

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Publishing and Book Culture
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THE EDITED COLLECTION

Pasts, Present and Futures

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-73937-5 — The Edited Collection
Peter Webster
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108739375

DOI: 10.1017/9781108683647

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First published 2020

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-73937-5 Paperback

ISSN 2514-8524 (online)

ISSN 2514-8516 (print)

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DOI: 10.1017/9781108683647

First published online: April 2020

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ABSTRACT: Edited collections are widely supposed to contain lesser work than scholarly journals; to be incoherent as volumes, no more than the sum of their parts; and to be less visible to potential readers once published. It is also often taken as axiomatic that those who make decisions in relation to hiring, promotion, tenure and funding agree. To publish in or edit an essay collection is thought to risk being penalised for the format before even a word is read. After examining the origins of this critique, this book explores the modern history of the edited collection and the particular roles it has played. It then examines each component part of the critique, showing that they are either largely unfounded or susceptible of solution. It proposes the edited collection as a model of one possible idea of scholarly community: one of collaboration, trust and mutual obligation in pursuit of a wider good.

KEYWORDS: academic libraries; academic publishing; publishing history

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ISBNs: 9781108739375 (PB), 9781108683647 (OC)

ISSNs: 2514-8524 (online), 2514-8516 (print)

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