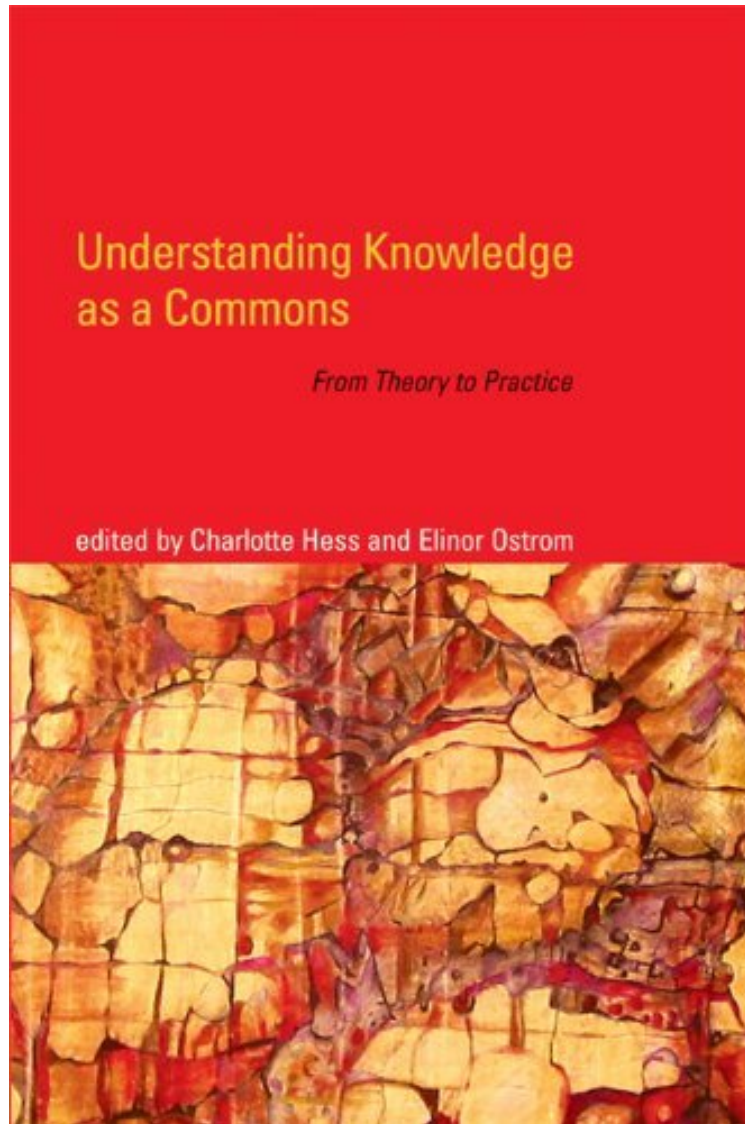


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Understanding Knowledge as a Commons: From Theory to Practice (MIT Press)

Charlotte Hess, Elinor Ostrom
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Charlotte Hess, Elinor Ostrom : Understanding Knowledge as a Commons: From Theory to Practice (MIT Press) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Understanding Knowledge as a Commons: From Theory to Practice (MIT Press):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Understanding Knowledge as a Commons By davidrsol This book is excellent to understand our context where knowledge and information can be used by a community of users to get a common goal. The approach is compared with other "commons" as natural resources and environment. 18 of 24 people

found the following review helpful. Almost a Three--Ambitious Title, Narrow Focus
By Robert David STEELE
Vivas
An MIT publication from 2007, this is actually knowledge from the 2000-2004 timeframe, and it is annoying narrow knowledge written from legal-economic point of view. Well-intentioned, no doubt, this is not the "inter-disciplinary" work that it claims to be, and I demonstrate restraint in not scoring it as a three. Despite references to Yochai Benkler's *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom* and Lawrence Lessig's *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World*, these folks are largely out of touch with Web 2.0 to Web 4.0, collective intelligence, wealth of networks, and tao of democracy concepts, authors, and works. This is not a substantive contribution to evolutionary anything (cultural evolution, evolutionary activism, conscious evolution). The index STINKS and there is no consolidated bibliography. I left it at four in part because this is a very good job on one part of the elephant (the anus or intellectual property of old part) and I really appreciated the six of the twelve contributions by Nancy Kranich, James Boyle, Peter Suber, Shubha Ghosh, Peter Levine, Charles M Schweik. This is not a book that focuses on innovation as much as on structured processes and conventions. My fly-leaf notes:
+ This is a political science work with some law and economics thrown in, a superficial but useful pass from an isolated perspective. It runs in the opposite direction from *World Brain* and *Wisdom of the Crowds* or *Wealth of Networks* scholarship and practice.
+ Severely isolated from the larger literature, both multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural, on the concepts of "commons" both physical and mental.
+ A Weberian book, a last gasp from the era of top-down imposed order. Totally from a Western point of view, noting that the commons concept relies on a mix of social norms and legal conventions rather than economic ownership of the whole ideas. Also notes that less than 2 per cent of the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI, DIALOG File 7) comes from the developing world, which I take to be OUR problem, not theirs.
+ Any book that thinks Esther Dyson is the first word on meta-tagging, to take just one example of many, instead of Doug Engelbart and his hypertext innovations from the 1970's, is totally divorced from the real world of information and communication technologies (ICT).
+ The book ignores self-publishing that is validated post publication, and still trapped in the paradigm that thinks peer reviewed publishing is some form of validation--with all that I know about climate change fraud and skeptic suppression within fraud-accessory journals, and medical journal fraud with ghost-written materials from the pharmaceuticals signed by doctors without integrity, this is the final straw in terms of losing the fifth star and almost drove it to three stars.
USEFUL STUFF:
+ Information commons is distinct from the natural commons because the first gains value with more people using the same information, while this is not true of the latter (absent cultural evolution).
+ Most new (corporate sponsored) technologies seek to capture or enclose knowledge rather than liberate it.
+ Average life on the web for an object is 100 days, with citations disappearing over time toward 50% after seven years (OSS.Net has been up since 1993 and will remain up forever as the foundation for Phi Beta Iota, the Public Intelligence Blog--all it takes is integrity).
+ Distinction drawn between libertarian commons (all can partake) and association commons (a contradiction in terms, meaning a commons shared by the group that created it). The book as a whole leans toward homogeneous small communities and is very representative of the balkanization of scholarship (see *Web of Knowledge* image at Phi Beta Iota, I refuse to post images here since deleted over 350 of them as a lazy way of getting rid of 12 Bush-Obama morphs).
+ Key concepts throughout include wise use, public trust doctrine, precautionary principle, cyberbalkanization, social network, folk taxonomies, peer production, and metatagging.
+ Reed-Elsevier is in trouble--losing subscriptions. The combined privatization of government publications under Ronald Reagan, and the universities turning over journals to private publishing houses, has destroyed easy at cost access to knowledge.
+ Intellectual Property Rights include concepts of access, contribution, extraction, remove, management and participation, exclusion, and alienation.
+ A number of interesting organizations mentioned that helped secure the fourth star, including Open Access News, Open Citation Project, Open Archives, Open Knowledge, Scratchdj.com, Distributed Open Digital Library (DODL), Open Content Alliance, DSpace, SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) Engaged University Initiative, EarthForce, and the Software Freedom Law Center.
+ Scholars must change from passive appropriators of information to active providers of information into the commons (similarly and later on a librarian calls for librarians shifting from being stewards and archivists to being collaborators and catalysts).
+ Top contributions for my purposes were Nancy Kranich on countering enclosure; James Boyle on the Library of Congress as a prison for 20th century culture; Peter Suber on Open Access; Shubha Ghosh on building a commons; Peter Levine on collective action and civic engagement that is a PROCESS creating social capital emphasizing youth, local, and engaged scholars; and Charles Schweik on Free/Open Source Software (F/OSS). Boyle also introduced me to the concept of Mertonianism, from the sociology of science, for free open inquiry, I quote from page 123:--- a process of free, open inquiry, without crippling secrecy norms or strong property claims, strongly reliant on the process of peer-reviewed publication and citation to drive hypotheses closer to an underlying objective reality. Reference *On Social Structure and Science* (Heritage of Sociology Series)
The book kept my attention, and that is a testament to its usefulness however narrow its focus. The question this book does not answer, that I note at the end of my notes: What is the difference between cultural knowledge and structured knowledge, and what information-sharing and sense-making processes do the two integrate? It is possible to do culture without knowledge, knowledge without culture? For a start on this see *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*
Other books I recommend within my ten-link limit (see many more at Phi Beta Iota):
Nonzero: The Logic of Human

Destiny
The Genius of the Beast: A Radical Re-Vision of Capitalism
Collective Intelligence: Creating a Prosperous World at Peace
Global Brain: The Evolution of Mass Mind from the Big Bang to the 21st Century
THE SMART NATION ACT: Public Intelligence in the Public Interest
Collective Intelligence: Mankind's Emerging World in Cyberspace (Helix Books)
PS: Yes, I know one of the contributing editors got a Nobel in Economics for sharing the commons stuff--this just is not really about that, Holistic Darwinism and Non-Zero come much closer to what the Nobel pupports to be for, so I am assuming it was the earlier work that really earned the prize.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. Knowledge Commons
By James A. Gano
Great set of articles for anybody researching theory of the commons as it pertains to knowledge (e.g. academic research, intellectual property rights, open-source software).

Knowledge in digital form offers unprecedented access to information through the Internet but at the same time is subject to ever-greater restrictions through intellectual property legislation, overpatenting, licensing, overpricing, and lack of preservation. Looking at knowledge as a commons--as a shared resource--allows us to understand both its limitless possibilities and what threatens it. In *Understanding Knowledge as a Commons*, experts from a range of disciplines discuss the knowledge commons in the digital era--how to conceptualize it, protect it, and build it. Contributors consider the concept of the commons historically and offer an analytical framework for understanding knowledge as a shared social-ecological system. They look at ways to guard against enclosure of the knowledge commons, considering, among other topics, the role of research libraries, the advantages of making scholarly material available outside the academy, and the problem of disappearing Web pages. They discuss the role of intellectual property in a new knowledge commons, the open access movement (including possible funding models for scholarly publications), the development of associational commons, the application of a free/open source framework to scientific knowledge, and the effect on scholarly communication of collaborative communities within academia, and offer a case study of EconPort, an open access, open source digital library for students and researchers in microeconomics. The essays clarify critical issues that arise within these new types of commons--and offer guideposts for future theory and practice. Contributors: David Bollier, James Boyle, James C. Cox, Shubha Ghosh, Charlotte Hess, Nancy Kranich, Peter Levine, Wendy Pradt Lougee, Elinor Ostrom, Charles Schweik, Peter Suber, J. Todd Swarthout, Donald Waters

About the Author
Charlotte Hess is Director of the Digital Library of the Commons at Indiana University.