We witness a similar monopoly of knowledge to those described by Innis in Empire and Communications (1950) in relation to paper and print in the control that few publishers have on scholarly publishing today.

Hybrid journals published by for-profit publishers have extended the dominance of for-profit publishers, particularly Elsevier due to its symbiotic relationship with Scopus, and of the university rankings’ with Scopus and WoS.

“Both of these commercial databases [Scopus and Web of Science] severely underestimate the scholarly production of the region and provide a skewed and misleading picture of the publishing activities of developing countries.”

- Juan Pablo Alperin, 2014:21

We have a responsibility to think critically about the interests of for-profit third-parties.

World University Rankings are commercial products based on proprietary data from Scopus, which is owned by Elsevier.

Web of Science was until recently Thomson Reuters property. WoS is the basis for The Journal Impact Factor, also proprietary metric.

In 2016 Thomson Reuters Corp. sold its IP and science business including Web of Science to private-equity funds for $3.55 billion in cash.

There is an implicit conflict of interest where a dominant key player produces, distributes, measures and provides tools for assessment of the content they profit from.

It is crucial that researchers retain control over how their work is conducted and disseminated. Can it be done?

The best interests of for-profit publishers is to maximise profits (Logan 2017).

Who do academics make money for?

10 publishers (ten) account for 54% of all revenue generated by the top 57 world publishing companies.

$25.2B

World rankings: who dominates and why?

£94 M

4 publishers were all scientific or academic publishers.

Combined, Elsevier, Taylor & Francis and Wiley-Blackwell -- represent almost 50% of all published social sciences papers in 2013.

As of 2015, the academic publishing market had an annual revenue of $25.2 billion.

In 2013, Elsevier reported a higher percentage of profit than Apple, Inc.

94 Million Pounds is what the top 10 academic publishers received in subscription revenues from UK academic libraries in 2014 alone.

The challenge for the global south

What will the fate of our cultural heritage be if we are being discouraged to describe, analyse, assess and study it through our own languages and on our own platforms, and when our cultural heritage and scholarly production is also being digitised, produced and assessed by the same 4 or 5 for-profit publishers from the North?

Academia’s goal is to share knowledge.

The best interests of for-profit publishers is to maximise profits (Logan 2017).