sup>15</sup> This led to a discussion about whether to extend a call for papers or modify what constitutes acceptable submissions to accommodate scholars who were experiencing a sudden increase in care-related duties. Anecdotal experiences were provided by editorial collective members who have



been affected by care-related responsibilities during the pandemic, and a lengthy discussion ensued about balancing workloads for different aspects of the production cycle. Several proposals for modifying our Issue 18 call for papers were introduced, and our editorial collective gave each contribution equal consideration in determining a path forward. Ultimately, our editorial collective voted to add language in the Issue 18 call that specifically noted that *JITP* would support potential contributors who have been affected by increased caretaking responsibilities, would work with individual authors to make submitting to the issue easier, and would extend the submission deadline out to accommodate summer workflow changes.<sup>16</sup> As this example demonstrates, by including scholars in diverse academic positions in our editorial collective, including working mothers, we are able to make decisions that better support historically marginalized scholars who may be in similar positions.

## Open Access

A feminist perspective acknowledges the exclusive structures that shape our access to knowledge and information. Traditionally, cutting-edge research published in academic journals is hidden within the bindings of costly subscriptions and behind prohibitively expensive paywalls. The exorbitant prices relegate access only to those at institutions that are able to invest. Even for those with access to university databases, there exists what Chris Gilliard and Hugh Culik refer to as a kind of “digital redlining,” by which those students and faculty at the wealthiest institutions have far greater access to scholarly databases and research than those at under-resourced institutions, like community colleges. Independent scholars, alt-ac professionals, community organizers, and members of the general public are often left unable to access the new ideas and research that could be useful and interesting to them. This perpetuates a feedback loop in which only those who can access this information are then able to produce the kind of scholarship that is published in top tier journals. This vicious cycle creates a “walled garden,” similar to a gated community, supporting a hierarchical, tiered economy of knowledge production and dissemination.

By contrast, *JITP* embraces an open access approach to publishing. “Open access” is a term that emerged in the 2000s, in reference to the idea that users should have unrestricted access to scholarly research. As an open access journal, *JITP* leverages the affordances of a low-cost digital platform to make all articles and content available on our website, free of charge, outside of for-profit databases.<sup>17</sup> Legally, *JITP* publishes content under a Creative Commons [Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) license. This is considered “gold” open access as defined by Peter Suber.<sup>18</sup> When an author agrees to publish an article in *JITP*, they agree both to our open peer review process and to make their work free to use and share once published in the journal, thus increasing access to scholarship outside traditional academic gatekeeping, and encouraging dialogue both within and across scholarly communities. We believe, as Fitzpatrick articulates in her 2012 article “Giving it Away: Sharing and the Future of Scholarly Communication,” that “[s]cholarship is written to be read and to influence more new writing” (350). For example, as many of us have been forced to

move our courses online during the COVID-19 pandemic, *JITP*'s peer-reviewed research on online teaching, gleaned from decades of experience, is freely available to anyone who needs it.

*JITP* runs on a customizable WordPress site, a platform that reflects an ethos of open access. The journal runs on the CUNY Academic Commons, which is the original installation of Commons in a Box, a “free open-source software that provides an infrastructure that encourages discussion, collaboration, and sharing” (“Commons in a Box”). CUNY Academic Commons allows the journal to function on the front-end as a public-facing website, and on the back-end as a collaborative workspace for the site. Because *JITP* was founded at CUNY by instructors and students in the ITP program, the members of the original editorial collective were familiar with the platform and had experience working with WordPress sites. Some might argue that to be a truly free platform—meaning existing entirely outside of a corporate entity or institution—the site needs to be hand-coded from the ground up. While this level of openness remains an aspiration for *JITP*, we have found that the Commons—and WordPress in general—offers a low-barrier to entry system that enables new members of the editorial collective to get started quickly, without extensive training, which supports our commitment to being inclusive to graduate students and academics from a variety of backgrounds.

Expanding access to information creates opportunities for those outside elite institutions to engage with and produce scholarship. According to Carys Craig et al., in “What is Feminist About Open Access? A Relational Approach to Copyright in the Academy,” published in 2011, “[w]here as traditional copyright practices are grounded in possessive individualism, open access evinces a feminist commitment to collaboration and the sharing of information” (30). In their discussion of relational feminism from the perspective of legal scholars, Craig et al. argue that digital technologies can be used to “dislodge” traditional notions of intellectual property within academic publishing and shift the social, economic, and political structures that bar access to information (31). At the same time, we take seriously the notion that open access can replicate the very practices of epistemic injustice it seeks to challenge (Albornoz et al. 65). We aim for what Denisse Albornoz et al. identify as a “situated” and “responsible” openness (72). This involves identifying, reflecting upon, and working to address our own complicity in excluding certain knowledges.

Expanding who has access to information and who can produce knowledge can lead to increased equity in terms of research design, execution, and results. Consider the long-standing practice of testing new pharmaceuticals and medical treatments solely on male test subjects, which has resulted in dangerous, unanticipated side effects for women (Flaherty). Or, designing new technologies for the average white male, resulting in tools—from bikes and seatbelts to screens and AI vision—that do not adjust to accommodate over half the population. These androcentric biases, found across nearly all disciplines, create blind spots in fields of knowledge and even shape what questions researchers find “interesting” or “relevant” in their respective fields (Anderson). *JITP*'s open access platform lays the ground for researchers to depart from established norms in research—especially those that stem from biases—while also finding wider audiences for their work. For instance, we have recently published “[A Conversation on International Collaboration in Digital Scholarship](#),”

which is a transcript of a conversation between three “bridge” figures in global digital humanities that has been presented with Arabic, English, and Russian translations. The format of the publication—a conversation—and the translations to multiple languages not only improves accessibility, but serves to challenge biases about what forms published scholarship can take. Considered together, these aspects of the journal may help reduce biases in research by increasing the diversity of content available to researchers. While that is a lofty goal, we at *JITP* are trying to take small steps toward an equitable future through conscious choices in terms of our platform, dissemination, and mentorship models.

Another way we aim to make *JITP* accessible is by publishing research with minimal jargon in forms that are readable and usable to scholars from different disciplines. As Hunt argues, making scholarship “accessible and appealing without sacrificing technical quality...[is] a goal of engaged feminist scholarship” (103). Hunt elaborates that conveying ideas clearly and without jargon can increase the impact of research: “work that is dense and written for a very narrow readership will simply not rock the boat as hard. I am not suggesting a ‘dumbing down’ of our scholarship, but a tuning up of our writing skills” (105). As an interdisciplinary journal focused on pedagogy, *JITP* prioritizes understandable language and easily transferable knowledge in the articles we publish. At the same time, we acknowledge that our audience remains largely scholars with postsecondary degrees. Thus, as we create spaces to have new conversations (for instance, about teaching with [virtual and augmented reality](#)) we sometimes have to sacrifice readability and utilize what some would consider jargon.

We also strive to make our content cognitively accessible to scholars of all abilities. To this end, we include OCR text and mobile responsive content, and we provide transcripts for video and audio content. In fact, in 2015 the journal issued an open call for submissions related to disability studies and underwent a comprehensive redesign to enact best practices in “universal” web design. In the introduction to [Issue 8](#), Andrew Luchessi chronicles this process, and acknowledges the shortcomings that the editorial collective must continue to address in order to make content as accessible as possible to a wide audience. In this regard, we hold no illusions that our commitment to open access is in any way equivalent to universal access. To access the research published in *JITP*, users must have an internet-ready device and access to the internet, which encompasses only 63% of the world’s population (Statista Research Department).

We also acknowledge the difficulties in sustaining and archiving born-digital, multimodal content to ensure long-term access to the content we publish. Because of the ever-evolving nature of digital technology, interactive content may become inactive or unusable, which calls for constant management and intervention from the editorial collective. As of April 2022, *JITP* employs the [Internet Archive](#) to back up all of our content, a service that deserves recognition because of their mission to provide “Universal Access to All Knowledge” to billions of web pages and millions of texts at no cost to users (“About the Internet Archive”). We also ask authors to submit content in forms we can host on our servers, rather than relying on third party platforms.

There are no easy solutions to the problem of maintaining and sustaining digital scholarship, and we continue to learn from scholars across the disciplines working to find solutions.

## Open Peer Review

Traditional academic publishing practices rely on judgments made by elusive, blind peer reviewers. Scholars submit their research to journals and editorial boards, typically composed of senior scholars in a given field, who decide whether the research fits within the parameters of the journal and whether the article is worth sending to their review board of experts in the field. But as Fitzpatrick argues, this traditional model is flawed, constituting “a backchannel conversation taking place between editor and reviewer that too often excludes the author from its benefits, and that too often impedes rather than assists in the circulation of ideas” (*Planned Obsolescence* 11). As Fitzpatrick elsewhere argues, peer review has the potential to be “a more productive, more helpful, more transparent, and more effective process if conducted in the open, with greater transparency and collaboration throughout the editing process” (“Planned Obsolescence”).

In recent years, scholars have begun to explore alternatives to traditional academic models of blind peer review. The journal *Hybrid Pedagogy*, for example, utilizes a collaborative peer review model “in which members of the editorial collective engage directly with authors to revise and develop articles, followed by post-publication peer review” (“About”). Fitzpatrick herself utilized an open peer review process for her book *Planned Obsolescence* (2009). She developed a MediaCommons Press website where she made drafts of her book chapters available for users to comment on and invited the general public to give feedback that she then used to revise and publish the manuscript. Since then, similar open collaborative peer review processes have been used by the editors of *Debates in the Digital Humanities* and *Keywords for Digital Pedagogy in the Humanities*. Rather than maintaining the traditional gatekeeping function of editors, these alternative models invite *collaboration* between authors and reviewers.

In keeping with these models, *JITP* embraces an open peer review model, where the identities of the authors and the reviewers are known by all parties in the review process. When an article is submitted to the journal, it is first reviewed by the issue editors (typically two or three members of the editorial collective). If it fits the criteria for publication, the article is then assigned two outside reviewers from a bank of over 50 individuals.<sup>19</sup> Issue editors try to ensure that each article is assigned to reviewers with designated interest in the topic and sufficient expertise to offer constructive feedback to the author(s). When the review has been completed, reviewers complete a short form about the article in which they must articulate not only the strengths and weaknesses of the piece, but also how well the authors address *JITP*'s emphasis on pedagogy. Editors provide authors with summaries, as well as the full text of these reports, with the reviewers' names attached to their respective comments. Reviewers agree to this open system at several stages in the process and know they will be held accountable for their responses (although, if need be, reviewers are able to make comments directly to the editors only).

Open peer review practices place author and reviewer in conversation to produce knowledge together, a central tenet of feminist theory and methodology. As Hunt argues, the relationship between journal editors and authors can be understood as a form of “feminist pedagogy beyond the classroom” that is “available without charge to anyone who submits an article” (104). We have found that this “open identities” system yields more detailed and constructive feedback for our authors (including, in a few instances, a personal invitation for an author to directly follow-up with their reviewer during the revision process) and reduces the dreaded “reviewer two syndrome” by making it difficult for a reviewer to hide beyond a cloak of anonymity when writing a scathing and unhelpful review. This collaborative focus helps scholars situate their own unique pedagogical reflections within larger debates and supports scholars through the process of creating digital compositions. Additionally, this system facilitates networking opportunities for graduate students and junior scholars (who may not have much experience publishing in journals) by establishing communication channels to more experienced scholars who are invested in their work. As such, our open peer review practices help to demystify the protocols of academic publishing, provide mentorship opportunities for submitting authors, and diversify the means for pedagogical reflection—all of which results in experimental work that pushes the boundaries of traditional scholarship.

*JITP* aims to strike a delicate balance between respect for scholarly expertise without reverence for academic rank. This is especially true in the constitution of our review board, which includes reviewers from a range of different academic ranks. Being mindful not to perpetuate the same hierarchies our journal has worked to dismantle, but also being mindful of the important insights we can gain from scholars who have established a level of expertise in their respective fields, we do have a number of notable scholars on our review board. We recognize that their expertise lends a degree of credibility to the articles we publish, and also helps promote the work of our authors (especially those lesser-known authors) to wider networks than we would otherwise have access to. That being said, we work diligently to invite junior scholars, alternative academics, and librarians to our review board as part of our broader efforts to challenge historical barriers to knowledge production.

As an editorial collective, we are working to increase the involvement of authors in these feminist publishing practices. At present, we do so through the generative mentoring relationships we aim to cultivate between authors and reviewers as well as through small gestures, like asking authors to provide alt-text for their images to make their submissions more accessible. Yet feminist pedagogy also teaches us that learning is seldom a one-way street. By involving authors more explicitly in these processes, we hope they will help us identify new changes we can make to improve our inclusive editing practices.

We are in the process of evaluating our inclusive editing practices and hope to publish a statement that will make these aims more explicit. The work of editors such as Jean Lee Cole, Cheryl Ball, and those involved in the collaboratively generated “Anti-Racist Scholarly Reviewing Practices: A Heuristic for Editors, Reviewers, and Authors”<sup>20</sup> will inform our inclusive editing statement and practices moving forward.

## Conclusion

Collectively we have served in multiple capacities for the *Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy* over the last decade: as the managing editor (Laura), as authors (Danica and Amanda), and as issue editors and general members of the editorial collective (all three of us). These experiences have shaped our understanding of what it means to promote feminism in academia. While it is common among feminists to identify as “teacher-scholars” (a designation that identifies both teaching and research as forms of meaningful work), we have come to see ourselves as feminist teacher-scholar-editors, who work to advance justice and equity through these different modes. Indeed, working on the journal has helped us understand that there are opportunities for feminist praxis at every level of academia: from teaching, to research, to service.

In one register, working with *JITP* has transformed our own teaching in exciting and unpredictable ways. Shepherding authors through the process of designing digital texts has enabled us to guide students through that process as well. We publish our students’ writing on a wide range of digital platforms and teach them to tailor their writing for different audiences (*Kairos*). In another register, working to maintain *JITP*’s status as a reputable, high-quality, open access journal has shaped our own publication trajectories and our collective desire to make our research as widely accessible as possible. In working to promote the journal through social media and electronic communication, we have learned more effective means for amplifying the scholarship and editorial contributions of marginalized scholars.

As a journal that publishes under the umbrella of the digital humanities, we view ourselves as making important contributions not only to the content of the digital humanities, but also to the practices that help shape the field. For other journals similarly interested in promoting justice and equity in the digital humanities and academia more broadly, we suggest that they might consider shifting to open access publishing, with attention to training graduate students and maintaining a collaborative structure of leadership. We find that this shift is needed more than ever, especially as the number of crises affecting academia—from the increasing reliance on contingent faculty and the erosion of the liberal arts to the COVID-19-related closures—continues to rise. Making scholarship accessible and responsive to scholars’ evolving needs and interests is paramount for any journal that seeks to publish innovative scholarship. Furthermore, we suggest that open peer review and mentorship models of editing can increase the communication and collaboration between authors, editors, and peer reviewers. These shifts can create the opportunity for more women, people of colour, alt-ac professionals, and non-tenure track instructors to participate in the publishing economy, providing greater access to the production and dissemination of knowledge.

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## Footnotes

0. Reshma Jaggi et al. conducted a massive study of 35 years of six prominent medical journals and found that “women still compose a minority of the authors of original research and guest editorials” (281). Karen Schucan Bird found that women are under-represented in social science publishing (921). Jevin D. West et al. analyzed 8 million papers in JSTOR and found consistent gender gaps across the disciplines (1). Vincent Larivière et al. found evidence of global gender imbalance in research output (211). Andrew Kahn and Rebecca Onion found that 75.8% of both trade and university press history books were written by men. Some studies like Andrew Piper and Chad Wellmon find a gradual movement towards gender parity in some academic journals, though this progress is not universal across fields nor is it close to completion (“Gender”). Donna K. Ginther et al. found that Black applicants for National Institutes of Health (NIH) research awards reported fewer papers, publications, and citations than their white counterparts and that their work appeared in lower-tier journals (12). Katherine Grace Hendrix found that scholars of colour are seen as less objective, especially when using qualitative methods to study race (153). ↵
0. Hunt argues that feminist publishing methods include mentoring authors, rejecting distinctions between theory and practice, and “bringing together many voices” to dialogue about feminist topics and issues (103–104). ↵
0. *Hybrid Pedagogy* was founded in 2011 to publish scholarship on teaching and technology at the nexus of theory and practice. The editors define as praxis “the blend of theory and practice that develops with experience and reflection” (“About”). ↵
0. HASTAC, the world’s first academic social network, was founded in 2002 by Cathy N. Davidson and David Theo Goldberg as a way to bring together humanists, scientists, activists, and educators to discuss urgent issues related to “equity, access, privacy, security, and other social dimensions of technology and learning (“History”). ↵
0. See the lists from [Digital Humanities Journals](#) at the University of Berkeley and the [list](#) from the University of Pennsylvania. ↵
0. We would like to thank Steve Brier for the information he generously shared with us in an interview on March 2, 2020. ↵
0. The early minutes indicate the following collective members were in attendance: Steve Brier, Leila Walker, Matt Gold, Claire Fontaine, Ben Miller, and Kimon Keramidas. ↵
0. As of 2016, [73.2 percent of all US full-time faculty were white \(“Race and Ethnicity”\)](#). In addition, white males still continue to dominate the higher ranks of full- and distinguished professors, positions that often come with significant reductions in teaching load. As Yolanda Flores Niemann et al. write, citing statistics

- from the National Center for Education, “Among those in the tenure-track ranks, the most coveted positions within academia, 82 percent of all full professors were white” (3). ↵
0. While these short forms are not sent out for external peer review, they are reviewed and edited by members of the editorial collective. As the journal’s readership metrics indicate, these short form submissions are often those that are most read. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that these low-stakes publications often lead to graduate students having scholarship accepted to other peer-reviewed publications. ↵
  0. While they may be seen as having the potential to grow into established scholars, in their time as students they are typically left out of decision-making procedures that determine curriculum, departmental, and institutional resource allocation, and funded research opportunities, even though their success as future scholars often depends upon these factors. ↵
  0. *JITP* is not a grant-funded journal; our sole waged employee is an employee of the CUNY Graduate Center. ↵
  0. For instance, this examination and retooling process has led to the more recent formation of the Staging Committee. Staging Committee members each volunteer to stage one or two pieces associated with the issue under production. The staging process involves transferring the main text, endnotes, images, captions, alternative text, and tags from the original document to our web format. By distributing the workload in this way, each committee member is only responsible for a small portion of the staging process and our managing editor is not left to stage an entire issue alone. ↵
  0. Graduate student contributions to the journal are also acknowledged in the forms of credit on curriculum vitae, networking and collaboration opportunities with scholars outside one’s own institution, and recommendation letters from more senior members of the editorial collective. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this volunteer work, while uncompensated, has helped many editorial collective members gain the professional employment they desired. ↵
  0. The journal has devoted entire issues to covering topics such as disability and embodiment in the development of and use of digital tools (who is the intended audience of such tools?); on establishing democratic means for opening up educational places and practices; on the impact of digital technologies and tools internationally, with a special focus on Africa and the African diaspora; to investigating the scope of ePortfolios in academic work; and to the application of computational tools and analytical techniques to art-historical research questions, among others. ↵
  0. See, for instance: *The Lily*, “[Women Academics Seem to be Submitting Fewer Papers During Coronavirus](#)”; *Chronicle Vitae*, “[Covid-19 and the Academic Parent](#)”; *The Conversation*, “[Women are Getting Less Research Done than Men in this Coronavirus Pandemic](#)”; and *The Guardian*, “[Women’s Research Plummet During Lockdown - But Articles From Men Increase.](#)” ↵

0. The modified language for the Issue 18 call is as follows: “Submission deadline for full manuscripts is June 30th, 2020. Please view our submission guidelines for information about submitting to the Journal. The editorial team and the JITP editorial collective want to offer any support we can to those facing increased caregiving workloads. We seek to put our pedagogical and collaborative mandate into practice by inviting constructive communication with authors developing their work during this difficult period. If you are unable to meet this deadline for whatever reason given COVID-19–related disruptions, please email the editors at [admin@jitpedagogy.org](mailto:admin@jitpedagogy.org) to discuss an extension. Optionally, if you would like to receive feedback from the editors on an abstract or paper proposal, please submit it to the editors by May 31st, 2020.” [↵](#)
0. Note, this does not mean it is free to publish open access content, and in fact the open access model still presents financial challenges to many academic publishers. However, considering the relatively low readership of most scholarly publications, and the economic crisis in higher education, open access may certainly be the one viable way forward (see Fitzpatrick, “Giving it Away”). [↵](#)
0. The term gold, coined by Stevan Harnad, refers to open access content published in—most often peer reviewed—journals, rather than “green,” which refers to content uploaded to a repository (Suber 3.1). Work that is not open access, or that is available only for a price, is called toll access (TA). [↵](#)
0. These reviewers receive annual queries to renew their interest in serving and to update their areas of expertise. [↵](#)
0. Contributors to the “Anti-Racist Scholarly Reviewing Practices: A Heuristic for Editors, Reviewers, and Authors” include Lauren E. Cagle, Michelle F. Eble, Laura Gonzales, Meredith A. Johnson, Nathan R. Johnson, Natasha N. Jones, Liz Lane, Temptaous Mckoy, Kristen R. Moore, Ricky Reynoso, Emma J. Rose, GPat Patterson, Fernando Sánchez, Ann Shivers-McNair, Michele Simmons, Erica M. Stone, Jason Tham, Rebecca Walton, and Miriam F. Williams. [↵](#)