



# OxFOSS

Oxford Forum of Open Scholarship

Welcome to our in-person conference day

Wednesday 4 March 2026, 10:00-18:00



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# OxFOSS

Oxford Forum of Open Scholarship

Opening plenary talk:  
Rebuilding broken value chains  
in an AI-mediated open research ecosystem

Wednesday 4 March 2026



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# Rebuilding broken value chains in an AI-mediated open research ecosystem

## Or: Lessons from Reader's Digest

Monica Westin, March 2026  
Oxford Forum of Open Scholarship





# Important note

**This presentation reflects my own views, personal analysis, and commentary, and should not be taken as a policy position of Cambridge University Press.**



GenAI & agentic systems are rapidly reshaping how scholarly content is discovered, attributed, licensed, measured, and used. This new form of machine-mediated discovery and usage is now occurring at a scale, frequency, and opacity that challenge core value propositions for every part of the scholarly communication ecosystem...

# Introduction

## For authors & researchers

Value is expressed through attribution (citations), provenance, and visibility

## For librarians

Value is expressed through usage, impact, and evidence of service delivery

## For publishers

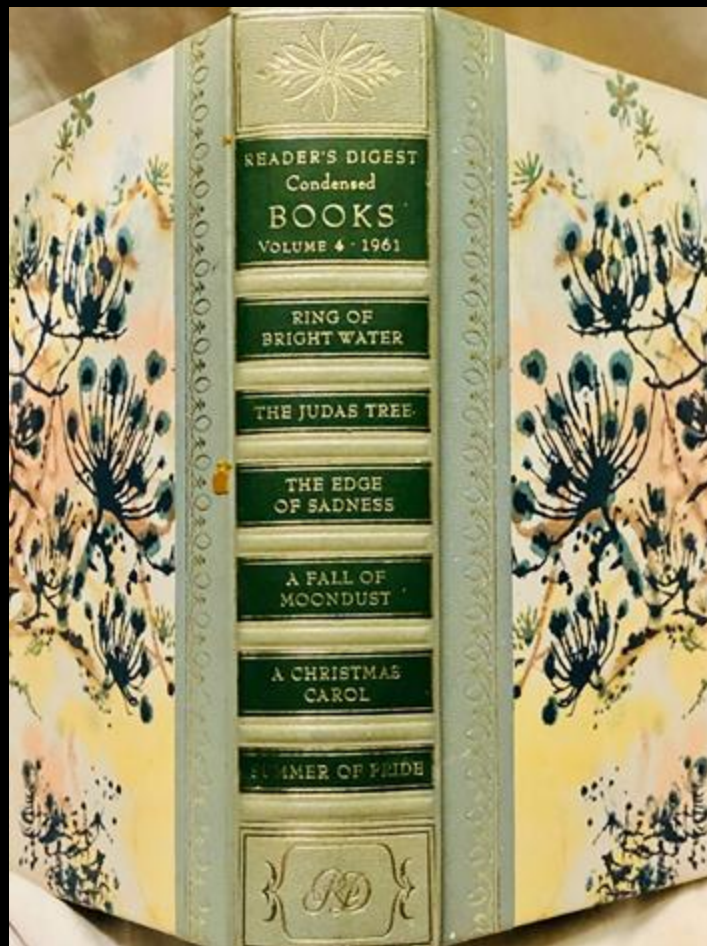
Value is expressed through traffic to full text & economic models built on usage and impact

# The value chains that are breaking in this new information environment

In a scholarly information environment in which machines are interfering with every existing value exchange, from attribution to licensing to usage measurement...

**How does value flow back?**

# The core question



# Reader's Digest

## ARTICLES OF LASTING INTEREST

The Quest for Life	<i>N. Y. Herald Tribune Magazine</i>	97
In Defense of the Spendthrift	<i>Outlook</i>	109
An Age of Alarums	<i>Century Quarterly</i>	103
Awkward Imperialists	<i>Atlantic</i>	106
The Significance of Arithmetic	<i>North American Review</i>	109
The New York Times	<i>Fortune</i>	113
"Puff" and the Police	<i>Survey Graphic</i>	115
Music and Animals		118
Tails of the Town	<i>New Yorker</i>	131
The Oubliette on our Consciences		124
The Renaissance of Excavation	<i>Woolf's Work</i>	125
The Curse of Amen-Ra	<i>McCall's</i>	129
Where America Gets Its Beers	<i>Popular Science</i>	131
The Masque Parade	<i>Mentor</i>	134
The Magic Wand Eternal	<i>"Jean-Christophe"</i>	137
A Nation of Elders in the Making	<i>American Mercury</i>	139
And the End Is Not Yet	<i>Nation's Business</i>	143
The Christian Science Census	<i>Nation</i>	145
Education for Peace	<i>Progressive Education</i>	148
The Tortures of Week-Ending	<i>Guiden Book</i>	151
Problems of the New Decade	<i>N. Y. Times Magazine</i>	154
The Great Game of Publicity	<i>Plain Talk</i>	157
Empty Hours	<i>Delinquent</i>	160
Revolt Among Missing Men	<i>Review of Reviews</i>	162
Is There an Old Maid Today?	<i>Vogue</i>	163
London's Great Treasure Trove	<i>Travel</i>	168
Are Parents Good for Children?	<i>Fantasy</i>	170
The Sweet Mills Today	<i>New Republic</i>	173
How the News Grew	<i>New Freeman</i>	176
"Nobody's Child"	<i>Woman's Journal</i>	179
Science Notes		183
The Death Detail	<i>World Tomorrow</i>	185
Reporter		190

NINTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

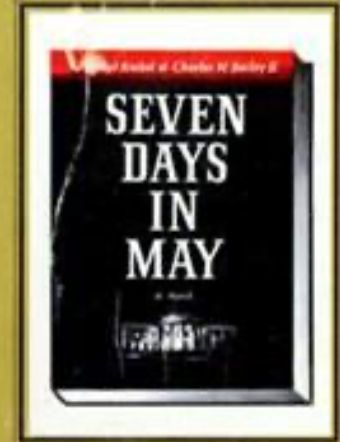
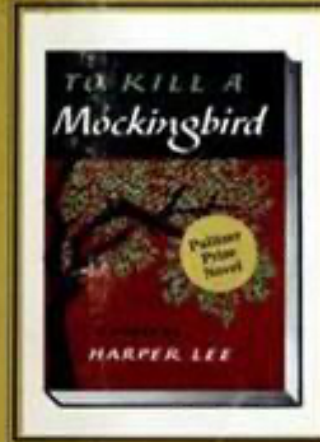
JUNE, 1930

25c a Copy      \$3.00 a Year

# Reader's Digest: Industrialised Human Summarisation

- Reprinted condensed magazine articles, and later books as well
- Reached massive new audiences
- Often substituted for originals

FROM READER'S DIGEST CONDENSED BOOKS



At the time, this practice looked both innovative and parasitic...

PROFILES

# LITTLE MAGAZINE—II: BIRTH OF AN ARISTOCRAT

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*How DeWitt Wallace turned a basement clipping project into a lucrative, parasitic-seeming “little aristocrat” of American magazines.*

✦ This summary is AI-generated. [Learn More »](#)

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**By John Bainbridge**

November 17, 1945

*Early phase:  
free reprints for  
promotional  
value...*

Aside from the cost of subscriptions to a number of periodicals and an occasional investment in a new pair of scissors, the *Digest's* overhead was small, and its content was obtained, with surprising ease, free of charge. Wallace made occasional trips to the city, called on the editors and business managers of magazines, shyly complimented them on certain articles they had published, and asked permission to reprint them. He was rarely refused. A few of these magazine people recall that they were not quite sure what Wallace was up to, but most of them saw no harm in letting him use their stuff second-hand, though they were sometimes too busy to make the presentation in person. "We figured he was just another guy with a crackpot idea," one editor has said in explaining why he now and then turned the task of dealing with Wallace over to a stenographer who didn't have too much to do. As the *Digest's* popularity grew, publishers and editors generally were willing to let Wallace reprint from their magazines without paying because they felt, as many of them still do, that appearing in the *Digest* had great promotional value.

*Publishers moved to licensing agreements as the value and scale of the derivative market become clear*

Wallace is now as secretive about his contracts as he once was about his circulation figures, but people who get around in the publishing business report that the *Digest's* annual payments to magazines begin at around \$1,200 to the *New Republic* and \$3,500 to the *Saturday Review of Literature*. The fees range thence upward to \$18,000 or thereabouts, paid to the *American Mercury*, and \$35,000, to the Luce publications combined, and reach their peak with the Crowell and Curtis publishing companies, which receive \$50,000 each. Besides compensating the magazines, Wallace also rewards the authors of reprinted articles by paying them at the rate of \$150 per *Digest* page. Under the Wallace system, apparently, everybody wins.

# *Reader's Digest: Condensation of Its Sales Techniques and Forays Into New Ventures*



Share full article



By James Feron Special to The New York Times

March 28, 1975



For many years.” Mr. Lewis said “we had been developing books for the magazine.” Mr. Lewis continued. “We'd have the condensed rights, but we would always be tied to a publisher. We still do, of course, but now with Reader's Digest Press we are publishing 20 of our own books each year and we have total control.”

The corporation, for example, has so developed its huge and carefully guarded subscription list (there are only three copies—one in a vault, one in a computer and one hidden) that it can interview readers about their tastes in proposed books and then virtually manufacture a product to fit that collective taste.

This is done through a series of questionnaires sent to selected subscribers at various stages in the formation of a book. “What we want to do is to build the perfect book,” said John O'Hara, director of the Books and Records Division, who also was recently appointed Director of International Operations.

A few years ago DeWitt Wallace summed it up this way: “We do as we damn please and that's close to ideal.”

**Digest rights** for articles and **condensation rights** for books are a subsidiary copyright right allowing a third party to publish an abridged, summarized, or adapted version of an existing work (rather than the full text).

These abridged, adapted versions are **derivative works**, like translations, adaptations for film or TV, audio versions, etc. They preserve the substance of the argument or narrative and substitute for the original in many cases - which is why publishers developed condensation / digest rights as a specific licensing category.

## Digest & Condensation Rights (US copyright law)

## Derivative rights vs ideas

Copyright does not protect: facts, ideas, methods, discoveries

But it does protect: structure, selection, arrangement, narrative or argumentative expression

Summaries often recreate these protected elements.

Derivative rights exist because transformed works can capture more value than the originals, and history shows that **unless attribution and signal-return are designed in, that value rarely flows back.**

Condensation is not inherently parasitic,  
but when it substitutes for originals, &  
erodes value (and values),  
value flow must be redesigned by the  
rest of the ecosystem.

# Key historical lesson

## A few relevant notes on derivative works for the age of genAI & agentic AI:

- A derivative output can infringe even if no exact passages are reproduced in outputs
- Derivative rights exist because secondary markets are important...
- ... but they also **re-route value** from creators and stewards of content to intermediaries and other parties, with various degrees of traceability
- Derivative rights law focuses on authorization, control over adaptation, economic exploitation, and substantial similarity (not just verbatim copying)



# The 4 copyright questions for ML / genAI

1.

Q: It is an infringement to train a model?

A: (2026 answer)  
Sometimes not, due to fair use...

3.

Q: Is the output of the model copyrightable?

A: Depends on the region

2.

Q: Is the model a derivative work?

A: Nobody knows - not focus of current lawsuits

4.

Q: Does the output infringe on the training data?

A: It depends.

Hypothesis: genAI summaries/  
synthesis function like  
unauthorized derivative works,  
at massive scale, often without  
permission or attribution. It is  
irrelevant whether the LLMs  
they were trained on were done  
so via fair use.

Digest /  
condensation  
rights as one  
solution to the OA/  
CC-BY AI paradox



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**FREE UKSG webinar: The  
Open Access–AI  
Conundrum: does free to  
read mean free to train?**



**THE DIGITAL SHIFT**  
changing how we think about technology

---

**The Cost of Open by Default in the AI  
Era**

Can We Protect Donor Materials from Generative AI?

ROSALYN METZ  
JAN 30



The OA / AI paradox:  
Openness lowered  
barriers to reading,  
but also lowered  
barriers to extraction  
- nobody knows this  
better than librarians

## Formalised derivative licensing

- Maintained attribution
- Paid producers and stewards of the content
- Recognised condensation as a lucrative market

Reader's Digest solved a governance problem

- Machine-attributable provenance
- Attribution (e.g. article contribution) metrics for outputs
- Non-human usage metrics
- Transparent training disclosure
- Licensed condensation pathways

What rebuilding value chains looks like for AI + open research

**Open research content → Machine synthesis → User**

- Design attribution persistence
- Design usage visibility
- Design compensation pathways

# A New Value Chain Model

## CC-BY-NAID (no AI derivatives)

- Expressly forbids AI derivatives (models & outputs) while allowing other derivatives uses (translation, reuse of figures, etc)

## New usage and impact metrics

- Article-level (fractional) answer contribution scores
- Retrieval frequency scores for papers and sections of papers

## New attribution metrics

- List of most important papers for answer with provenance information
- Standard for exposing evidence trails in UI

# Designing new value chains - what else do we need?

Must remain incentivised, trustworthy, & sustainable

Rebuilding these value chain is deliberate, difficult, ecosystem-wide work

# Open research in a machine-first world



# Thank you



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**This presentation reflects personal analysis and  
commentary, and not a policy position of Cambridge  
University Press.**





Oxford Forum of Open Scholarship

AI and Communities: Bias, Equity, and Empowerment in Context

Wednesday 4 March 2026



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Envisioning the future of 'open' in a generative AI world

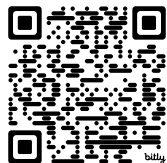
# AI and Communities: Bias, Equity, and Empowerment in Context

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**Godwyns Onwuchekwa**

Community Engagement Specialist

Global Tapestry Consulting



Global Tapestry Consulting



# Overview

- ❑ How does AI amplify bias?
- ❑ Why is equity not merely a technical problem?
- ❑ Under what conditions can AI genuinely empower communities?

## The Central Argument

AI is not  
inherently good  
or bad.

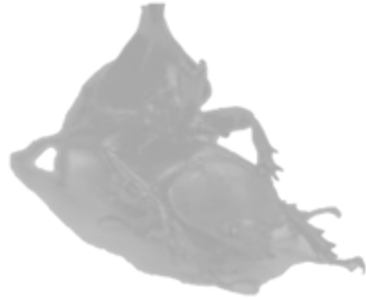
Its impact  
depends on  
context, power,  
and inclusion or  
exclusion.



Photo by [Ava Sol](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# Part One:

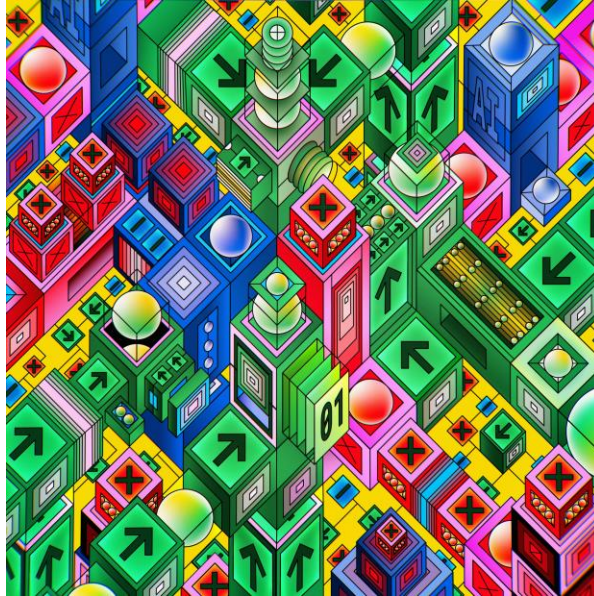
# Bias and Its Costs



**AI inherits history**

**Bias Is Not a Bug:  
It's Structural!**

# Part One: Bias and Its Costs



## The Illusion of Objectivity

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2812958>

# Part One: Bias and Its Costs

## The Stakes in Higher Education



Photo by [Susan Q Yin](#) on [Unsplash](#)

AI empowerment cannot exist  
without addressing **systemic  
harms.**

# **Part Two: Equity, Participation, and Structural Inequities**

# **Equity Is Not a Technical Problem**



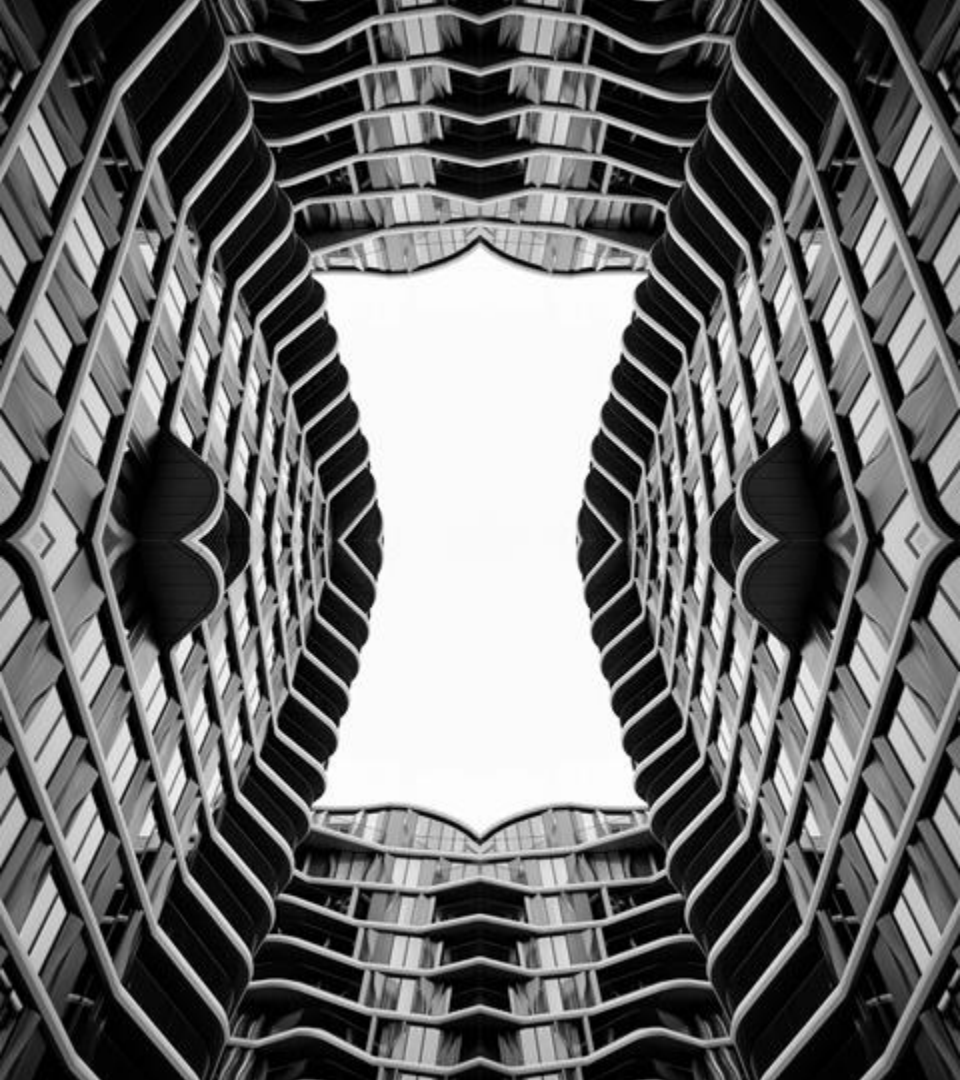
# Participation as the Mechanism of Integrity

## Part Two: Equity, Participation, and Structural Inequities

# Whose Knowledge Counts?

Photo by [Julian Gentile](#) on [Unsplash](#)





## Resource Inequities and the Limits of "Just Participate"

“Without ensuring equitable access, this AI advancement has the potential to exacerbate educational inequalities more than any prior technology.”

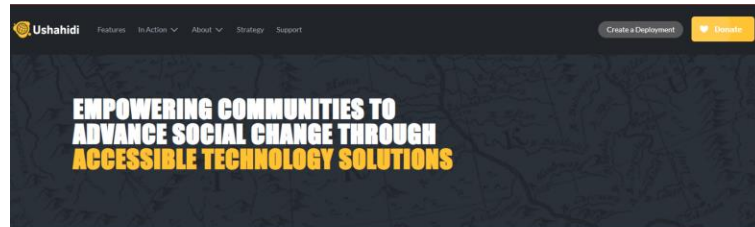
<https://openpraxis.org/articles/10.55982/openpraxis.17.1.750>

# **Part Three: Empowerment — Conditional, Contextual, and Evidenced**



## Empowerment Is Possible

# What Empowerment Looks Like in Practice



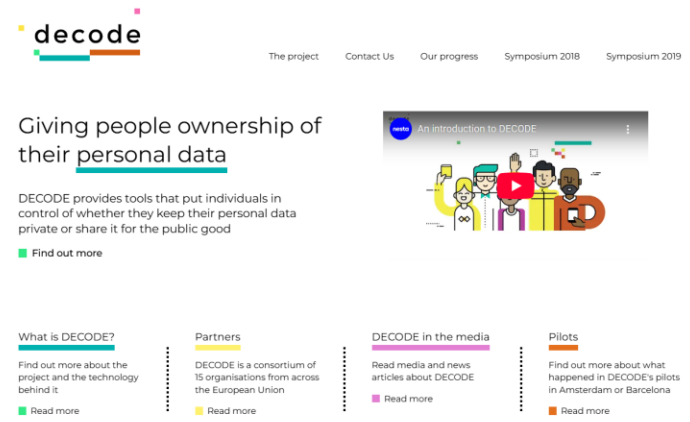
## Empowering communities to advance social change through accessible technology solutions

Ushahidi is a global not-for-profit technology company that develops integrated tools and services to enable people to generate solutions and mobilize communities for good. We build our open-source software with the intent of strengthening communities and improving lives, empowering users to rapidly and purposefully gather, analyze, respond and act on data and information.

Since our founding in 2008 as a tool to monitor and map post-election violence in Kenya, Ushahidi's crowdsourcing tools have been used by thousands of around and millions of people to raise voices, inform decisions,



<https://www.usahidi.com/about/our-story/>



<https://decodeproject.eu/>

## Co-Creation as the Condition for Empowerment

**“Co-creating AI systems can enable communities  
to address regional concerns”,**

*and*

**“Explaining data patterns using AI can surface  
local issues for public scrutiny”**

# Conclusion

- ✓ The spectrum, not the binary
- ✓ Recognise and actively mitigate bias
- ✓ Co-create with communities
- ✓ Invest meaningfully in access, infrastructure, and training
- ✓ Take the context seriously



Photo by [Jon Tyson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

**Community engagement is an intentional action to involve the people, practitioners, and communities who are our target audience.**

# Thank you!

Godwyns Onwuchekwa



 Global Tapestry Consulting

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Thank you  
for coming



Still time to book!  
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We'd love to  
hear what  
you thought  
of today's  
event

Thurs, 5th March, ONLINE 13:00-15:00,  
Cultivating FAIR data across disciplines

Fri, 6th March, ONLINE 11:00-12:00,  
How to do open research safely

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