



Open Scholarship Perspectives on Knowledge Mobilization in the Humanities—A Research Scan, available open access via the Open Scholarship Press

by Alan Colin Arce | 28 September 2026 | Community News, English



Written by Alan Colin-Arce and Caroline Winter.

At a Glance

Topic / Titre	Knowledge Mobilization in the Humanities
Key Participants / Participants clés	INKE Partnership, ETCL, C-SKI, Open Scholarship Press
Date / Période	2025
Keywords / Mots-clés	Knowledge mobilization / Mobilisation des connaissances

Summary

This post introduces the Knowledge Mobilization in the Humanities research scan, available open access via the [Open Scholarship Press](#). The goal of this scan is to support the efforts of those in the humanities to develop shared discipline-specific understandings of the theory and application of knowledge mobilization (KMb).

What is Knowledge Mobilization?

While there are several definitions of the term, the authors of the research scan view knowledge mobilization in the social sciences and humanities as the process of putting knowledge into action. However, most of the theories and best practices for knowledge mobilization were developed for the sciences, so they are not always appropriate for the humanities. In addition, KMb in the humanities faces resistance from multiple actors. Some researchers within the humanities worry that KMb might commodify their work or undermine the advocacy for the intrinsic value of humanities knowledge. Other researchers and members of the broader community might hold the belief that humanities knowledge has no real-world applications.

Despite these challenges, mobilizing humanities knowledge is important because the institutional contexts in which humanities research is conducted often use research impact metrics as a proxy for research value. KMb is also increasingly understood as part of open scholarship, as it helps open the processes of knowledge creation and communication to societal actors beyond the traditional scientific (scholarly) community (UNESCO 2021).

Knowledge mobilization debates in the humanities seek to expand the notion of research impact in a way that is more appropriate for the disciplinary context of the humanities, which tends to be slower and more critical than the sciences. For example, the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences defines research impact as:

The influence scholarly and creative enquiry has upon wider society, intended as well as unintended, immediate as well as protracted. It includes the influence such research has upon future researchers within the discipline as well as in other disciplines and on public policy, quality of life, social cohesion, business innovation, the environment, artistic and creative practices, commercial and economic activity, administrative and institutional development, and political and cultural understanding (Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences 2014, 7).

The *Knowledge Mobilization in the Humanities* research scan presents a curated list of resources and annotations on the topic to provide guidance to researchers and stakeholders that are increasingly required to present and measure their research impact. The research scan is divided into three sections: [Definitions and Foundations](#), [Knowledge Mobilization in the Humanities in Practice](#), and [Knowledge Mobilization Resources, Tools, and Guides](#). The document also has a critical introduction written by Caroline Winter with Britt Amell to provide a more context of the debates around KMb in the humanities.

The next sections of the post present a brief overview of the sections and subsections of the *Knowledge Mobilization in the Humanities* scan ([Winter et al. 2025](#)). The scan seeks to provide guidance and different approaches to KMb broadly, but it is informed by the writers' work in Canadian research institutions. While many examples and sources draw from the North American context, the

annotations on social media, podcasting, or industry partnerships might be of interest in multiple regional contexts.

Definitions and Foundations of Knowledge Mobilization in the Humanities

The resources in this section summarize the theoretical and critical debates around KMb in the humanities. Most of these debates are connected to broader discussions about the futures of the humanities and the university. The resources annotated in this section consider the role of KMb in research impact, which includes policy development, social change, and innovation, as well as questions about how (or if) the impact of humanities research can be measured using bibliometric or creative methods. This section is divided into two subsections:

- [Why Knowledge Mobilization?](#)
- [Understanding and Measuring Impact](#)

Knowledge Mobilization in the Humanities in Practice

This section is the most substantial of the scan because it describes several approaches to KMb in the humanities. The variety of definitions of research impact in the humanities implies that there are multiple ways of putting its knowledge in practice. The first of these approaches to mobilizing knowledge in the humanities is [Community-engaged Research](#), which facilitates community-led and community-driven engagements with knowledge creation.

Other approaches covered in the scan are [Cultural Heritage and GLAM \(Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums\)](#) initiatives to support and foster knowledge creation among their patrons and audiences. These approaches view libraries and archives as knowledge creators and brokers in their own rights.

The following two sub-sections address [Industry Partnerships](#) and [New Media Engagements](#) as tools and techniques for engaging with partners and audiences across different sectors and platforms. Resources selected in these subsections include a case study of engaging with the videogame industry, makerspaces, and a critical analysis of the one directional engagement that tends to happen in KMb activities.

The last four subsections [Pedagogy](#), [Podcasting](#), [Social Knowledge Creation](#), and

Social Media also cover different channels, activities, and tools where KMb in the humanities take place and the different challenges associated with each of them, including the use of Wikipedia, crowdsourcing, Reddit, TikTok, Spotify, and X.

Knowledge Mobilization Resources, Tools, and Guides

This last section provides a selection of **annotated resources** related to research communication, impact planning, and data management in the humanities, as well as an **unannotated list** of resources related to KMb more generally.

Closing Remarks

Knowledge mobilization is necessary across all disciplines, including the humanities to address the challenges, issues, and crises we face locally and globally (Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences 2014). The humanities can play a role in developing and supporting complex and critical understandings of these problems and their solutions. The *Knowledge Mobilization in the Humanities* research scan seeks to offer readers some guidance to more confidently engage with these and further conversations.

This and other themed bibliographies can be found for free online as a Wikibook, at **Open Scholarship Press Collections**.

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