

# White Paper

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White Paper  
for  
HZ-234074-16  
“Humanities Open Book Program – Cornell University”

Project Director: Dean J. Smith  
Grantee Institution: Cornell University  
03/29/17

## Cornell Open: Scholarship Reborn

### Overview

The NEH Humanities Open Book Program at Cornell University Press provided an opportunity to reconnect and realign with the values of Cornell University — especially its global Cornell mission and a new commitment to public engagement and access to humanities on a broad scale. Soon after becoming director of Cornell University Press, Dean Smith identified a strong desire among the staff to experiment and innovate with e-books and open access publishing. Founded in 1869, Cornell's was the nation's first university press, with published output now in excess of 6,500 titles and nearly 3,000 titles currently in print. Cornell University Press published Linus Pauling's *Nature of the Chemical Bond* and Anna Comstock's *Handbook of Nature Study*. Many groundbreaking works remain out-of-print and are no longer accessible to the current generation of scholars. Its reputation for publishing high-quality books in the humanities and social sciences resonates with the strengths of its home institution. The body of published work is broad and deep, the legacy of previous directors such as John Ackerman, Roger Hawley, Walter Lippincott, Victor Reynolds, and their editorial teams. The Press's backlist of classic out-of-print titles still has tremendous potential. For the NEH Humanities Open Books program, the Press partnered with the Cornell University Library to develop a foundational curation layer based on usage and citation metrics. Subject area scholars were also consulted to inform the selection of titles for inclusion in the program. We named the program Cornell Open to signify that we are opening access to groundbreaking scholarship, to create an open access platform specifically for Cornell University Press content, and to give ourselves a venue for experimental innovation. Our plan is to expand the number of open access titles to 150 by 2019 to coincide with the Press's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The NEH Humanities Open Book Program at Cornell University continues to be one of the great achievements of the past two years for the Press. In seven months since going live on multiple platforms, twenty classic out-of-print titles selected from German Studies, Slavic Studies and Literary Criticism have generated more than 25,000 downloads in 152 countries. More than 800 institutions have accessed these titles.

Working closely with the Cornell University Library on this project has enabled Cornell University Press to establish a methodology for analyzing and identifying impactful out-of-print and deep backlist titles using a combination of subject area specialists, circulation data, and citations. The Press established a rights clearance workflow that accelerated the project timeline and engaged library consortia including the LYRASIS consortium and the International Coalition of Licensed Consortia to evaluate the project and provide feedback. Cornell Open titles have even been included in the JSTOR research initiative, "Reimagining the Monograph" (<http://labs.jstor.org/monograph/>).

Cornell University Press divided the NEH Humanities Open Book grant activities into five segments: (1) title selection; (2) rights clearance; (3) digitization; (4) marketing and title discovery; and 5) usage analysis.

## **I. Title Selection, Rights Clearance, and Digitization**

From its early strengths producing reference volumes in natural science, Cornell University Press expanded its publishing program in the humanities and social sciences to reflect both the diverse nature of the Cornell University curriculum and the needs of American scholarship and publishing. In selecting the first group of twenty titles for inclusion in the NEH Open Books Program, we focused on three areas in which Cornell University Press (CUP) has consistently demonstrated innovation and influence during recent decades: German Studies, Slavic Studies, and Literary Criticism.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provided initial funding for the *Signale: Modern German Letters, Cultures, and Thought* series in German Studies, the titles of which become open access after four years. The success of this series led the Press to a familiar subject area and provided an opportunity to engage with the managing editor of the series, Kizer Walker, who is director of collections for the Cornell University Library and the University's librarian for German Studies. The series editor, Peter Uwe Hohendahl, is one of the world's leading scholars in German Studies and is a Press author. The model of the *Signale* program made this a natural choice.

The Press's lists in Slavic Studies and Literary Criticism reflected the work of two outstanding Press editors and scholars. Former Press director John Ackerman built an award-winning list of titles in Slavic Studies over the last thirty years. He assisted in the selection process. During the Cold War years, Cornell built a reputation as one of the best windows into Soviet society, and our list in Slavic Studies, which covers all eras of the region's history, has a vibrancy that allowed it to handily outlast the USSR.

Former editor-in-chief Bernie Kendler published groundbreaking works in Literary Criticism. Cornell literary scholar Jonathan Culler assisted in making the selections from among those titles. Working in these subject areas has enabled the Press to establish a foothold within those academic communities both here at Cornell and beyond. In part because of the presence of Cornell faculty members including Culler and Dominick LaCapra, Cornell University Press, like the University itself, served as a platform for the emergence of European-inflected critical theory in the practice of literature and history.

In the initial phase of the grant period beginning in January 2016, twenty classic out-of-print titles were selected and approved. The Press identified and hired a temporary employee to clear both author rights and secondary rights and to perform various project management functions through the end of the grant term. With bookstore and publishing experience, James McCaffery was hired in March and he began the process of scanning, reviewing, and filing the contracts. He worked closely and effectively with our digital publishing editor Karen Laun, sending out author letters to explain the program and to obtain contract amendments. The Press extended the title pool number to allow for overage in the event that substitute titles were needed to account for rights clearance issues or authors unwilling to participate.

Physical copies of the books were requested from our warehouse for scanning purposes and those which we could not locate in our archive were purchased. New ISBNs were assigned to

the titles. When we acquired books without dust jackets, we were able to find scannable dust jackets in our cover archive, although we were prepared to design new covers if necessary. A key facet of our approach to the program is a guarantee to our authors of a print-on-demand (POD) paperback that we will sell. We are committed to paying royalties on those sales. This aspect proved to be very popular among our NEH authors and, we believe, helped us clear primary rights more easily.

We initially believed that the rights clearing process was going to be the most time-consuming activity. With an experienced team that already had a workflow in place, we quickly located contracts and permissions files and completed this activity by the end of April 2016. Warburg's classic *Images of the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America* turned out to be the most complex title with regard to rights issues. Advisory board member Kizer Walker assisted the Press team in contacting the Warburg estate and the translator on the project, Michael Steinberg at Brown University, who was pleased that we were bringing the book back into print. Walker was also instrumental in helping us determine the rights issues with the German publisher C.H. Beck concerning Peter Uwe Hohendahl's book, *Building a National Literature*.

We were denied permission by one author who wrote the following in an email to us:

*As someone working very closely with authors who are starving because the digital environment, monopolized by Amazon, has destroyed their ability to make a living, I am fundamentally opposed to digital arrangements that eliminate author income. I do not need the few cents that might accrue if I was paid the equivalent of my print royalties when people use this digital archive, but I feel it is necessary to take some kind of stand against this kind of abuse of authorial ownership.*

Although this author's sentiments resonated with us at the Press, we feel that it is critically important, as the publishing landscape continues to evolve, to experiment and innovate in new areas such as open access publishing.

With the final title list established by the end of April, the Press gained experience in the digitization, delivery, rights clearance, and dissemination of OA monographs in EPUB3.0.1 and PDF format. Apex, our vendor for electronic formats, delivered files in a timely fashion. Our production department, working closely with our marketing team, created metadata for the twenty titles which was sent along with the files to BiblioVault for eventual distribution to various digital platforms, including our own open access web platform, [www.cornellopen.org](http://www.cornellopen.org).

All digital versions were loaded by August onto the Cornell Open website. We also planned to sell the print versions of the books but did not have those completed in time. On June 7, 2016 the Press launched an initial batch of seven titles on Project MUSE, which accelerated its publication turnaround times to support this program. Their Press release set a new standard for open access releases by including links to MARC records and creating a homepage for Cornell University Press: [https://muse.jhu.edu/about/cup\\_open\\_access\\_books.html](https://muse.jhu.edu/about/cup_open_access_books.html). Those same seven titles launched on Cornell Open on June 15, 2016, fulfilling our target deadline for the American Association of University Presses meeting in Philadelphia.

Immediately after the soft launch of those seven titles we were made aware that the Creative Commons license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>) information was not available on the books for both Project MUSE and Cornell Open. We worked quickly to make sure it was included on the book landing pages. After additional feedback from NEH, we included the CC license on the copyright pages of the e-books. We had selected the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License. We received feedback from one user that this license was too restrictive. In this initial phase, we heard from our authors that this license made them more amenable to participating in the project because of its protections.

All twenty titles were launched by August 2016 on both Project MUSE and Cornell Open. Titles were made available as Amazon Kindle versions on August 15 and JSTOR launched our twenty NEH titles on October 25 in conjunction with Open Access Week 2016.

Creating the metadata for the twenty NEH titles was a major challenge as these books fell outside of the Press's normal workflow for metadata. Further, our self-generated assurance that POD versions of each title would be available fell outside of even our NEH workflow. Several print versions of the titles thus remain in the approval process at Lightning Source (LSI).

Increasing our 2016 print publication title count by the twenty Cornell Open titles, which we sought to bring back as POD paperbacks as promised to our authors when clearing rights, created stresses on our current publishing workflow for new books. We did not have a workflow established to absorb the additional 20 paperback editions that required updated copyright pages, LSI set-up and new covers. We agreed at the beginning of the project that those new print versions must not take priority over the 105 Cornell University Press frontlist titles to be published in 2016. Retrofitting new POD versions of NEH Cornell Open titles into our existing workflows was challenging but sales of those print-on-demand editions are now beginning.

## **II. Marketing and Title Discovery**

Our first action involved branding the initiative Cornell Open as a nexus for all of our open access initiatives. We focused on three marketing goals: 1) to reach individual scholars working in the subject areas via e-mail blasts and social media; 2) to leverage the user communities and marketing strength of Project MUSE and JSTOR; and 3) to engage directly with libraries by working with consortia around the globe.

We built the Cornell Open website in six weeks to house the PDF and EPUB3.0.1 versions of the books. This signaled a departure from the grant application in which we originally stated that we would be hosting the titles on the Press website. We determined that content hosting was not possible on our website and that it would be more effective to create a separate "micro-site" for marketing purposes that would enable us to measure the program's impact separately. It would also allow us to host both PDF and EPUB formats.

We began marketing the titles on September 15, after the Fall 2016 semester had started. We sent e-blasts to departments in German Studies, Slavic Studies, and Literary Criticism. We created "Widely Circulated, Highly Cited" social media marketing badges that we are using to promote

the program and developed a marketing toolkit for all platforms and institutions that included the badges. Cornell Open titles were also included in the Press's Fall 2016 seasonal catalog.

In an effort to educate libraries about Cornell Open, the Press contacted LYRASIS library consortium director Celeste Feather about the program to drive usage and discoverability. She raised awareness among the 1,200 U.S. libraries comprising LYRASIS and developed a questionnaire and flyer about the twenty initial Cornell Open titles (please see Appendix I). She also contacted the International Coalition of Licensed Consortia (ICOLC) on our behalf to help market the OA content to that global community. These two organizations encompass several thousand academic institutions around the world.

Many librarians praised the effort and offered valuable information, such as the importance of creating MARC records (available, i.e., from Project MUSE) to aid in the overall discoverability of the program. We also learned that we needed to include the publication date on Cornell Open.

Here is a representative sample of unedited excerpts from the feedback:

- *Each and every open book initiative increases the knowledge base available to everyone in the global community. Each initiative makes a difference. Books and libraries make a difference. They save lives in thousands, if not millions, of different ways.*
- *We are a small liberal arts school - moving rapidly into professional programs, but these titles could be useful to a number of our students and faculty in the humanities.*
- *We are always happy to include academic open access titles such as these in our discovery system. They appear to be of interest to advanced researchers or graduate students, so they probably will see little use by our undergraduates. However, having them available to our faculty is very useful*
- *All good! Obviously solid content, great to have Cornell titles available OA.*
- *Not seeing on quick look info about getting OA records for all of these into our OPAC; we have ebooks from both Muse & JSTOR -- will all of these Cornell OA titles simply appear on those platforms? how/when will info about record downloads for our own ILS be sent out?*
- *Yes, the Cornell Open monograph content would be and is useful at my institution. I took the time to check the initial 20 titles against our library catalog and found that we own a print copy of each - and with 5 of those titles, we own two or more print copies. The only title we currently have as an e-book is "Revolution of the Mind" (through ACLS Humanities). Having established monographs available as e-books without restrictions on the number of simultaneous users is likely to be of interest to many humanities graduate students and faculty - and we increasingly are supporting online-only students. Having the titles within JSTOR and Project MUSE also means that the content will be more discoverable through our "Library One Search" (Summon) discovery tool...*
- *It is exciting to have an open platform that we can offer researchers for out of print materials from the Cornell Press. We will definitely check back often to review new content.*

- *We are very pleased to support such programs, but they are ultimately much more valuable and marketable to our users if they are discoverable in our discovery layer, Primo.*

In addition, we created a video of world renowned German Studies scholar Peter Uwe Hohendahl discussing the importance of the open access availability of his books through the NEH Program (please see: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUX\\_klN3ZVU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUX_klN3ZVU)). In an unexpected development, Hohendahl talked about how the Press converted him from a German author into an American one.

### **III. Usage Analysis**

Compilation of the discovery and usage results of these classic out-of-print texts across multiple platforms, including JSTOR, Project MUSE, the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB), and Amazon (please see Appendix II), used the time period June 2016 through March 2017. Our intention as stated in the grant proposal was to also load the titles onto OAPEN and Hathi Trust. We remain in communication with these entities but have not yet received submission guidelines.

Each platform reports differently based on download format and the availability of data. For Project MUSE and JSTOR, we examined chapter downloads by title because both platforms break down their book content into chapter-level units. In the case of Amazon, we recorded full-book download data available from Vendor Central for the time period August 2016 through February 2017. Due to an error in the website stats program for Cornell Open, we could only measure direct PDF downloads from the site.

Project MUSE and JSTOR played a key role in driving the usage and discoverability of the Press's NEH Open Books. Usage on Project MUSE exceeded 4,000 downloads during the time period by scholars at 461 institutions located in 56 countries (please see Appendix III). Surprisingly, JSTOR recorded more than 15,000 chapter-level downloads at 832 institutions located in 152 countries (please see Appendix IV). What is even more impressive is the fact that the titles were launched four months later on JSTOR than on Project MUSE and reflect less than 6 full months of activity. When examining the total number of chapter-level downloads, page views, and ToC views of the Cornell Open titles, that number increases to 49,873.

Amazon Kindle activity for these titles continues to be significant with monthly downloads occurring through March 2017. This activity did not start until December 2016, four months after the titles were available on Amazon. We could not locate the definitive source of this activity. The Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) contains Amazon links for each title and we suspect that this may have played a role. Aby Warburg's *Images of the Regions of the Pueblo Indians of North America* is the most downloaded Cornell Open title on Amazon with 510 full e-book downloads. Carolyn Dean's *The Self and Its Pleasures* does not yet show in Amazon due to a metadata error that we are in the process of fixing.

Direct downloads from Cornell Open reflect only three months of activity – January, February and March – due to an error in the Google analytics program which has now been corrected.



Despite this programming error, we were still able to discern 4,320 downloads from our site. This is surprising because we had originally conceived the site as a marketing nexus and not a content platform. In the future, we would like to more readily track PDF and EPUB downloads from the Cornell Open website.

Overall usage by discipline and approximate core audience size

| Subject Area (titles)  | Downloads | Approx. Audience Size * |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| German Studies (4)     | 4,415     | 1,900                   |
| Slavic Studies (8)     | 8,662     | 8,000                   |
| Literary Criticism (8) | 12,395    | 9,000                   |
| Total:                 | 25,472    | 18,900                  |

\* Audience size determined by: German Studies Association; Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies; and the Modern Language Association.

The usage statistics in the table above are broken down by discipline. Usage correlates generally with the size of the audience we have estimated and the number of titles included. Brantlinger's *Bread and Circuses* generated the highest number of downloads with 4,414 in Literary Criticism. The book analyzes theories that have treated mass culture as either a symptom or a cause of social decadence including many of the most influential and representative theories of mass culture — including Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, T. S. Eliot, and the theorists of the Frankfurt Institute down to Marshall McLuhan and Daniel Bell. *Literary Transcendentalism* (2,157) and *The Self and Its Pleasures* (2,135), both also in the Literary Criticism category, finished second and third, respectively.

#### IV. Conclusion

Cornell University Press will continue its participation in the NEH Humanities Open Book Program and has secured a new round of funding to publish fifty-seven out-of-print titles in Literary Criticism, Anthropology, Political Science, and the Classics. We will be exploring new ways to increase the usage of the titles within the classroom.

We received positive feedback for the project from presses within the AAUP, Cornell University, and the general public based on the activity on Amazon for these titles. In the comments section on Amazon, there is feedback for one of our titles. Commenting on *Nabokov: The Mystery of Literary Structures* by Leona Toker, RP Speakes wrote on December 4, 2016:

*Professor Toker, back in 1989, wrote this excellent academic study of Nabokov's work. Toker jumped right into deep water as she explored the undercurrents of ten of Nabokov's novels and managed successfully to guide her readers through aesthetic/sensual textural depths revealed in ephemeral content. Sounds daunting but readers fascinated by Nabokov's extraordinary novels will find Nabokov: The Mystery of Literary Structures highly readable, insightful and elucidating. Released recently as an e-book from Cornell University Press, it is still both current and vital!*

The NEH Open Book grants have helped serve as a catalyst for open access publishing at Cornell University Press and have increased the Press's capacity for creating e-books from both the recent and deep backlists and out-of-print collections. Previously, we had converted five to ten backlist e-books a month within our production workflows. The NEH program has also helped refine our workflows for the creation of web-enhanced PDFs and EPUB files. We have developed a new partnership with CoreSource and this will help us expedite the creation of digital files at lower cost.

One of the key ingredients of success for this program was an outstanding team that included Kizer Walker, Susan Barnett, Karen Laun, James McCaffrey, Ange Romeo-Hall, Karen Kerr, Diana Silva, Jonathan Hall, Nathan Gemignani, and Michael Morris. Their extraordinary publishing talents are eclipsed only by their love of books.

We remain committed to publishing 150 open access titles by 2019 to commemorate the 150-year anniversary of Cornell University Press. This program has energized the staff and led to the creation of a backlist inventory of everything the Press has published dating back to 1869. The NEH Humanities Open Book Program is helping Cornell University Press fulfill its mission to change the world — one book at a time.

**LYRASIS Library Consortium  
Announcement and Questionnaire  
re: Cornell Open**

This summer, Cornell University Press launched [Cornell Open](#), a new global open-access portal for classic out-of-print titles from the catalog of [Cornell University Press](#). The project is funded by the newly created [Humanities Open Book Program](#), a collaborative effort between the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) and [The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#).

**Selection Process**

Cornell University Library and Press staff began the process of selecting the first twenty books to be digitized with the NEH grant by examining over two decades of the library's circulation statistics for influential Press titles which are currently out-of-print. Scholars and subject specialists in selected fields were then asked to evaluate the list of prospective titles using both this quantitative data and their own knowledge of research and teaching needs in their specialty areas, to choose those books of greatest continuing interest and relevance.

**Subject Areas**

Currently, twenty titles are available from Literary Criticism and Theory, German Studies, and Slavic Studies subject areas. Cornell University Press plans to digitize 150 books up and through 2019. The next phase will expand access into more subject areas such as Anthropology, Classics, Political Science and more out-of-print titles in Literary Studies.

**Access**

Cornell Open titles are available on [Cornell Open's website](#) as well as on platforms of collaborative partners [JSTOR](#) and [Project MUSE](#). They are soon to be located on HathiTrust and OAPEN in both PDF and EPUB3 formats. Links to purchase print on demand copies will also be available in the near future.

**Marketing**

Social Media Badges have been created to help market these titles to your community. You may use the badges in any way you like.

[Access Badges](#)

**Survey**

Cornell Open titles are selected based on circulation and impact over time and are encouraged for course use. Is this content useful at your institution? How will you use these titles? What are your thoughts about the Cornell Open Program as a whole? Please give us your feedback by filling out a brief survey.

You are welcome and encouraged to distribute this survey to other faculty at your institution.

[Access Survey](#)

## Cornell Open Program Survey

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### Please give us your feedback.

- Is this content useful at your institution?
- How will you use these titles?
- What are your thoughts about the Cornell Open Program as a whole?
- Do you have any other comments?

#### 1. My Name

#### 2. My Title

#### \*3. My Institution

#### 4. My Email Address

**\*5. Please share comments and feedback about the Cornell Open Program and the usefulness of the content.**

# Cornell NEH Open Books

## Round 1 Tracking

| TITLE   | MUSE* | JSTOR** | AMAZON*** | CORNELL OPEN**** | Downloads |
|---|-------|---------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| Bread and Circuses                            | 336   | 1,840   | 331       | 1,641            | 4,148     |
| Building a National Literature                | 289   | 774     | 23        | 80               | 1,166     |
| By Honor Bound                                | 97    | 1,150   | 287       | 136              | 1,670     |
| Chaucer and the Poets                         | 107   | 491     | 80        | 149              | 827       |
| Clarissa's Ciphers                            | 105   | 446     | 26        | 55               | 632       |
| Electrification of Russia, 1880–1926          | 361   | 637     | 154       | 358              | 1,510     |
| Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians  | 98    | 300     | 510       | 61               | 969       |
| Institution of Criticism                      | 204   | 938     | 24        | 40               | 1,206     |
| Literary Transcendentalism                    | 218   | 1,174   | 115       | 650              | 2,157     |
| Nabokov                                       | 111   | 717     | 102       | 252              | 1,182     |
| Proletarian Peasants                          | 41    | 367     | 155       | 106              | 669       |
| Reappraisals                                  | 155   | 876     | 23        | 20               | 1,074     |
| Research Guide to the Russian/Soviet Censuses | 102   | 461     | 63        | 80               | 706       |
| Revolution of the Mind                        | 186   | 602     | 197       | 136              | 1,121     |
| Revolutionary Acts                            | 64    | 551     | 109       | 71               | 795       |
| Rewolucja                                     | 241   | 666     | 61        | 250              | 1,218     |
| Russian Formalism                             | 215   | 668     | 35        | 55               | 973       |
| Seductive Reasoning                           | 105   | 584     | 42        | 41               | 772       |
| The Self and Its Pleasures                    | 561   | 1,501   | N/A       | 73               | 2,135     |
| Transfigured World                            | 118   | 322     | 36        | 66               | 542       |
| TOTALS:                                       | 3,714 | 15,065  | 2,373     | 4,320            | 25,472    |

\* Chapter downloads from June 2016 thru February 2017

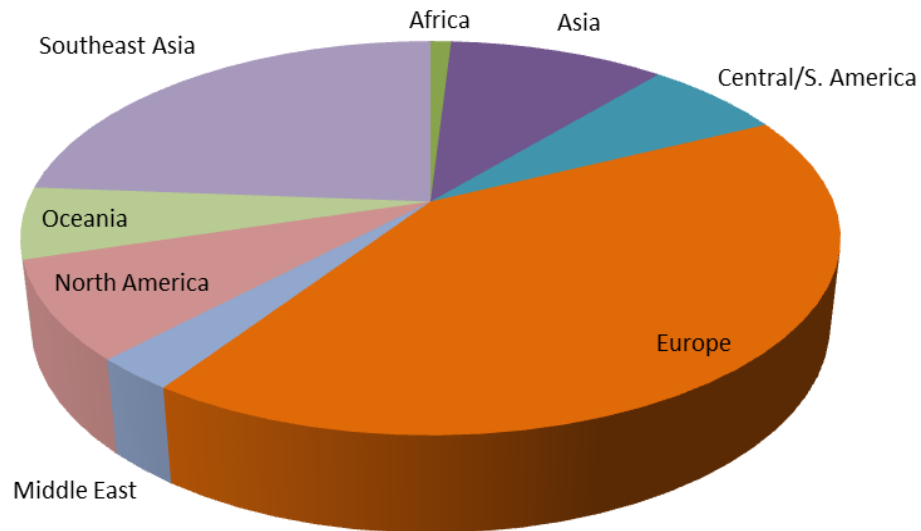
\*\* Chapter downloads from October 2016 thru March 2017

\*\*\* Kindle downloads from August 2016 thru February 2017

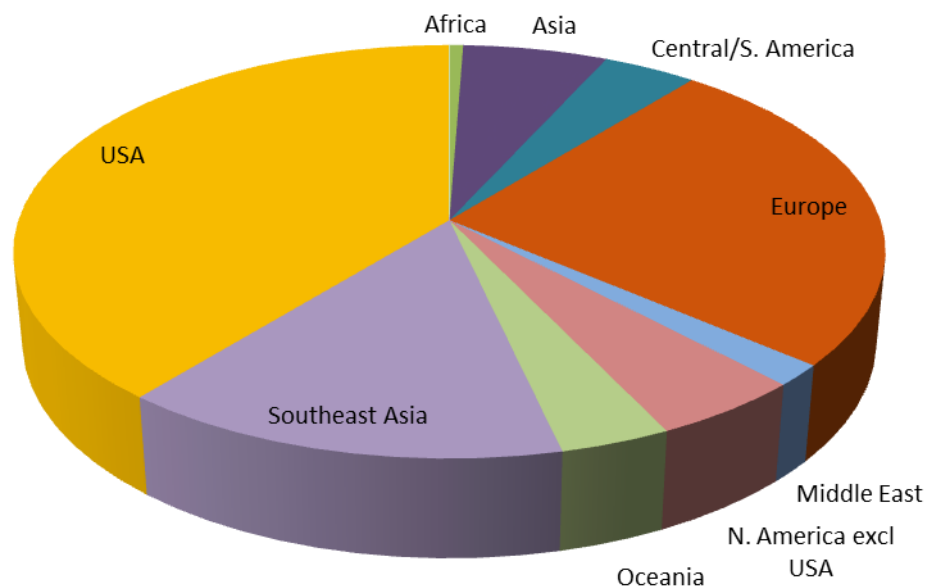
\*\*\*\* Full PDF downloads from January thru March 2017

**Geographical Distribution  
of Cornell NEH Open Books  
on the Project MUSE Platform**

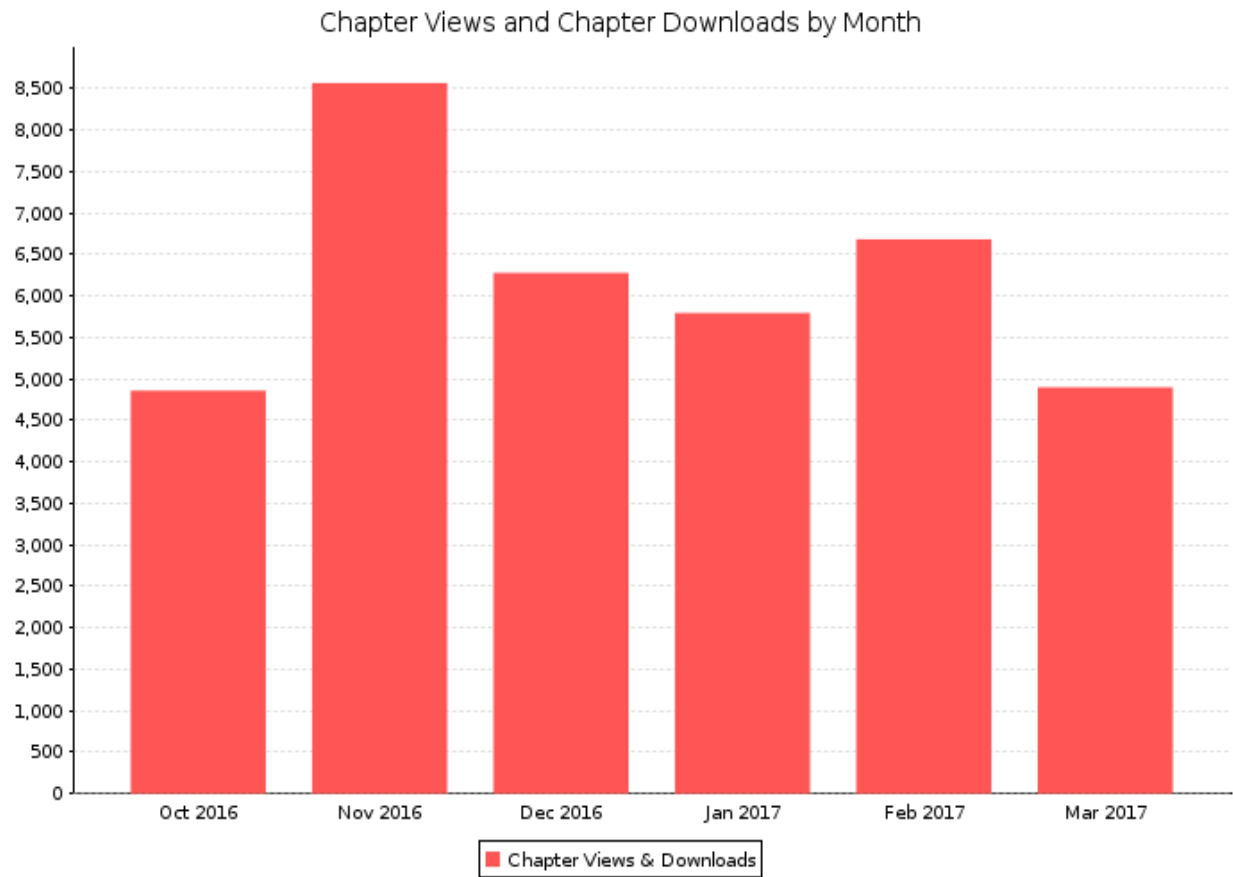
**Non-USA Distribution of CUP NEH Titles  
via Project MUSE - June '16 thru Feb '17**



**World-wide Distribution of CUP NEH Titles  
via Project MUSE - June '16 thru Feb '17**

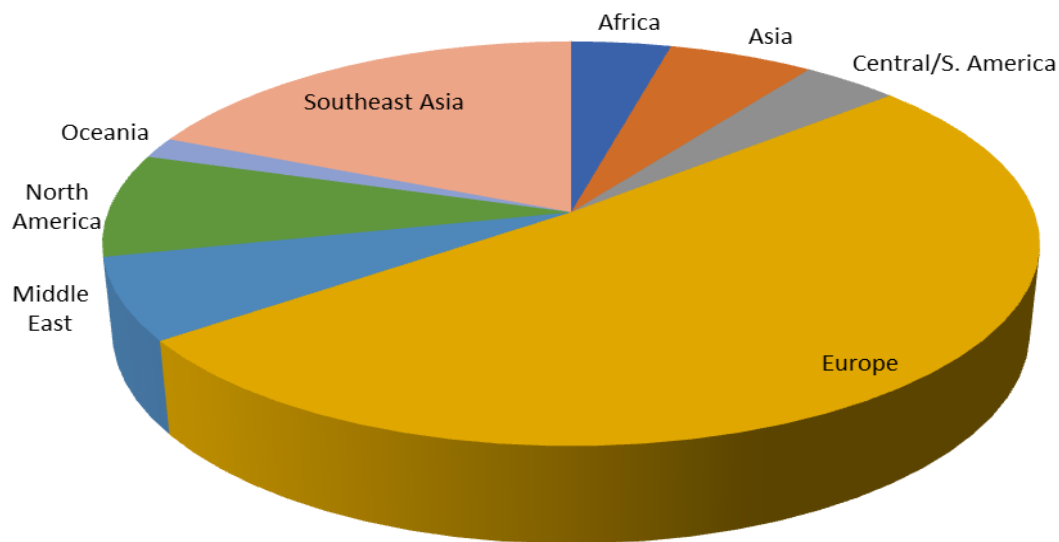


**Online Access Activity  
for Cornell NEH Open Books  
on the JSTOR Platform**



**Geographical Distribution  
of Cornell NEH Open Books  
on the JSTOR Platform**

**Non-USA Distribution of CUP NEH Titles  
via JSTOR - Oct '16 thru March '17**



**World-wide Distribution of CUP NEH Titles  
via JSTOR - Oct '16 thru March '17**

