Formative Evaluation of the Aid to Scholarly Publications Program (ASPP)

Part I : Evaluation Report

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Background

This report presents the results of a formative evaluation of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)'s Aid to Scholarly Publications Program (ASPP) conducted by Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) between January and June 2004.

The main objective of this evaluation was to provide SSHRC and the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS), the organization responsible for administering the program, with evaluation findings that will assist in deciding how best to adapt the ASPP to ensure that it remains relevant within an ever-changing academic context.

With the emphasis of the evaluation being formative in nature, information was collected on the program's rationale and relevance, design, and delivery, and, to a certain extent, potential program impacts. Data was collected from a literature and document review; twelve interviews with key informants; online surveys of successful and non-successful applicants, non-applicants, and publishers; and eight case studies focussing on specific titles published with ASPP support

Conclusions

The study team found that the ASPP remains very relevant to the needs of both scholarly authors and scholarly publishers in Canada. It is an essential vehicle for encouraging Canadian publishers to publish commercially non-viable scholarly books in Social Sciences and Humanities, for ensuring the quality of Canadian scholarship, and for supporting academic career advancement.

Findings clearly indicate that the program has a beneficial impact on the authors and their scholarly community, by creating opportunities for knowledge creation, academic career development, and knowledge dissemination. Impacts on policy makers and the general public are less direct and tangible. The latter objective, however, tends to be considered secondary by the majority of stakeholders.

Survey results generally indicate that authors and publishers are satisfied with the delivery of the program. Key informants were more critical, in particular regarding the timeliness and transparency of decision-making. The key issues affecting program delivery are the ASPP review/approval process, which inevitably slows down publication of manuscripts, and the quality of feedback provided to non-successful applicants on their manuscript.

However, evaluation findings also showed that the program currently faces important challenges in terms of its design and delivery mechanisms. The key findings of this study are that:

- Over half of ASPP grants are received by scholars in only two disciplines: history (31%) and literature (20%);
- 71% of successful manuscripts are published by only 3 large university presses;
- since the implementation of the MOU, 80% of manuscripts submitted by university presses were reviewed under the MOU process by a peer-review committee set up by the press rather than the ASPP; and
- the program's eligibility criteria exclude or limit certain categories of potential beneficiaries of the program: foreign authors writing on Canadian subjects, Canadian authors of translated works, and Canadian authors who publish with foreign publishers.

The program's budget is very small given the broad objectives it pursues and in contrast with other Canadian government programs in support of publishing. Also, the fact that it has decreased by 15.41% in constant dollars since 1998 has a negative impact on the program's capacity to meet the demand for its services; furthermore, that demand is expected to rise in the near future. Considering this small budget and the labour-intensive nature of the program's activities (continuous intake of manuscripts and quality-control function), the allocation for administration costs appears appropriate.

Contradictory views were expressed on the timeliness of ASPP decision-making. The evidence is unclear on whether the review/approval process conducted by the program contributes to unreasonable delays in publication. Although peer-review of manuscripts is generally seen as essential, there is debate among publishers, program

representatives and authors as to whether the peer-review process conducted by publishers is as rigorous as, or more rigorous than, the ASPP's. Evidence on these points is subjective and contradictory in nature and therefore somewhat inconclusive.

Electronic book publishing has not gained sufficient momentum in the Canadian scholarly community to warrant immediate investments from SSHRC to the detriment of print publication. However, it is anticipated that the issue will evolve, and that SSHRC will need to closely monitor technological advances and shifts in scholars' attitudes towards the use of other means of publication. Print-on-Demand is one of the electronic technologies showing the most potential for scholarly publishing.

Although the ASPP is intended as an authors' program, and the ultimate decision as to who will publish their manuscripts remains with the authors, in practice, the ASPP's delivery mechanisms entail a more direct interaction with publishers than authors, particularly since implementation of the MOU. In addition, the majority of grants are received by three large university presses. These facts generate a perception (which has prevailed throughout this evaluation exercise) that Canadian scholarly publishers are the primary targets of the program.

Options

In light of these conclusions, we recommend that SSHRC consider the following:

1. The objectives and focus of the ASPP should be more clearly defined, and its design and delivery adjusted accordingly.

    a. **If the program is to be primarily an authors' program**, *and if the budget is maintained at the current level*, SSHRC and the Federation should consider focusing the program on new authors. This option is supported by case study findings showing that the program has had the most notable impact on first books by new scholars. In the absence of new financial resources, this option would maximize the program's overall impact as demand for its services rises.

        If the program budget is increased, SSHRC and the Federation should retain current eligibility criteria and should consider: 1) making more
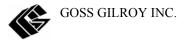
grants available for translations of key manuscripts between English and French; and 2) publicizing the eligibility of collective works for funding. They might also examine whether authors would benefit from the program's expansion to include other publication options, such as electronic publishing formats exclusive of print, and/or publication with foreign publishers. However, it must be taken into account that opening program criteria to include foreign publishers will dilute the pool of program funds available to Canadian publishers. This entails the risk of weakening the capacity of Canadian publishers to meet the needs of Canadian scholars, especially those who publish in Canadian Studies and rely on a robust infrastructure of Canadian scholarly publishers to disseminate the results of their research.

b. **If the program is to be primarily a Canadian scholarly publishers' program**, SSHRC should consider the option of block grants to academic presses. This option would reduce the administrative workload and overhead costs of the ASPP. However, it could entail the risk that publishers might choose manuscripts based on sales potential rather than scholarly excellence and might decrease their quality-control checks. The program would need to ensure that the presses maintained rigorous peer-review of eligible manuscripts. The process of choosing which presses to support, and of allocating block grant amounts, would also require a careful redesign of delivery mechanisms.

c. **If the program is to be designed to meet the needs of both authors and Canadian scholarly publishers,** it will require a substantial increase in budget in order to achieve intended results under this broader focus. It is likely that this option will also require a major redesign of the program, since one mode of delivery will not meet the needs of both groups. The program redesign may need to integrate various options mentioned above (e.g. one portion of funding being supplied in the form of block grants, while another portion targets specific author groups).

2. SSHRC and the Federation should continue to monitor closely the developments in electronic publishing technology and how they affect scholarly book publication and knowledge dissemination.

3.   SSHRC and the Federation should better articulate the results expected as well as develop and monitor indicators of success for the ASPP, including monitoring results of the MOU with university publishers. These indicators should enable the ASPP to improve its analysis and reporting of the program's immediate and intermediate outcomes.

In conclusion, the ASPP remains essential as an incentive program assisting the publication of high-quality scholarly books by Canadian researchers in the social sciences and humanities. Furthermore, in spite of growing interest and capacities in electronic publishing, printed books remain an essential vehicle of knowledge dissemination and continue to play a central role in the careers of Canadian academic researchers. However, if SSHRC and the CFHSS want to maintain the program's broad objectives, a significant level of additional resources will be necessary for the program to achieve its intended results. Otherwise, the program's focus needs to be reduced.

1.0 Introduction

This report presents the results of a formative evaluation of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)'s Aid to Scholarly Publications Program (ASPP) conducted by Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) between January and June 2004.

The main objective of this evaluation was to provide SSHRC and the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS), the organization responsible for administering the program, with evaluation findings that will assist in deciding how best to adapt the ASPP to ensure that it remains relevant within an ever-changing academic context. In particular, the evaluation examined how SSHRC and CFHSS can:

- best adapt the program design and delivery so that it supports the mandates of the key stakeholders;
- ensure that current efficiencies and program delivery strengths are maintained with any program change; and,
- make program delivery and design improvements where needed.

With the emphasis of the evaluation being formative in nature, information was collected on the program's rationale and relevance, design, and delivery. At the request of the Project Authority, the study also identified potential program impacts through a series of case studies focussed on specific titles published with ASPP support.

This report is designed to assist the management of both SSHRC and CFHSS to identify *key areas and aspects* of the program that should be considered in any process of program adaptation and change. Consequently, the main body of the report focuses on a discussion of those issues.

In order to provide the reader with a thorough understanding of the ASPP, the present section initially provides an overview of the evaluation methodology and a profile of the ASPP. Section 2.0 contains the findings for the evaluation issues that focus on the *relevance* of the ASPP. Section 3.0 focuses on the evaluation findings with respect to program *design*. Section 4.0 deals with *delivery* of the ASPP. Potential program

impacts are discussed in section 5.0. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in section 6.0.

Part II of this report contains an overview of the current context for scholarly book publishing in Canada. Part III contains individual case study reports. Part IV contains research instruments.

1.1 Methodology for Evaluation

The methodology used for this evaluation consisted of a literature, document and file review, key informant interviews, case studies, a database review, and online surveys.

1.1.1 Literature, Document and File Review

Building on the work already conducted as part of the design phase for this study, the evaluation team updated the review of literature on scholarly publishing to document the context in which the ASPP operates (see Part II). The document and file review was completed to draw a descriptive profile of the program.

1.1.2 Key Informant Interviews

In order to gather more in-depth information on the program rationale, program delivery, and program impacts, a total of 12 interviews were conducted with key informants. These included representatives from the ASPP, CFHSS, SSHRC, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Association of Canadian University Presses (ACUP), the Association of Canadian Publishers (ACP), an electronic publishing expert, a scholarly publisher, and a university administrator. Key informants were identified with the assistance of the Project Authority.

The list of key informants interviewed and the interview guides used for each category of informant are included in Appendices (Part IV).

1.1.3   Case Studies

Eight case studies were conducted on titles supported by the ASPP. The purpose of these studies was to gather qualitative information about medium-term and long-term outcomes of the program to address the evaluation issue pertaining to program impacts. The case studies provided the evaluation team with "in-depth success stories" that, while perhaps not completely representative of all program outcomes, highlighted in considerable detail potential impacts of the program.

The list of titles was selected in consultation with SSHRC and CFHSS according to a number of criteria, such as academic discipline, publication date, language of publication, and size and region of publishing house. Authors were contacted to request their participation. For each case study, the evaluation team conducted interviews with the author, the publisher, and sometimes the editor, and in some cases doctoral students. Literature searches were conducted for book reviews, media coverage, citations, conference proceedings, course adoptions, and other indicators of the books' impact.

Findings from the case studies are expected to assist SSHRC in assessing three areas of impact of books supported by the ASPP: on the author's academic achievement and career; on the Canadian research community; and outside the research community, on decision-makers and the public.

Interview guides for authors and publishers are included in Appendices (Part IV). A table in section 5.2 presents the list of books on which case studies were conducted, as well as overall findings from these case studies. Detailed summaries of each case study can be found in Part III.

1.1.4   Online Surveys

Primary lines of evidence for the evaluation consisted of four web-based surveys of the following groups of program stakeholders:

- Researchers whose books have been accepted for funding under the ASPP (1996 to 2003);

- Researchers who have applied to the program but whose books have not been funded by the ASPP (1996 to 2003);
- Scholarly publishers who are eligible for funding from the ASPP; and
- Researchers who never applied to the program.

A separate questionnaire was developed for each group (see Appendices, Part IV). Surveys were administered via a web site where all four survey questionnaires were hosted. The questionnaires took between 10 and 40 minutes to complete. The following are final response rates[1] for each of the four surveys administered:

- Successful applicants: 413 of 1101 (38%)
- Non-successful applicants: 49 of 203 (24%)
- Publishers: 19 of 51 (37%)
- Non-applicants: 238 of 750 (32%)

The small number of responses to the survey of non-successful applicants prevented an analysis of the responses by discipline. Due to the small population of publishers and the relatively low response rate obtained, too few answers were received to produce quantitative results. A qualitative analysis of the publishers' survey responses was conducted in conjunction with the analysis of the results of key informant and case study interviews.

1.1.5   Database Review

Administrative data contained in the program's database of successful and non-successful applicants and SSHRC's database of non-applicants was used by the evaluation team as part of the analysis of survey results and cross-tabulations. Information used from the databases includes the language of publication/ correspondence, the area of research (Social Science or Humanities), the discipline of the author, the province of the academic institution the author is primarily affiliated with, and the size of the institution.

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[1] The total numbers against which response rates were calculated correspond to the number of applicants who submitted at least one application between 1999 and 2003. For the purpose of these surveys, the database of applicants was edited so that each applicant would appear only once, for the most recent successful or non-successful application submitted.

1.2   Profile of the ASPP

This section presents an overview of the ASPP, including a description of its objectives, main clients, design characteristics, eligibility criteria, and delivery mechanisms.

1.2.1   ASPP History

Since its establishment in 1941-42, the ASPP was administered by the CFHSS and its predecessors. From 1942 to 1957, the ASPP was financed by three philanthropic American foundations: Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie. On formation of the Canada Council in 1957, program funding came from the Council. Responsibility for funding the program changed hands again in 1978 with the advent of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), but program administration remained with the federations.

1.2.2   Program Objectives

The ASPP is designed to assist in the publication of works of advanced scholarship which make an important contribution to knowledge, but which are unlikely to be self-supporting.[2] The program's overall main objective is to support Canadian scholars in the social sciences and humanities in making contributions "to both national and international knowledge-based societies through the dissemination of their research".[3] This dissemination contributes to the nation's intellectual life and to its international profile as a country in which vigorous academic discourse and high-quality research are valued.

The program targets three main categories of clients:[4]

- **Researchers/authors** in the social sciences and humanities who need a medium to communicate their broader research results (as opposed to more focused results

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[2] General Guidelines - January 2003 - http://www.fedcan.ca/english/aspp/guidelines_jan2003_e.pdf; ASPP Reader's Guide - http://www.fedcan.ca/english/aspp/readersguide.cfm
[3] Template for SSHRC's Program Review (April, 2002).
[4] ASPP Draft Logic Model, Prepared by Policy, Planning and International Collaboration Division, SSHRC, January 2003.

such as in journals) in a timely manner. They also need to publish books to ascertain their professional status within their discipline and to obtain career advancement.

- **Scholarly presses**, which are responsible for the publication of most ASPP-funded scholarly books and which receive the ASPP grant upon publication of the book. These presses need financial support to offset the costs of publishing scholarly books that have low print runs and are not profitable.
- **Readers of the scholarly books**, which are, for the most part, other scholars, policy decision makers and the educated public. The program aims at making the books accessible at a reasonable cost.

1.2.3   Program Administration and Management

CFHSS receives annual grants from SSHRC to administer the ASPP on its behalf. CFHSS is an independent, non-governmental organisation of scholars representing the various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Four full-time employees of CFHSS are dedicated to administering the ASPP: a program manager, a program officer, and two administrative assistants. The CFHSS Executive Director oversees the work of the ASPP management team.

A Management Board, composed of a president and three vice-presidents, monitors management of the program. The CFHSS Vice-President Research Dissemination and Executive Director both sit on the Management Board *ex officio*. In turn, the Management Board president has an *ex officio* seat on the CFHSS Executive Committee. SSHRC's Director, Research and Dissemination Grants Division, is also an ex officio member.

A separate committee of volunteers is responsible for overseeing the peer review of manuscripts submitted for funding, on which the ASPP adjudication process is based. The Aid to Scholarly Publications (ASP) Committee is comprised of 98 scholars divided into 35 sub-committees representative of the major disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. It is responsible for ruling on the manuscripts' eligibility, for suggesting potential assessors, and for recommending which manuscripts should receive funding on the basis of assessors' reports. The ASPP Management Board remains responsible for final adjudication and payment decisions.

In addition to administering the receipt, peer review and funding of scholarly manuscripts, CFHSS also initiates regular communication, promotion and consultation activities with publishers, authors and public servants through the media, the ASPP website, and attendance at conferences, annual meetings, book fairs, etc. In particular, program staff operate a booth at the annual Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences.

In conjunction with the granting component of the ASPP program, the CFHSS also awards each year its juried Scholarly Book Prizes to four ASPP-supported books published in the humanities and social sciences:

- Harold Adams Innis Prize - best English-language book in the Social Sciences;
- Prix Jean-Charles-Falardeau - best French-language book in the Social Sciences; and,
- Raymond Klibansky Prize - best English- and French-language books in the Humanities.

The Prizes recognise Canadian excellence in research and writing in the humanities and the social sciences, and acknowledge the significant contribution that Canadian scholarly books make to the advancement of knowledge. A cross-Canada jury of scholars selects the best ASPP-funded books published each year.[5] The book prizes are funded by the proceeds of a "Colleagues for Scholarly Publishing" fund raising campaign held annually by the Federation. This campaign has raised between $11,000 and $23,000 annually since 1992. Funds thus collected are also used to cover some administrative costs of the program, such as the development of a database.[6]

1.2.4   Type and Amount of Funding

The ASPP awards grants of $7,000 to eligible Canadian publishers of manuscripts that have passed successfully through the adjudication process. Disbursement takes place after the books have been published. ASPP grants are intended to defray the following costs associated with the publishing process:

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[5] CFHSS, Media Release: Federation Announces Finalists for 2002-2003 Book Prizes, November 4, 2003.
[6] ASPP Draft Logic Model, Prepared by Policy, Planning and International Collaboration Division, SSHRC, January 2003.

- typesetting;
- printing;
- binding; and,
- promotion

The ASPP Management Board approves release of the grant after a completed financial form, along with eight copies of the published volume, are received by the ASPP secretariat. In cases where an approved manuscript remains unpublished for three years after an award, the grant lapses, and no further application for the manuscript is considered.

1.2.5 Eligibility Criteria[7]

ASPP subventions are granted to works of advanced scholarship in the humanities and social sciences which make important contributions to knowledge but which are unlikely to be self-supporting. A manuscript may be submitted for consideration by either an eligible author or an eligible Canadian publisher.

Briefly, eligible authors are Canadian or landed-immigrant scholars at all levels of their careers, including those who have recently received their doctorates, established researchers, policy-makers, journalists, and members of the general public. In some special circumstances, non-Canadian and non-landed-immigrant scholars are considered eligible.

Eligible publishers are Canadian presses that meet stated criteria of Canadian ownership, residency, primary activity as publishing, and a minimum of four eligible titles in print. Publishers must have satisfactory editorial boards in place, and be willing to abide by various ASPP criteria concerning size of print runs, and promotional activities. Grants can also be awarded for publication with a foreign publisher, as long as the author demonstrates that at least three Canadian publishers have rejected the manuscript not for reasons of quality, but because of the subject matter falling outside of the publisher's mandate/lists.

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[7] For more detailed eligibility criteria, please refer to the CFHSS ASPP website at http://www.fedcan.ca/english/aspp/aspp.html that outlines the specific eligibility criteria for authors, publishers, and works.

Eligible works are book-length manuscripts (minimum of 100 pages in length) that are judged to be works of advanced scholarship in the humanities and social sciences which make an important contribution to knowledge but which are unlikely to be self-supporting. The ASPP does not provide grants for the publication of textbooks, technical reports, original works of poetry, fiction and drama, scholarly journals and articles, or conference proceedings. While electronic publications are currently ineligible for funding, the issue of including them in the program is currently under review by the ASP Committee.[8]

1.2.6   Application, Peer Review and Adjudication Process

Although applications may be submitted by either the author or the publisher, publishers submit the majority of applications.

Table 1 How applicants applied to the program[9]

	S (n=413)	NS (n=48)
Approached publisher, who then applied on their behalf	77.6%	82.6%
Approached publishers, then applied directly	13.5%	6.5%
Applied directly, then approached a publisher	5.7%	4.3%
Other	3.2%	6.5%

If deemed eligible by the program, a manuscript is sent for assessment to at least two readers, selected by the ASP Committee (see section 1.2.3). The readers are selected from among recognized Canadian and foreign scholars who are knowledgeable about the specific field addressed by the manuscript. Readers are provided with a "Reader's Guide" to assist in assessing the quality of manuscripts through application of specific criteria.[10]

Upon receipt of the readers' assessments, ASPP officers forward them (after having removed the readers' names) to the author for his or her response. The assessments and the author's response are then submitted to the appropriate ASP sub-committee for its

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[8] ASPP General Guidelines, pp. 5-8.
[9] Survey of successful and non-successful applicants.
[10] A copy of the Reader's Guide can be found on the ASPP website at: http://www.fedcan.ca/english/aspp/readersguide.cfm .

recommendation. The ASP sub-committee makes one of the following recommendations:

- recommend prioritizing support to the publication (with or without conditions or suggestions);
- recommend support to the publication only if program funds allow (the manuscript is labelled "low priority");
- invite resubmission after appropriate revision;
- refuse assistance (any resubmission of the original or revised manuscript on the part of the publisher or author is not permitted); or
- defer a decision until further reports or evidence are available.

Manuscripts that receive a priority recommendation automatically receive funding. The committee's other recommendations are submitted to the ASPP Adjudication Committee for decision. Manuscripts deemed "low priority" are awarded funding in the current fiscal year only if funds permit. They must await the judgment of the Adjudication Committee, which meets periodically over the year. The Management Board of the ASPP makes all final decisions on the payment of subventions, based on the availability of funds.

1.2.7   New Memorandum of Understanding on Peer Review Process

Prior to 2003, the ASPP conducted peer review of all manuscripts submitted for funding. In November 2002, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the ASPP and ACUP, whereby university presses themselves may conduct the peer review of manuscripts that they submit to the program. The rationale for the agreement was that university presses already conduct their own peer review as an essential part of their decision-making process on publication of scholarly manuscripts. Hence the MOU seeks to avoid duplication of effort, and to save time and expense in the adjudication process. Nonetheless, the program continues to monitor the qualifications and appropriateness of assessors whose reports are submitted by university presses.

In the cases where a university press chooses this option, it must submit, along with the program application, at least two evaluations by suitable scholars in the field, from

within Canada or abroad, who can provide a competent assessment of the work's scholarship. Where verdicts of the two reviewers conflict, the publisher must obtain an additional report. The publisher must also submit the author's responses to the reviewers' reports and any additional comments the publisher may have on the process.

In the case of applications not submitted under terms of the MOU between the ASPP and ACUP, the ASPP continues to conduct peer review of manuscripts as described in 1.2.6 above.

Since the implementation of the MOU, 80% of manuscripts submitted by a university press were reviewed under the MOU process by a peer-review committee set-up by the press rather than the ASPP. [11] Of the twelve university presses identified in the program database, six availed themselves of the option offered under the MOU. The following table provides a breakdown of manuscripts submitted by university presses under the MOU or the ASPP review process since November 31, 2002, the day the MOU was signed.

Table 2 Breakdown of manuscripts submitted by university presses since MOU, by publisher and by manuscript review process

	ASPP	MOU
University of Toronto Press	3	31
McGill-Queen's University Press	8	31
University of British Columbia Press	6	17
Presses de l'Université Laval	1	7
University of Calgary Press		5
Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies		1
Presses de l'Université de Montréal	2	
Wilfrid Laurier University Press	3	
Total	**23**	**92**

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[11] This percentage was calculated from the program database using available information on manuscripts submitted after November 31, 2002. This figure does not include manuscripts for which publisher information was not communicated to ASPP officers.

1.2.8   Program Budget

The budget for the ASPP has remained fixed for the past eight years at $1,308,550 (the same budget as in fiscal year 1997-98). Approximately 22% of this amount (or $288,000) is allocated to administrative costs for the program.[12] While the ASPP budget remained constant, other similar programs have experienced important increases. The $27-million Aid to Publishers component of the Department of Canadian Heritage *Book Publishing Industry Development Program* (BPIDP) has risen from $16 million in 1996, an increase of 69% over seven years. Meanwhile the Canada Council for the Arts *Block Grant Program*, currently at $7.9 million in 2003-04, stood at $6.9 million as recently as 2000, an increase of 14.5% in three years.

Table 3 Comparison of Support to Book Publishing Programs, 2002-03 fiscal year

Program	2002-03 Budget*	Approximate # Titles Supported
BPIDP Aid to Publishers	$27.0 M	5,500
Block Grants	$8.7 M	2,400
ASPP	$1.0 M	150

* Amount does not include allocation for administration.

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[12] *ASPP Program Review Report*, April 2002.

1.2.9 ASPP Application Success Rates

On average, 150 grants are awarded annually, with a usual success rate of approximately 48%.

Table 4 Profile of annual demand and success rates since 1998

Year	Total Applications Received[13]	Ineligible/ Closed	Revise-and-Resubmit	Rejected Manuscripts	Approved Manuscripts	Other	Success Rate[14]
1998-1999	325	58	61	39	161	6	49.5%
1999-2000	289	46	43	11	180	9	62.3%
2000-2001	337	53	77	19	184	4	54.6%
2001-2002	344	42	89	41	167	5	48.5%
2002-2003	320	46	68	54	143	9	44.7%
2003-2004	288	23	38	42	140	45	48.6%

Since its creation, the ASPP has supported over 4,500 works from Canadian scholars and public figures.[15] The number of manuscripts supported has peaked at 184 in 2000-2001 and decreased to 140 in 2003-2004. The decrease in the number of applications in 2003-2004 is attributed by program representatives to the fact that, with the implementation of the MOU, publishers are now more aware of the need to subject submissions to more examination and "in-house" work before sending them to the ASPP. As a result, unready material is not being submitted as it may have been before.

1.2.10 Profile of ASPP Applicants: Authors

The program database indicates that between 1996 and 2004:

- 79% of manuscripts submitted were written in English;
- 61% of manuscripts submitted were in the humanities;
- almost half of manuscripts submitted were in history (29%) and literature (20%);
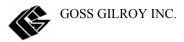
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[13] Total of approved, rejected, revise & resubmit, ineligible/closed and other applications.

[14] Number of approved manuscripts divided by the total of applications received.

[15] ASPP Draft Logic Model, Prepared by Policy, Planning and International Collaboration Division, SSHRC, January 2003.

- at the time they submitted their manuscript to the program, most program applicants were primarily affiliated to a university located in Ontario (37%), Québec (17%), or British Columbia (11%);
- forty-two percent (42%) of applicants were primarily affiliated with a large university (with 500 or more full-time professors); and 2% were primarily affiliated with a non-academic/research institution (i.e. provincial or municipal government or private sector/non-profit organization).

The profile of authors who succeeded in receiving ASPP funding for their manuscript does not differ from this general profile of program applicants, except in one respect. Among successful manuscripts, 31% were in history whereas they only made up 20% of non-successful ones. This indicates that manuscripts in history have a higher chance of receiving an ASPP grant than manuscripts in other disciplines.

As shown in the following table, while manuscripts in all SS&H disciplines are eligible, the majority of grants are awarded to a small number of key disciplines, namely history, literature, sociology/ anthropology/native studies/criminology/ geography, and political science.

Table 5 Successful applicants by 1ˢᵗ discipline, 1996 - 2004

Discipline	(n=1315)	%
History	412	31.3%
Literature	268	20.4%
Sociology/Anthropology/Native Studies/Criminology/Geography	195	14.8%
Political Science	121	9.2%
Classical and Religious Studies/Archaeology	67	5.1%
Philosophy/Ethics	58	4.4%
Interdisciplinary Studies (includes Slavic/Germanic/Italian etc. studies)	47	3.6%
Law	44	3.4%
Education	24	1.8%
Women and Gender Studies	23	1.8%
Communication, Media and Library Science	14	1.1%
Psychology	13	1.0%
Languages (linguistics, English, French, Spanish, translation, interpretation)	12	0.9%
Economics	7	0.5%
Fine Arts (music, theatre, etc.)	5	0.4%
Administration (includes management, finance, marketing, accounting)	3	0.2%
Other	2	0.2%
Social Work/Counselling	0	0.0%

1.2.11 Profile of ASPP Grant Recipients: Publishers

On average, three quarters of the books published last year by university presses were scholarly books. The proportion drops to 15% for private publishers. The proportion of books that receive ASPP support varies widely from one publisher to the next. Overall, three university presses (Toronto, McGill-Queen's and University of British Columbia) receive approximately 71% of the ASPP grants. For instance, McGill-Queens University Press publishes approximately 150 books per year, with more or less 40 titles (or 27%) receiving ASPP support. In comparison, the University of Alberta publishes approximately 20 new titles per year, with one to two (5% to 10%) receiving an ASPP grant. Wilfrid Laurier University Press publishes 22 to 24 new titles each year and has seen between 7 and 14 ASPP grants annually (30% to 60%).[16]

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[16] Survey and interview results.

Program data since 1996 indicates that the proportion of grants awarded to the three large university presses corresponds roughly to the proportion of manuscripts they submit.

Table 6 Proportion of manuscripts submitted vs. accepted, by the three largest university presses since 1996

Press	Eligible manuscripts submitted (%) (n=1399)[17]	Manuscripts accepted (%) (n=1176)
University of Toronto Press	36%	35%
McGill-Queens University Press	25%	24%
University of British Columbia	11%	12%
All other presses	28%	29%

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[17] This figure is the number of manuscripts submitted for which publisher information was entered in the program database. Publisher information was missing for 204 (13%) of manuscripts entered since 1996.

2.0 Relevance of ASPP

Three evaluation questions related to program limitations, gaps, and impact of electronic publishing were initially identified under the issue of relevance. However, for reporting purposes, findings regarding these questions are presented in the next section on ASPP design, as they relate more to program design issues. This section on relevance will identify the needs the program is attempting to address and the stakeholders for whom these needs exist.

As previously mentioned in section 1.2.2, the ASPP aims to support the publication of scholarly works in the social sciences and humanities that make an important contribution to knowledge, but which are unlikely to be self-supporting.

The program as it currently exists is positioned by SSHRC and CFHSS as a program for authors.[18] As a result, the program's main stakeholder group is Canadian researchers in the social sciences and humanities who write book-length manuscripts. In practice, however, the ASPP is also very much a program for Canadian scholarly publishers. The grants are paid directly to publishers, not authors, and for the most part, publishers apply to the program on behalf of authors. The study team's research suggests that the program is structured to work through professional publishers because they add value to the quality of the final product, in terms of editing, design, production, marketing, and distribution. Furthermore, the program is restricted to manuscripts published by Canadian publishers (with few exceptions), which benefits those publishers while limiting Canadian scholarly authors. The needs addressed by the program can therefore be categorized into two main groups: authors' needs and publishers' needs.

2.1 Authors' Needs

Peer-reviewed scholarly books are seen as a primary vehicle for disseminating research results and are perceived as very important to scholars' careers, as they are considered a primary criterion for promotion and tenure in the university hiring

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[18] Key informant interviews.

process. The format for dissemination varies between groups of scholars in the social sciences and humanities (SS&H). Scholars in some disciplines, such as psychology and economics, rely more on publication in peer-reviewed journal format than in peer-reviewed book format. For other disciplines, particularly in the humanities, the book-length monograph remains crucial to academic promotion.

The evaluation study team collected information from ASPP applicants as well as SS&H researchers who responded to another study on the relative importance of the various research dissemination techniques (e.g., books, presentations at conferences, journals) for their own research. As illustrated in Table 7 below, the two approaches that were rated "Very Important" by the largest proportion of researchers were articles in peer-reviewed journals and book publications. The publication of books is very important for 91.4% of successful ASPP applicants, for 83.7% of non-successful applicants, and for 80.5% of successful applicants to SSHRC's Conferences and Congresses Program.

Table 7 Perceived importance of various knowledge dissemination techniques

Very important	S (n=413)	NS (n=49)	Others[19] (n=279)
Books	91.4%	83.7%	80.5%
Articles in peer-reviewed journals	83.2%	81.4%	88.3%
Book chapters	65.5%	59.5%	N/A
Presentations at international conferences	64.4%	69.8%	90.2%
Presentations at national conferences	56.5%	58.5%	61.8%
Articles in professional or trade journals	28.9%	34.1%	29.7%
Popular media	25.9%	25.6%	14%
Presentations at provincial conferences	21.5%	26.2%	N/A
Presentations at regional conferences	20.4%	26.8%	29.6%
Textbooks	18.9%	28.6%	13.7%
Conference proceedings	18.7%	21.4%	35.8%
Web publications	16.3%	16.7%	28.0%
Conducting workshops	14.0%	23.3%	28.8%
Database or datasets	10.8%	7.5%	15.2%

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[19] Results taken from the Evaluation of SSHRC's Aid to Occasional Research Conferences & International Congress in Canada Program. February 18, 2004.

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As shown in the following table, results do not differ substantially between successful applicants from the social sciences and the humanities.

Table 8 Perceived importance of various knowledge dissemination techniques, successful applicants, by category of discipline

Very important	Social Sciences (n=133)	Humanities (n=229)
Books	89.0%	92.8%
Articles in peer-reviewed journals	80.0%	84.9%
Presentations at international conferences	67.4%	62.6%
Book chapters	63.9%	66.2%
Presentations at national conferences	59.0%	54.9%
Popular media	32.6%	21.6%
Articles in professional or trade journals	29.3%	28.5%
Presentations at provincial conferences	20.3%	22.3%
Presentations at regional conferences	20.3%	20.2%
Conducting workshops	20.0%	10.0%
Textbooks	19.7%	18.1%
Web publications	18.2%	15.3%
Conference proceedings	15.7%	20.1%
Database or datasets	12.6%	9.4%

These findings confirm the importance attributed in the literature and by key informants to book publishing for SS&H scholars' careers.

Another emerging need of authors is to compete for publishing outlets with an increasing supply of scholarly manuscripts, due to demographic changes occurring within the academic community. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada has estimated that 20,000 to 30,000 new professors will be required in Canadian universities by 2010.[20] Of those, a considerable percentage will be needed in the humanities and social sciences. Indeed, SSHRC has forecast that 5,000 new professors will be needed in those fields by 2005.

Accompanying this influx of new scholars will be increased demand to publish works for tenure and academic promotion purposes. Like their predecessors, young scholars seeking academic appointments will come under pressure to demonstrate their

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[20] Leanne Elliott, Revitalizing Universities Through Faculty Renewal, AUCC Research File, March 2000 Volume 4 No 1.

professional qualifications by publishing not only journal articles but peer-reviewed monographs. This increase in demand will be compounded by the identified increased interest in active research programs among this younger cohort, in comparison with earlier cohorts of SS&H academics. Already a new trend has been observed of young scholars writing their thesis in book form with the aim of publishing it after graduation. Along with other SSHRC programs, the ASPP is likely to encounter this increased demand in the very near future as new scholars, scholarly presses and universities realize the impacts of these demographic changes.

2.2 Publishers' Needs

The ASPP's current eligibility criteria support publication by Canadian scholarly presses, with only limited exceptions made for non-Canadian publishers. The main need of Canadian scholarly publishers, identified both in key informant interviews and the publishers' online survey, is financial assistance for publishing scholarly manuscripts that are not financially self-supporting. Publishers incur a deficit on most scholarly books they publish because of their small readership, little prospect for economies of scale, a lack of support from domestic private foundations, as well as decreasing support from their parent institution. Sales of scholarly books in the SS&H are also affected by a decrease in domestic and international library sales, which constitute the lion's share of the scholarly book market. In 2000, the average deficit per title for domestic books in the SS&H was $13,240.[21]

Respondents from university presses reported that an ASPP grant covers on average half of the deficit incurred from publication costs. Nearly 75% of successful and non-successful applicants reported having received no other sources of funding for the publication of their manuscripts. Among those who did, the most frequently mentioned other sources of funding are the author's university (13% of successful and 7% of non-successful respondents) and provincial government programs (6.7% of non-successful applicants). On average, these other sources of funding cover one third of the costs of publishing a scholarly book. Generally, publishers use the profits made with selling more popular commercial books to subsidize the publication of scholarly works.

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[21] ACUP, Study of publication deficits of ACUP members, Fall 2000.

Therefore, although ASPP grants are vital to offset the costs of publishing scholarly books, they do not cover the entire costs of publication.

2.3   Need for the Program

One of the key strengths of the program identified by key informants and survey respondents was the fact that it seeks to ensure that only books of advanced scholarship and scholarly merit receive funding support. This confirms the importance of the quality-control role played by the program, beyond the mere awarding of grants. It also underlines the importance of the program for the advancement of scholarship and knowledge within Canada and abroad. As illustrated by the case studies, the program is seen as a key source of support for the dissemination of Canadian perspectives on important research questions and for the preservation of knowledge for future generations. Key informants and case studies also confirmed that the program is vital for publication of research in Canadian Studies, in which there is limited interest by publishers outside Canada.

Because of the ASPP's extended budget freeze, pressures on the program from scholarly authors and their publishers are already considerable. A review of trends in the supply of scholarly manuscripts, and the demand for funds to support their publication, suggests that these pressures will grow in the years ahead.

The ASPP's importance to authors and publishers is evident from the fact that in 2002-03 (a typical year), the program received 320 manuscript applications and funded 143, for a success rate of 45 per cent. Significantly, as reported by SSHRC director of public affairs Dominique LaCasse (*Quill & Quire*, Vol. 68, No. 11, p. 26, November 2002), that percentage mirrored the success rate in other SSHRC-funded programs, perhaps reflecting the organization's larger budgetary dilemma.
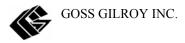
To illustrate further the perception of the ASPP's importance, an article by University of Calgary professor Robert A. Stebbins in *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* (26[3], 2001) said of the ASPP that "…many if not most of the monographs [in Canadian sociology] it has subsidized would not have been released by a Canadian scholarly publishing outlet were it not for this program."

One university press director stated in an interview that, of the 2,500 book-length manuscripts submitted to his press annually, as many as 500 could be publishable on the basis of scholarly merit alone; but that the press (with the support of its funders) has the resources to publish only 150. Moreover, the same press director noted, the ASPP's budget freeze has been accompanied by progressive restrictions over the years on categories of titles funded: categories such as edited collections and translations are still eligible within certain limits, but in practice can seldom be funded.

Evaluation results also showed that the program has an important incremental impact with respect to publications in SS&H, as explained in section 5.4 of this report.

Conclusion on relevance: The ASPP remains very relevant to the needs of both authors and publishers, as it is an essential vehicle for encouraging Canadian publishers to publish commercially non-viable scholarly books in SS&H, for ensuring the quality of Canadian scholarship in book form, and for supporting academic career advancement.

3.0 ASPP Program Design

This portion of the evaluation study focuses on three main evaluation issues with respect to the design of the ASPP. These issues were presented in the form of questions:

1. *What are the limitations of the current program design? How can these limitations be addressed?*

2. *What gaps currently exist in terms of:*
   a. *Who the program should be funding?*
   b. *What the program should be funding?*
   c. *Key audiences?*

3. *To what extent is electronic publishing having an impact on the scholarly publishing environment? Does, or will, this have an impact on ASPP priorities?*

3.1 Gaps in Current Design

With respect to **whom** the program should be funding, currently all Canadian and landed-immigrant SS&H scholars are considered eligible. Nonetheless, a few authors and publishers mentioned that, by excluding foreign authors, the program might actually be limiting its potential impact on authors' careers and Canadian publishers' reputations:

> *Some non-Canadian scholars should be eligible if the publisher's list has strength in their discipline. It makes sense for a press to be able to publish heavyweight scholars from abroad, in order to enhance the reputation of the Canadian books in a particular series.* (Publisher)

A few respondents also suggested that the program should allow authors to submit manuscripts to be published by foreign publishers. They argue that this would address the gap of certain research fields not being well served by existing Canadian publishers. However, grants can in fact be awarded to authors who wish to publish with a foreign publisher, as long as they demonstrate that at least three Canadian publishers have rejected their manuscripts not for reasons of quality, but because of the subject matter falling outside of the publisher's mandate/lists. Nonetheless, 44% of successful, 68% of non-successful and 80% of non-applicants reported having published a scholarly book with a non-Canadian publisher during their lifetime. While one main reason provided for choosing a foreign publisher is the publisher's specific specialty/content knowledge relevant to their manuscript,

> *Where works are in fields that are truly international (Economics, Philosophy, History) and where there is no specifically Canadian content, these works are best suited for an international publisher.* (Researcher)

over half of non-successful and non-applicants reported that their choice was motivated by the non-Canadian publisher offering wider distribution of its titles.

> *There is a belief that larger international presses are better seated to market an author's work.* (Researcher)

The higher prestige associated with foreign publishing houses was also a key factor.

> *Authors want the prestige of having an internationally recognised publisher producing their work. Having a known publisher is lucrative for young scholars looking for tenure or academic advancement.* (Researcher)

Table 9 Reasons for publishing outside Canada (multiple answers accepted)

	S (n=297)	NS (n=34)	NA (n=85)
Wider distribution by non-Canadian publisher	24.2	52.9	62.4
The non-Canadian publisher had specific specialty/content knowledge	20.9	23.5	38.8
It is considered more prestigious to publish outside Canada	10.1	14.7	28.2
The non-Canadian publisher promotes titles more vigorously than other publishers	9.4	20.6	25.9
The non-Canadian publisher is more timely and efficient than others	7.4	32.4	11.8
The non-Canadian publisher paid better royalties	4.7	11.8	7.1
Canadian publishers rejected manuscript	4.0	20.6	--
More rigorous review process with the non-Canadian publisher	1.0	8.8	17.6
Less rigorous review process with the non-Canadian publisher	0.7	--	2.4

SSHRC representatives report that the context for publishing in French Canada is different from the rest of the country (many authors in English Canada tend to publish in the US or the UK whereas French Canadian authors are more aligned with French publishers). However, no data collected as part of this study enabled us to shed light of this issue. An analysis of administrative data and survey results showed no notable difference between authors who submitted a manuscript in French and those who wrote in English. In responses to open-ended questions, a very small number (fewer than 10) of respondents mentioned that publishing in French was an issue in terms of their access to the program or in terms of the publishing market made available to them. Program statistics show that 20% of successful applicants and 18% of non-successful applicants submitted a manuscript in French, which reflects the proportion (20%) of SS&H full-time faculty members using French as their primary language of work.[22]

With respect to *what* the program should be funding, there was general support among the different groups of respondents for the current definition of eligible works. Other suggestions included more generous admissibility for both translations and collective works.

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[22] Estimate provided by SSHRC and taken from SIG program data submitted December 2001.

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Although translations between English and French are theoretically eligible under certain conditions, some respondents perceive that in practice it is very difficult to get a translation supported, presumably because of a shortage of funds. ASPP support to translation of key scholarly works is deemed particularly important, given that many strictly scholarly titles are ineligible for support from the Canada Council's translation grants program. Furthermore, it was argued that if translations were more often approved, it would open markets in the other official language and promote cross-cultural exchange:

> *The rest of Canada needs to be able to read some of these works in translation; it's not good enough that they're available in one language. The program should subsidize translation of at least 10% of the titles in the program.* (Publisher)

This argument was also made in favour of opening eligibility criteria to more systematically include collective works. The increasing pressures on researchers to work collaboratively and as part of multidisciplinary teams are likely to produce an increasing number of collective publications. Although collective works are eligible (as long as they are not merely collections of separate articles or chapters), several key informants and survey respondents are under the impression that they are not. This indicates that program eligibility criteria are not clearly understood or that the proportion of collective works funded by the program is considered too low by authors and publishers. However, the following table shows that the proportion of collective works supported by the program has increased since 2000-2001, despite the particular difficulties entailed in assessing such works in terms of the range of expertise sometimes needed to assess various contributions to the same collection.

Table 10 Success rates of collective works submitted to the program, 2000-2004

Year	Submitted	Approved	Success Rate
2000-2001	18	4	22%
2001-2002	31	8	26%
2002-2003	29	18	62%
2003-2004	36	15	42%

3.2   Limitations in Design

Based on the issues presented above, the study team proposes various potential design limitations that could be considered by management and administrators as they consider changes and plan the future of the ASPP.

3.2.1   Authors vs. Publishers Program

One possible limitation of the current design is that the ASPP has very broad objectives, despite the fact that it is a relatively small program ($1M budget vs. $8M for Canada Council Block grants and $27M for BPIDP Aid to Publishers component). By attempting to support both authors and Canadian scholarly publishers, without specifically targeting disciplines, specific scholar groups, or specific types of publishers, this small program ($1M) is trying to accomplish a great deal with very limited resources.

First, the ASPP might be designed differently if it were truly primarily an authors' program. While authors do have the ultimate choice of which publisher will publish their manuscript, and the ASPP will respect that choice as long as the publisher is eligible under the program, the grants are paid to publishers; in addition, it is most frequently publishers that apply to the program on the authors' behalf. When surveyed, 67% of successful applicants had first heard of the program from their publisher and 78% reported that the ASPP application was submitted by their publisher. The introduction of the MOU between the program and the university presses further acknowledges the role played by publishers in the delivery of the program. In addition, the ASPP is restricted to primarily Canadian publishers, which may not always be most advantageous from an author's perspective. If the objective of the program was solely to support publication of Canadian scholarly works in SS&H, it might allow authors access to a wider pool of foreign publishers. From an outside perspective, these aspects make it appear that the ASPP is functioning equally as a Canadian publishers' program.

On the other hand, the fact that 71% of ASPP grants go to only three university presses raises the question whether the current program design would enable it to have any significant impact on supporting the development of other Canadian scholarly

publishers. However, Federation and ASPP representatives noted that the program funds going to smaller presses are still of high (if not higher) importance for those presses.

3.2.2   The Peer-Review and Decision-Making Process

One aspect that does make the ASPP an authors' program is the awarding of grants on a per-manuscript basis, rather than on a formula such as block funding directly to scholarly presses. The rationale for this approach is that the ASPP adds value to the scholarly book publication process by putting each manuscript through an extensive and rigorous peer-review process or, under the MOU, by ensuring that an appropriate review process is conducted. All stakeholders consulted agree that a peer-review process is important to ensure the quality of the books published and to lend credibility to the publications for career promotion purposes. One question to be considered by the ASPP is whether existing mechanisms for reviewing ASPP manuscripts and making funding decisions are the most time- and cost-effective.

Timeliness of the peer review and decision-making process

The main area for improvement as reported by respondents was in the timeliness of the decision-making process. However, the evaluation team received contradictory information about the extent to which there is a substantial and unreasonable delay due to the ASPP process, or whether this is an unfounded perception on the part of some authors and publishers. The publishers who responded to the survey tended to contradict those who participated in key informant interviews and case studies.

According to the majority of publishers who answered the survey, manuscripts for which they applied for an ASPP grant took approximately the same amount of time to publish as those for which they did not request ASPP funding. A review of administrative data indicated that there is a difference of one month in the delay between receipt of an application and the date when a recommendation is made, depending on whether the ASPP is responsible for conducting the peer review, or the press is conducting the review under the MOU.

Taking into account that the numbers are relatively small (96 manuscripts reviewed under MOU conditions, compared with 56 manuscripts reviewed under standard ASPP procedures in the same time period), an analysis of the data indicates that the delay between application receipt and date of recommendation is relatively similar: on average, a one-month difference (average of 179 days for MOU process, compared with 218 days for regular ASPP process).

Given that respondents estimate the overall normal delay for publication of a scholarly book from submission of manuscript to publication is approximately 12 to 18 months, the difference of approximately one month contributes 7-10% of the overall delay.

Table 11 Delay between receipt of application and recommendation[23]

Group	Average Delay (days)	Average Delay (months)	Minimum Delay (days)	Maximum Delay (days)
MOU reviews (Oct.03 – Dec.03) (n=96)	179	5.9	40	382
ASPP reviews (Oct.03 – Dec.03) (n=56)	218	7.2	30	452
All reviews (1996-2003) (n=1603)	249	8.3	30	1002

Those publishers who participated in key informant interviews and interviews for case studies reported that the ASPP decision-making process often takes too long, affecting timeliness of publication. Delays were attributed to the time it takes the program to find qualified reviewers, additional steps in the adjudication process when a manuscript is not immediately recommended for funding, and the perception that ASPP staff is overloaded with work.

It would therefore appear that timeliness is an issue for some respondents. However, it remains unclear which aspects of ASPP procedure could be improved to effect a significant change in timeliness. ASPP management may want to investigate other areas of the application and adjudication process such as program promotion, selection and recruitment of reviewers and committee members, recommendations, appeals and revisions, etc. to determine if there are any efficiencies to be gained in the identified activities. It should be noted that this program relies very heavily on time donated by busy scholars. Consequently, timeliness issues may be as much a result of the

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[23] ASPP Administrative data (1996-2003).

volunteer peer-review process and delays in receiving authors' responses, as a result of any internal processes either within the ASPP or the scholarly presses themselves.

> *The ASPP is made the scapegoat for any delays. Authors blame publishers and publishers blame ASPP and in turn, authors blame the ASPP.* (Publisher)

> *A normal delay is 12 to 18 months. It's reasonable to take three months for peer review and to publish the book a year later. An exception is a book where the subject matter is timely or urgent. In those cases, we will not submit the book to the ASPP.* (Publisher)

A parallel issue mentioned by several publishers is the long delay, sometimes up to several months, in paying out grants once a manuscript is published. This delay reportedly has implications for some publishers' cash flow and burdens them with additional financing charges. ASPP management, and SSHRC as the funder of the program, may need to revisit the payment process to quantify the extent of the delay, and to determine if this is a problem across the program, or an issue for a few individual cases.

Effectiveness of the peer-review and decision-making processes

With respect to effectiveness, many of the publishers indicated that the peer-review process conducted by their own press is more rigorous and effective than that provided by the ASPP. The study team was unable to confirm this assertion of improved quality with any other information from the evaluation. In contrast, the ASPP program representatives interviewed indicated that, for some of the large university presses with large editorial boards, the peer-review process may be more streamlined; but they do not have evidence that the peer-review process is of higher quality than that of the ASPP.

For the majority of stakeholders consulted, the main strength of the program is the use of a peer-review process to decide on allocation of funds. This is seen by all respondents as a necessary measure to ensure the quality of manuscripts. As mentioned previously, this is a somewhat costly approach to funding from an administrative perspective; however, it appears that in a scholarly context, it is an inevitable cost.

The ASPP and its stakeholders have explored how the integrity of this process can be maintained at a lower cost through the development and implementation of the MOU. It will be important for the program to monitor this change over the next few years, in order to ensure that the anticipated improvements in efficiency are realised, but not at the expense of a decrease in the quality of the peer review process. Although challenging, it would be desirable to develop and monitor indicators of success for this fundamental change in program delivery.

Transparency in decision-making

Publishers and non-successful applicants reported that they had issues with the apparent lack of transparency that they experienced in the decision-making process conducted by the ASPP. Publishers reported that they did not often understand the reasoning behind why specific readers were rejected (under the MOU), or why some manuscripts were rejected despite receiving positive readers' reports.

The current situation of the ASPP budget allows it to fund only a portion of the manuscripts deemed to make a significant contribution to scholarship. As a result, very difficult decisions must be made with respect to which manuscripts rate as "high priority" or "low priority". The comment was made during the evaluation that being forced to make these decisions may unintentionally contribute to supporting more conservative or "safe" manuscripts, in contrast to the more provocative manuscripts that potentially have a greater impact on a discipline. As described by one publisher:

> *The process tends to work on the "clean-file syndrome," i.e. approvals favour books with only positive appraisals. If there is one negative report, it provides a justification for the adjudication committee to reject or defer the application, or to give it a low priority. But the best books are often provocative, hence more likely to get a negative report. So the ASPP process favours safe, conservative scholarship. It does not always fund the best books*. (Publisher)

However, respondents reported that they understood that difficult decisions often had to be made with respect to having many quality manuscripts but a small budget that can only support a certain proportion of the works approved for funding.

Feedback on manuscripts

Another question to be examined is whether the feedback provided by reviewers to authors on their manuscript is as valuable as initially presumed by the program. Several key informants consider that the ASPP review process, in particular its revise-and-resubmit mechanism, contributes to the development of Canadian scholarship. The feedback provided by reviewers on how to improve manuscripts is presumed to be beneficial to scholars, particularly new authors.

While 70% of successful applicants said that the manuscript-review process had contributed to strengthening their manuscripts, in contrast, less than one-third of non-successful applicants considered the process valuable for their manuscript.

Table 12 Main outcomes of ASPP review of manuscript (multiple answers accepted)

	S (n=392)	**NS (n=123)**
Contributed to strengthening the manuscript	70.4	26.7
Provided me with perspectives/opinions that I had not previously considered	40.6	17.8
Assisted me in developing skills by addressing reviewers' comments	25.5	--
Was of little value to me as an author or researcher	14.3	64.4
Provided me with perspectives/opinions that I considered in my future work	13.0	6.7
Contributed to weakening the manuscript	1.5	6.7

3.3   Role of Electronic Publishing and ASPP

The review of literature (see Part II - Context for Scholarly Publishing) has shown that electronic publishing has gained great currency in academic journal and article publishing, but is less likely to gain the same level of acceptance in the near future for book-length scholarly works. It is anticipated that the most likely influence of electronic publishing on book-length works will be in the area of print-on-demand (POD) technology. In the evaluation, the study team asked respondents to address some of the issues with respect to electronic publishing, and its potential impact on the ASPP.

3.3.1   Current Use of Electronic Publishing

Researchers responding to the online survey were asked whether any of their book-length scholarly manuscripts had been published via electronic means. The proportion of respondents who had book manuscripts published via electronic means was relatively low (8%-16%). Of those who had used this technology, the majority reported that the book was an online or web publication.

Table 13 Use of other (electronic) means of publication for scholarly books

	S (n=377)	NS (n=47)	NA (n=219)
No	87.5%	76.6%	77.2%
Yes	8.2%	10.6%	15.5%
Both	4.2%	12.8%	7.3%

Table 14 Electronic means used for publishing scholarly books (multiple answers accepted)

	S (n=29)	NS (n=5)[24]	NA (n=26)
Online/Web publication	58.6	--	61.5
CD-Rom/DVD/Diskette	31.0	--	42.3
Other/Don't know	13.8	--	11.5
E-book	10.3	--	19.2
Print-on-demand	3.4	--	7.7

In key informant interviews and case studies conducted for this evaluation, scholarly publishers and electronic publishing experts acknowledged that publishers in the humanities and social sciences are actively exploring the potential of electronic book publishing. Publishers already use digital technology to edit manuscripts and create printed books; therefore they possess the files necessary to publish in electronic formats, particularly for recent titles. (In the case of titles published before the widespread use of digital technology, text would have to be digitized before publishers could create electronic versions.)

Publishers state that they do need to access and test the market for electronic versions of their books. In doing so, publishers most frequently license electronic rights to firms that market online versions, chiefly to academic libraries. A publisher may license rights to several of these marketers at once. Firms such as NetLibrary, Ebrary, Questia and Baker & Taylor E-Division are resellers, comparable to book wholesalers in the

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[24] Numbers in this column were too low to include.

print world: i.e. they operate a non-exclusive distributorship, reselling titles from a middleman position between publisher and customer. They use various technical platforms, to which they convert the publisher's files. One question often cited by publishers and researchers is uncertainty over which platform(s) will continue to be used into the future. Publishers also note that royalties from electronic publishing licenses do not yet represent a significant portion of their revenues.

Respondents to the online surveys generally concurred with the views just summarized. Scholars in the three categories of successful ASPP applicants, non-successful applicants and non-applicants were asked to indicate what they consider the advantages and disadvantages of other means of publication for both books and journals. Responses were consistent across categories of respondents. The perceived main advantage of other means of publication is to provide a wider audience for their work by making it more easily and quickly accessible. Respondents also perceived that other means of publication provide cheaper and more cost-effective alternatives to traditional print. This perception was however contradicted by publishers' testimonies.

Successful applicants, non-successful applicants and program non-applicants also agreed that the risk of copyright infringement was a key disadvantage of electronic publications, along with difficulties in ensuring scholarly quality, and lower academic prestige, credibility and recognition. For books in particular, electronic formats are not considered practical because they are difficult to read on screen. Concerns were expressed with regard to the potential negative effects of these other means of publication on Canadian scholarly publishers, on the quality of publications, on the books' accessibility and longevity.

3.3.2 Skills Required for Electronic Publishing

Different perspectives exist on the necessity for researchers to expand their capacity and expertise to use electronic publishing. A majority of researchers responding to this question named a variety of resources or assistance that they would need to increase their capacity in this area. Most key informants, particularly publishers, did not see this issue as a major concern. They pointed out that if scholarly researchers are seeking professional, peer-reviewed publication (as opposed to self-publication or vanity

publishing), they do not require this type of technological expertise, which is the publisher's domain.

However, an electronic publishing specialist pointed out that researchers could, if they wished, acquire the capability to make "the foundations of their research" more accessible electronically, using media that incorporate visual and audio features. In such cases, acquiring technical knowledge would be necessary in order to incorporate colour, movement, and sound into the presentation of research data.

Sixty per cent of successful applicants and 64% of non-successful applicants said they would consider the possibility of publishing their manuscripts through other (electronic) means in the future. However, many do not feel they have the necessary training or expertise to do so. Table 15 delineates the additional resources or assistance that respondents (successful applicants only) in the two categories of humanities and social sciences say they require in order to publish through other means. These include, in aggregated order of importance: training, funding, software, information, and equipment.

Table 15 Resources or assistance needed to publish using other means, successful applicants, by category of discipline (multiple answers accepted)

	Humanities (n=99)	**Social Sciences (n=105)**	**Total (n=204)**
Training	67.7	61.9	64.7
Funds	63.6	61.9	62.7
Software	61.6	57.1	59.3
Information	61.6	56.2	58.8
Equipment	42.4	35.2	38.7
Other	17.2	10.5	13.7

We may therefore conclude that researchers hold various views about electronic publishing and would desire and/or require varied types of support to either publish themselves using electronic means or to approach a publisher to do it on their behalf. Any program seeking to support electronic publishing will need to take this into consideration.

3.3.3   Impact of Electronic Publishing

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Through the key interviews, case studies and online surveys, it was possible to discern the impact to date of electronic publishing on scholarly books. Electronic publication of books offers a number of potential advantages and new possibilities for disseminating scholarly research, but has not yet made a large impact on the field. Researchers and publishers tend to agree that print remains the medium of choice for readers, tenure and promotion committees, and the market itself. Electronic dissemination permits researchers to make their work accessible more quickly and widely, but lacks the professional credibility and prestige accorded to peer-reviewed print publications. It may also increase the danger of piracy.

Of the available technologies, publishers and senior scholars see the greatest practical utility arising from print-on-demand systems. These can extend a book's life by allowing publishers to fill single orders after the initial printed supply runs out.
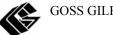
According to publishers, electronic publishing has little impact on cost-efficiency, even if it were to replace print. The bulk of a press's publishing costs relate to editorial (including peer-review), design and marketing issues, rather than paper, printing, and binding. An electronic publishing expert estimated that manufacturing, warehousing and shipping printed books may represent up to 20% of a publisher's costs per title, which could be saved by only making books available electronically; but the latter method also generates additional costs in the technical, design and marketing areas. Moreover, publishers must deal with the different technical formats required by resellers.

Conclusion on program design: Evaluation results highlighted the following limitations and gaps in the ASPP design:

- Eligibility criteria exclude or limit certain categories of potential beneficiaries of the program: foreign authors, Canadian authors of translated works, and Canadian authors who publish with foreign publishers.
- Over half of the grants go to scholars in only two disciplines: history (31%) and literature (20%).
- 71% of successful manuscripts are published by only 3 large university presses.

- Since the implementation of the MOU, 80% of manuscripts submitted by a university press were reviewed under the MOU process by a peer-review committee set-up by the press rather than the ASPP.

- The program was intended as an author's program but in practice its eligibility criteria indicate that it also targets publishers, and its delivery mechanisms entail a more direct interaction with editors than authors.

- The program's budget is very small, given the wide objectives it pursues, and in contrast with other similar programs.

- Contradictory views were expressed on the timeliness of the ASPP decision-making process. Evidence is unclear on whether this is due to the peer-review process.

- The peer-review of manuscripts is seen as essential. There is debate, however, between publishers and program representatives and authors as to whether the peer-review process conducted by publishers is as rigorous as, or more rigorous than, the ASPP's.

- Electronic publishing has not gained sufficient momentum in the Canadian scholarly community to warrant immediate investments from SSHRC. However, it is anticipated that the issue will evolve and that SSHRC will need to closely monitor technological advances and shifts in scholars' attitudes towards other means of publication.

- Print-on-Demand is one of the electronic publishing technologies showing the most potential for scholarly publishing.

4.0   ASPP Delivery

For the current evaluation, the study team focussed on four main delivery evaluation issues:

1. How efficient and cost-effective is the general management of the ASPP?

2. Is the program hindered in achieving immediate and intermediate outcomes by any internal or external issues/barriers? If yes, what are these and what changes could be implemented?

3. How does the current delivery of the program enable the ASPP to meet its overall objectives?

4. Are stakeholders/clients satisfied with the products and/or services provided by ASPP?

4.1   Efficiency and Cost-effectiveness

The issue of timeliness was already examined in the previous section. This section concentrates on the issue of cost-effectiveness.

As previously observed, the ASPP's grant budget has remained virtually the same for over a decade, requiring the program to limit each grant to a flat $7,000, which only covers about 53% of the estimated average scholarly publication deficit of $13,240.

The amount allocated to the CFHSS to administer the ASPP is approximately $288,000 annually. In terms of the stated budget of $1.3M, this amount represents approximately 22%. At first glance, this proportion appears high when compared to similar types of government programs (e.g., 2% for Canada Council Block Grants, 3% for BPIDP). However, the study team posits that other considerations must be made before evaluating whether this level is appropriate.

A first consideration is that, for small programs, it is extremely difficult to obtain any economy of scale with respect to administrative costs. From the evaluators' experience, basic administrative costs exist for any program, regardless of size. The incremental costs of administering a program do not necessarily increase proportionally to budgetary increments. For example, it is likely that CFHSS would be able to administer the ASPP with a budget funding twice as many titles per year for less than a 50% increase in administrative costs. For comparison purposes, the Canada Council Block Grants Program has a budget of $8M ($160K in administration costs), and BPIDP has an annual budget of $26M ($700K in administration costs).

A second consideration to be made in deciding whether the administration costs are appropriate is to study the method of program delivery. The delivery of the ASPP differs substantially in two main ways from that of the other two programs discussed above. One difference is that the ASPP operates using a continuous intake model, whereby it receives and reviews individual applications on an ongoing basis, rather than conducting a limited number of competitions each year. Another difference is that it does not allocate "block funding" directly to publishers, but rather assesses individual manuscripts. Both these delivery mechanisms are highly labour-intensive and therefore more costly than alternative mechanisms.

In conclusion, taking into consideration the small granting budget, and the nature of program delivery, it would appear that the allocation for administration costs is appropriate. Realistically, reductions in proportion of budget allocated to program administration would likely require a substantial increase in the overall granting budget, and/or substantial changes to key aspects of program delivery (e.g., changing the continuous intake model, probably by moving to block grants rather than manuscript grants).

4.2   Internal and External Barriers

The main barrier identified by all respondent groups, including SSHRC representatives, was in the area of funding. As previously reported, funding for the program has remained constant for the past eight years at $1.3M. In effect, this means that the actual value of the program has decreased over this period, when inflation is taken into account. If we apply the average inflation rate of 2.07, in constant dollars the ASPP's $1,308,550 budget in 1998 would be $1,510,239 in 2004. This represents a difference of $201,689. Therefore, the ASPP budget has in fact decreased by 15.41% since 1998. For purposes of the evaluation, the impact of the decrease in the size of the program was examined from a number of perspectives, which raised a number of associated questions. These are presented below.

4.2.1   Budget Constraints

According to a SSHRC representative, the Council has not increased its budgets for ASPP or for any dissemination program because:

1) all new funds were used to maintain satisfactory success rates in core programs, such as Standard Research Grants and Fellowships, and to increase the amounts of fellowships; and

2) other increases in SSHRC's budget went to very focused, government-defined initiatives, such as the Canada Research Chairs, the Initiative on the New Economy and the Canada Graduate Scholarships.

A key issue is SSHRC's lack of resources for knowledge mobilization. This study, and the ensuing discussions/negotiations, will provide an opportunity to re-define the objectives, roles, and responsibilities should SSHRC succeed in obtaining supplementary resources for increased knowledge mobilization.

4.2.2 Potential program impacts going unmonitored

One main area indicated as being impacted by the decreasing program budget was the capacity of CFHSS to monitor the performance of the program. Although program documentation states that the ASP Committee is currently looking into this, according to CFHSS, the current resources do not allow for the ongoing identification, tracking, and analysis of the immediate and intermediate outcomes of the ASPP. As well, with fewer resources, it is challenging to monitor longer-term issues such as electronic publishing.

4.3 Meeting ASPP Objectives

The evaluation team endeavoured to assess to what extent the current delivery of the ASPP contributed to the general objective of:

> *Assisting in the publication of books of advanced scholarship in the humanities and social sciences which make an important contribution to knowledge, but which are unlikely to be self-supporting.*

The evaluation findings indicate that delivery of the ASPP assists the program in meeting the three main aspects of the broad objective above in the following ways.

Assisting in the publication of books of advanced scholarship in the humanities and social sciences …

The ASPP assists publication of books by allocating on average 150 subventions per year for specific manuscripts. The delivery of the ASPP allows for direct support of the publication of individual books. By choosing to deliver the support on a per-title basis, the ASPP ensures that the direct result is books. If the ASPP delivered funding in a block funding manner, the attribution of funding to specific titles or books might be more challenging, and would have to be the publisher's responsibility. The amount of assistance is consistent at $7,000 per approved manuscript.

However, an important finding of this evaluation is that some disciplines benefit more from the program than others; history and literature apply for and obtain half of the ASPP grants.

The delivery of the ASPP following a strict peer-review process ensures that the funded books are of advanced scholarship. The ASPP reader's guide outlines the various criteria that peer-reviewers are asked to follow to determine whether the manuscript can be considered to advance scholarship in a specific discipline or field. Survey respondents identified quality of manuscripts as the number one benefit of the ASPP program, thereby confirming that the level of scholarship for ASPP-approved manuscripts is considered appropriately high.

The eligibility criteria specify that the work must contribute to a discipline within the humanities and/or social sciences. By making this an eligibility criterion, the ASPP ensures that this aspect of the program objectives is achieved.

…which make an important contribution to knowledge…

Similar to the concept of advanced scholarship above, "important contribution to knowledge" is a specific criterion that readers participating in the peer-review process are asked to consider in their assessment of each manuscript. By conducting a peer-review process, the ASPP delivery model ensures that an assessment of this aspect of the program objective is conducted for each manuscript. Case study reports provide specific examples of the contributions made by ASPP-funded books to advancing knowledge in their respective disciplines, by providing a synthesis of all existing research on a given topic, by covering previously unexplored topics of research, by providing a new and original interpretation of a topic, etc.

…are unlikely to be self-supporting.

Unlike some other federal government programs, in which the application process entails a declaration on the part of the grant recipient that the activity would not take place in the absence of funding or support from the program, the ASPP does not require this type of information from either the author or publisher. However, a review of the scholarly publishing industry (see Part II of this report) indicates that very few scholarly titles published in Canada will actually be self-supporting: that is, generate

enough sales revenue to cover the costs of publication. As previously mentioned, the average deficit for publishing a scholarly book in the social sciences and humanities in 2000 was approximately $13,000. Given that the focus is on scholarly books, it can likely be assumed that the vast majority of manuscripts submitted to ASPP could reasonably not be considered self-supporting and would likely not have been published (at least not in the same manner) without ASPP support. Indeed, only 41.1% of non-successful authors surveyed reported that their manuscript had been accepted by a publisher without ASPP support. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of these respondents changed publishers as a result of not receiving an ASPP grant.

4.4　Stakeholder Satisfaction

Not surprisingly, the level of satisfaction with the ASPP varied according to stakeholder groups. Successful applicants were consistently satisfied, while non-successful applicants expressed considerable dissatisfaction. The greatest variability in satisfaction levels was found within the publisher group.

Successful Applicants

More than one-half of successful applicants reported being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with all aspects of the program delivery. The areas for which the highest levels of satisfaction were reported were: eligibility criteria, the fairness of the review and decision-making process, and the quality of feedback on the manuscripts.

When the evaluation team compared the responses of authors in the social sciences with those in the humanities, a higher proportion of social scientists (59%) were satisfied with the transparency of decision-making than humanists (26%).

Table 16 Satisfaction with ASPP, successful applicants who said they very somewhat to very satisfied, by category of discipline

	Humanities (n=196)	Social Sciences (n=184)	Total
Quality of feedback from manuscript peer-review process	79.8%	74.1%	77.15
Manuscript eligibility criteria	77.4%	75.2%	76.4%
Fairness of decision-making process	76.3%	75.8%	76.0%
Fairness of manuscript peer-review process	77.4%	72.0%	74.8%
Work required to prepare application/manuscript package	70.8%	62.0%	66.6%
Timeliness of notification of decisions	63.3%	66.8%	65.5%
Timeliness of decision-making process	60.3%	61.1%	60.7%
Transparency of decision-making process	25.6%	59.4%	60.6%
Timeliness of manuscript peer- review process	57.7%	52.9%	55.4%
Helpfulness of ASPP staff	47.9%	43.5%	45.8%

Non-successful Applicants

As is usually the case when comparisons are made between non-successful and successful applicants to a program, there are major differences between the two groups. The majority of non-successful applicants were "somewhat dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with all aspects of program delivery. The areas of program delivery where the greatest levels of dissatisfaction were reported were transparency and fairness of the peer-review process and decision-making.
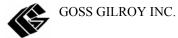
Table 17 Satisfaction with ASPP, unsuccessful applicants who said they were somewhat to very satisfied

	NS (n=49)
Work required to prepare application/manuscript package	50.0%
Timeliness of notification of decisions	36.4%
Manuscript eligibility criteria	33.3%
Timeliness of decision-making process	26.7%
Timeliness of manuscript peer-review process	24.4%
Helpfulness of ASPP staff	22.2%
Quality of feedback from manuscript peer review process	15.6%
Transparency of decision-making process	13.3%
Fairness of decision-making process	11.4%
Fairness of manuscript peer review process	11.1%

Publishers

Most publishers were "somewhat satisfied" to "very satisfied" with the fairness of the manuscript review process, the quality of feedback from the manuscript peer-review process, and the helpfulness of ASPP staff. The majority were "somewhat dissatisfied" to "very dissatisfied" with the transparency and timeliness of the decision-making process, the timeliness of decision notification and payments, as well as the grant amounts.

Conclusion on delivery: Given the small program budget and the nature of its activities (continuous intake and quality control function), the allocation for administration costs appears appropriate. The fact that the program budget has decreased by 15.41% in constant dollars since 1998 has an impact on the capacity of the program to meet the demand.

Survey results generally indicate that authors and publishers are satisfied with the delivery of the program. Key informants were more critical, in particular regarding the timeliness and transparency of decision-making. The key issues affecting program delivery are the ASPP review/approval process, which inevitably slows down publication of manuscripts, and the quality of feedback provided to non-successful applicants on their manuscript.

5.0   ASPP Impacts

Although the main focus of the current evaluation was formative and addressed issues of relevance, delivery, and cost-effectiveness, the evaluation team also collected some information on ASPP impacts. The following evaluation question was addressed by the evaluation:

> 1.   *What kind of impact has the program had on the development of various disciplines in the social sciences and humanities over its life cycle?*

The information on impacts took two main forms. ***Perceived incremental impacts of the program*** (i.e., *what would have happened in the absence of the program?*) were collected through the surveys and key informant interviews. ***Potential overall program impacts*** (i.e., *what impacts can the program achieve?*) were collected through eight case studies. This section initially presents the findings from the perceived incremental impacts of the program. This is followed by a more in-depth presentation of potential program impacts derived from the case studies.

5.1   Perceived Incremental ASPP Impacts

The ASPP is predicated on the likelihood that, in order to become professionally published in book form, most Canadian scholarly manuscripts require financial support to defray a publication deficit. Successful applicants responded to a survey question about the likelihood of their manuscript being published without support from the program. Only 14.6% of successful applicants considered that their manuscript would likely have been published as is without the subvention. A total of 37.1% considered that without the subvention, their manuscript would likely not have been published; and a further 20.5% felt that even if it had been published without program support, there would likely have been changes to the book or the publishing process.

Findings from key interviews and case studies reinforced these results. Occasionally a publisher or author indicated that a title would have been published even without the

subvention, because the author was a distinguished senior scholar, and foundation support was available for the book. But more often, informants stated that ASPP support was necessary for publication. Fundamentally, informants stated that the program enables the existence of publications by Canadian scholars, particularly of works in Canadian studies, since by and large they are not a priority for publishers outside the country.

A majority of publishers surveyed confirmed the need for the program. In the absence of ASPP funding, the majority of respondents reported that they would likely have not published the scholarly manuscripts for which they sought funding.

Successful applicants who answered that changes would have occurred in the absence of ASPP support specified a variety of likely changes, as shown in Table 18. Key informants gave other specific examples of such changes. In one case, the subvention permitted a publisher to include a colour photograph section and colour cover, which enhanced the book's visual interest and contributed to higher sales, resulting in a reprint. A publisher felt that, lacking the ASPP grant, it would have been necessary to reduce a book's costs by co-publishing with an American university press, which would have diluted the work's Canadian content. In another instance, a publisher was enabled by the grant to promote the book more vigorously to the media, to professors through breakfast and lunch meetings, and to the public through book fairs and signings. One author felt that, without ASPP support for his book, he would have been compelled to lower its scholarly rigour and quality in order to place the book with a commercial trade publisher. Among other changes that would have resulted if publishers had decided to publish nonetheless are: fewer or no royalties paid to the authors; a more rigorous review process; a smaller print run; and more rapid publication.

Table 18 Changes likely to have been brought to the manuscript or process without ASPP funding, successful applicants

	Successful applicants (n=80)
Different publisher	63.8%
Published later	35.0%
Less rigorous review process	30.0%
Less widely distributed	27.5%
Smaller print run	22.5%
Published sooner	18.8%
Promoted less	12.5%
Fewer or no royalties paid	11.3%
More rigorous review process	1.3%

A substantial majority of successful applicants considered that going through the ASPP manuscript review process had strengthened their manuscript. In addition, a significant proportion of these respondents felt that the process provided them useful opinions and/or skills. Not surprisingly, the percentages of non-successful respondents answering in this way were much lower.

Based on the findings presented previously, we can speculate that without some form of support for scholarly book publications in SS&H, publishers might stop or severely decrease their publication of such works, thereby forcing Canadian authors to seek foreign publication. Authors working on Canadian-specific topics would clearly be disadvantaged.

5.2   Potential Overall ASPP Impacts

As part of the current evaluation, the evaluation team attempted to identify some potential impacts of the ASPP. The evaluation team, with the assistance of ASPP managers and SSHRC representatives, selected eight titles that had been published within the last 20 years and were known in the scholarly community as having a substantial impact on the discipline or field, or had become widely consulted outside of the academic arena.

Table 19 Titles for ASPP Evaluation Case Studies

Title	Author	Date	Publisher
Muskox Land: Ellesmere Island in the Age of Contact	Dick, Lyle	2002	University of Calgary Press
Prometheus Wired: The Hope for Democracy in the Age of Network Technology	Barney, Darin	2001	University of British Columbia Press
Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State	Cairns, Alan C.	2000	University of British Columbia Press
Histoire sociale des idées au Québec (1760-1896): Volume I	Lamonde, Yvan	2000	Editions Fides
Values, Education and Technology: The Ideology of Dispossession	Emberley, Peter, C.	1995	University of Toronto Press
Mimic Fires: Accounts of Early Long Poems On Canada	Bentley, D.M.R.	1994	McGill-Queen's University Press
Double-Talking: Essays on Verbal and Visual Ironies in Contemporary Canadian Art and Literature	Hutcheon, Linda	1992	ECW Press
Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930	Morton, Desmond	1987	University of Toronto Press

The evaluation team believed that these titles would be likely candidates for "success stories" from which good practices may be developed and considered for other aspects of the ASPP.

The case studies selected are intended to cover a cross-section of disciplines within both the humanities and the social sciences; both older and younger scholars; large, mid-sized and small scholarly publishers participating in the program; publishers located in various regions of the country; varying years of publication; language; and gender.

The impacts described in this section should not be considered representative of all titles published under the ASPP. In some instances, findings from the key informants and surveys are included and integrated with the illustrations used from the case studies.

5.2.1   Impacts on Authors

The impacts on authors varied and ranged across a spectrum including:

- Securing an academic position as a direct consequence of the book;
- Achieving peer recognition by being awarded a scholarly book prize;

- Strengthening an already established reputation by making the author a recognised authority on a subject;
- Receiving co-publication by a scholarly press in the U.S., widening an author's international reputation;
- Receiving opportunities to publish further research in book form;
- For younger scholars, achieving recognition by being included in a collection with senior scholars;
- Achieving recognition outside the academic community through the book's impact on decision-makers and the public.

In short, publishing scholarly research and writing with the program's assistance had a distinct impact on the career of all authors in the case studies. Impacts were especially significant in the case of younger or "newer" scholars, i.e. those who were publishing their first scholarly title. Some specific examples follow:

- A Canadian university press, having contracted to publish the revised thesis of one young scholar, succeeded in negotiating an American edition with a major publisher. This resulted in highly favourable reviews in the U.S., which in turn led to winning an American scholarly book prize and receiving a visiting professorship at a prestigious American university;
- Two new scholars received additional recognition for their books from the CFHSS by being nominated for, and in one case winning, the Federation's Harold Adams Innis Prize. Both indicated that this was highly positive for their careers;
- Another scholar found that his first book, supported by the ASPP, prompted a national foundation to commission a second book on a related theme, which in turn led to a commission from a commercial publisher for a third book. These subsequent books flowed from the research conducted for the first book, which in the author's view "would never have been published by a commercial press," and publication of which represented "an enormous break for a young scholar." Publication and the resulting critical acclaim were accompanied by an assignment to design the curriculum for a liberal arts program at the author's university;
- A scholar who edited a collection of articles supported by the ASPP reported that younger contributors to her collection received "a vote of confidence" in their scholarship by being published in the book and benefited from the "reflected

prestige" of having their work appear alongside work by senior and better-known colleagues;

• Authors received lecture and speaking invitations as a result of their books, which contributed further to raising their career profiles.

In the case of scholars already established in their careers when the books appeared, other types of impacts resulted:

• In two cases, the books established their authors as national authorities on the subject in question;

• In two other cases, the authors found they were able to extend existing academic reputations into new areas;

• One scholar found himself at the centre of a national policy debate, featured on the cover of a national magazine, and invited to debate with his colleagues at conferences;

• Another author's 25-year-long research into intellectual history resulted, in addition to reviews in academic journals, in coverage by newspapers and popular magazines, and interviews on radio and television;

• Yet another author considered ASPP support crucial to his ability to present his research in full scholarly depth through a university press, instead of diluting it for popular consumption; in this way, his reputation as a serious scholar was enhanced, and he later received distinguished academic appointments.

5.2.2   Impacts on the Canadian Research Community

In their various ways, the books in the case studies made substantial intellectual impacts on their disciplines. They contributed to the preservation of knowledge for future generations and contributed Canadian perspectives on important research questions. Some examples are as follows:

Intellectual impact on the discipline: A significant indicator of success is that nearly all the books were widely (for a specialized scholarly title) reviewed, and often favourably so, in Canadian and international academic journals, both print and online, and on academic websites. Some of these works are considered to have made a critical contribution to their discipline by filling a significant gap, becoming either the first

book on their subject or the definitive reference to date. Consequently, most have been assigned by academic colleagues as required or recommended reading for a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses in Canada and, in several cases, abroad.

Collectively the books have won, or have been nominated for, several prestigious book prizes, including the Innis and Klibansky prizes awarded competitively by the CFHSS from among titles receiving ASPP support. The authors have been invited to give visiting lectures at various universities, or to address conferences of their peers on themes contained in their books.

Contribution to preservation of knowledge: Indicators of success include the fact that the works under study, in their various ways, represent a synthesis of groundbreaking research or new ideas, preserved in the enduring and tangible form of a book. In several cases, the research had been conducted over many years and was receiving its ultimate expression and dissemination through book publication. Most of the works explore new territory in Canadian studies, and at least three of them have broader international applications that resulted in their author's filling invitations to teach in the U.S., or to address academic conferences in Canada, the U.S., Europe and Australia.

In two cases, books resulted from an initial presentation of research by senior scholars in formal lecture series. The subsequent publications supported by the ASPP allowed these authors to develop and expand their research in ways that widened its accessibility. In other cases, books resulted from a master's, doctoral or post-doctoral thesis; these benefited from the value added by the scholarly presses' editors in transforming the thesis into a book, structured and written to make its research more readable and accessible to a wider readership. The fact that, as noted above, most of the books have been assigned as course reading also constitutes a significant contribution to preserving and disseminating knowledge. In two cases, historians preserved the knowledge of ordinary Canadians caught up in great socio-political events by incorporating oral history and/or research subjects' personal experience into their research.

Contribution of a Canadian perspective on a research question: Indications of success in this area include dissemination of the books outside of Canada. Their publishers arranged for all the books in the case studies to be distributed

internationally, in one or another of the following ways: either through the press's distributors in the U.S., Europe, Australia, Asia, or Africa; through the Canadian press acting as its own distributor abroad; or (in one case) through an American university press co-publishing the book with the originating Canadian publisher. All these distribution arrangements helped facilitate the books' availability to scholars and academic libraries around the world.

In addition, nearly all the books have been reviewed or cited in international periodicals, websites, articles or books, giving further currency to Canadian viewpoints. One of the books studied became the subject of a reading group and symposium conducted by the author at the California university where he was a visiting professor. Another book, which won the Innis Prize, attracted speaking invitations for the author from universities and professional associations in the U.S. Yet another has resulted in the author's being repeatedly invited back to give courses in his specialty at an American university. And as noted, several of the authors have addressed international conferences of scholars in their discipline, thanks in part to their books' adding to their scholarly reputations.

5.2.3   Impacts Outside the Canadian Research Community

Indications of the books' impact beyond their academic discipline include media coverage, exceptionally high sales, contributions to public policy debates, and influence on decision-makers.

Media coverage: Whereas books on such topics as literary theory were unlikely to receive notice by the media, ASPP-supported works dealing with political, social or technological subjects did receive such coverage. One book, published at the same time as a similar title with competing values and conclusions, became highly newsworthy by representing one side in a national debate; it was featured on a national magazine cover. An author breaking new ground in the history of ideas was interviewed on radio and television for his sweeping analysis of society. An author critical of prevailing social norms was not only reviewed but interviewed extensively by newspapers and in electronic media. Some publishers reported that ASPP funding enabled them to promote the book more vigorously to the media, as well as to scholars and academic libraries.

Sales: As discussed earlier in this report, average sales of serious scholarly works supported by the ASPP are comparatively low, in the 500- to 1,000-copy range. Hence it is indicative of higher than usual impact on the public when a scholarly title sells in a higher quantity. According to publishers, this generally means that the book has succeeded in "breaking out" of its academic discipline to become relevant to current public issues; it may also mean that the work has been recognized through the media and word of mouth for making an original contribution on contemporary issues that concern the public outside of academe. Examples among the works studied include several that have sold between 1,000 and 2,000 copies or even more, some of which had to be reprinted. One title had a typically small printing of 500 copies and was not reprinted, but the author was enabled by the book's intellectual impact to publish two subsequent titles on the same theme, both of which sold more than 8,000 copies.

Contributions to Public Policy Debate: In several cases, there were tangible indicators that the book had contributed to public debate on its issues. The author was invited onto radio or television programs or was interviewed by newspapers; the author was invited to participate in conferences or symposia or to give lectures to scholarly or professional audiences; or the book's ideas were cited by media commentators or policy analysts in newspapers and periodicals. In selected cases, the book itself became the focal point of symposia, seminars or even courses, variously attended by scholars, policymakers, businesspeople and students. In one such case, the symposium proceedings were published by a Canadian university press. These were instances where scholarship and policymaking intersected.
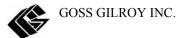
Influence on decision-makers: Some authors reported instances of this latter intersection involving decision-makers in government or industry. The authors received invitations to address, or engage in dialogue with, senior government officials, singly or in informal groups, who wished to explore issues and ideas raised in the book. Or the author was engaged as a consultant or policy advisor on government business, federal or provincial, as a member of a publicly appointed commission or similar body, or as a resource for corporate executives.

Conclusion on impacts: Findings clearly indicate that the program has a beneficial impact on the authors and their scholarly community, by creating opportunities for knowledge creation, academic career development, and knowledge dissemination. Impacts on policy makers and the

general public, although apparent, are less direct and tangible. This objective, however, tends to be considered secondary by the majority of stakeholders.

6.0   Conclusions and Options

Based on the evaluation data collected for this study, the evaluation team has formulated the following set of conclusions and recommendations. These conclusions and recommendations stem from the evaluation team's analysis of evaluation results and, to some extent, extend beyond the data collected through the evaluation study itself.

The ASPP remains very relevant to the needs of both scholarly authors and scholarly publishers in Canada. It is an essential vehicle for encouraging Canadian publishers to publish commercially non-viable scholarly books in SS&H, for ensuring the quality of Canadian scholarship, and for supporting academic career advancement.

Findings clearly indicate that the program has a beneficial impact on the authors and their scholarly community, by creating opportunities for knowledge creation, academic career development, and knowledge dissemination. Impacts on policy makers and the general public are less direct and tangible. The latter objective, however, tends to be considered secondary by the majority of stakeholders.

Survey results generally indicate that authors and publishers are satisfied with the delivery of the program. Key informants were more critical, in particular regarding the timeliness and transparency of decision-making. The key issues affecting program delivery are the ASPP review/approval process, which inevitably slows down publication of manuscripts, and the quality of feedback provided to non-successful applicants on their manuscript.

However, evaluation findings also showed that the program currently faces important challenges in terms of its design and delivery mechanisms. The key findings of this study are that:

- Over half of ASPP grants are received by scholars in only two disciplines: history (31%) and literature (20%);
- 71% of successful manuscripts are published by only 3 large university presses;
- since the implementation of the MOU, 80% of manuscripts submitted by university presses were reviewed under the MOU process by a peer-review

committee set up by the press rather than the ASPP; and

- the program's eligibility criteria exclude or limit certain categories of potential beneficiaries of the program: foreign authors writing on Canadian subjects, Canadian authors of translated works, and Canadian authors who publish with foreign publishers.

The program's budget is very small given the broad objectives it pursues and in contrast with other Canadian government programs in support of publishing. Also, the fact that it has decreased by 15.41% in constant dollars since 1998 has a negative impact on the program's capacity to meet the demand for its services; furthermore, that demand is expected to rise in the near future. Considering this small budget and the labour-intensive nature of the program's activities (continuous intake of manuscripts and quality-control function), the allocation for administration costs appears appropriate.

Contradictory views were expressed on the timeliness of ASPP decision-making. The evidence is unclear on whether the review/approval process conducted by the program contributes to unreasonable delays in publication. Although peer-review of manuscripts is generally seen as essential, there is debate among publishers, program representatives and authors as to whether the peer-review process conducted by publishers is as rigorous as, or more rigorous than, the ASPP's. Evidence on these points is subjective and contradictory in nature and therefore somewhat inconclusive.

Electronic book publishing has not gained sufficient momentum in the Canadian scholarly community to warrant immediate investments from SSHRC to the detriment of print publication. However, it is anticipated that the issue will evolve, and that SSHRC will need to closely monitor technological advances and shifts in scholars' attitudes towards the use of other means of publication. Print-on-Demand is one of the electronic technologies showing the most potential for scholarly publishing.

Although the ASPP is intended as an authors' program, and the ultimate decision as to who will publish their manuscripts remains with the authors, in practice, the ASPP's delivery mechanisms entail a more direct interaction with publishers than authors, particularly since implementation of the MOU. In addition, the majority of grants are received by three large university presses. These facts generate a perception (which has prevailed throughout this evaluation exercise) that Canadian scholarly publishers

are the primary targets of the program.

In light of these conclusions, we recommend that SSHRC consider the following:

4.   The objectives and focus of the ASPP should be more clearly defined, and its design and delivery adjusted accordingly.

   a.   **If the program is to be primarily an authors' program**, *and if the budget is maintained at the current level,* SSHRC and the Federation should consider focusing the program on new authors. This option is supported by case study findings showing that the program has had the most notable impact on first books by new scholars. In the absence of new financial resources, this option would maximize the program's overall impact as demand for its services rises.

   If the program budget is increased, SSHRC and the Federation should retain current eligibility criteria and should consider: 1) making more grants available for translations of key manuscripts between English and French; and 2) publicizing the eligibility of collective works for funding. They might also examine whether authors would benefit from the program's expansion to include other publication options, such as electronic publishing formats exclusive of print, and/or publication with foreign publishers. However, it must be taken into account that opening program criteria to include foreign publishers will dilute the pool of program funds available to Canadian publishers. This entails the risk of weakening the capacity of Canadian publishers to meet the needs of Canadian scholars, especially those who publish in Canadian Studies and rely on a robust infrastructure of Canadian scholarly publishers to disseminate the results of their research.

   b.   **If the program is to be primarily a Canadian scholarly publishers' program**, SSHRC should consider the option of block grants to academic presses. This option would reduce the administrative workload and overhead costs of the ASPP. However, it could entail the risk that publishers might choose manuscripts based on sales potential rather than scholarly excellence and might decrease their quality-control checks. The

program would need to ensure that the presses maintained rigorous peer-review of eligible manuscripts. The process of choosing which presses to support, and of allocating block grant amounts, would also require a careful redesign of delivery mechanisms.

    c. **If the program is to be designed to meet the needs of both authors and Canadian scholarly publishers,** it will require a substantial increase in budget in order to achieve intended results under this broader focus. It is likely that this option will also require a major redesign of the program, since one mode of delivery will not meet the needs of both groups. The program redesign may need to integrate various options mentioned above (e.g. one portion of funding being supplied in the form of block grants, while another portion targets specific author groups).

5. SSHRC and the Federation should continue to monitor closely the developments in electronic publishing technology and how they affect scholarly book publication and knowledge dissemination.

6. SSHRC and the Federation should better articulate the results expected as well as develop and monitor indicators of success for the ASPP, including monitoring results of the MOU with university publishers. These indicators should enable the ASPP to improve its analysis and reporting of the program's immediate and intermediate outcomes.

In conclusion, the ASPP remains essential as an incentive program assisting the publication of high-quality scholarly books by Canadian researchers in the social sciences and humanities. Furthermore, in spite of growing interest and capacities in electronic publishing, printed books remain an essential vehicle of knowledge dissemination and continue to play a central role in the careers of Canadian academic researchers. However, if SSHRC and the CFHSS want to maintain the program's broad objectives, a significant level of additional resources will be necessary for the program to achieve its intended results. Otherwise, the program's focus needs to be reduced.