

Call for chapters:

The case for AI-free research: In praise of organic, slow, and handmade scholarship

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AI-based scholarship is booming. There are innovations in AI-led literature reviews, AI-driven data collection, generation, analysis, preparation, and visualization, and AI-assisted grant and article writing. As qualitative researchers, for example, we are told that AI-based software can make data analysis faster and more efficient. With NVivo, advertising tells us, you can “identify themes, run advanced queries, and discover evidence-based insights faster [...] allowing you to achieve rigorous research results in less time.” With Chat GPT researchers can do even more. Using the right prompts, researchers can brainstorm ideas, outline and draft papers, find sources, generate a literature review, or convert raw data into a structured format. All of this in minutes, if not seconds.

Not everyone values fast, AI-driven research, and the proposed book joins this movement of resistance. United by a vision for a slower scholarship across the academic spectrum, observers have lamented the increased pace of academic life reaching new heights and resulting in stress, burnout, and alienation. Critics agree that the culprit of such acceleration is the expanding power of the neo-liberal economy and its increasing reach over the higher education “industry” and its organizational culture which has resulted in academics being asked to work more overall and make themselves more accountable to schemes measuring efficiency and productivity in quasi-corporate terms. AI-enhanced research feeds on this environment and—just like fast food—promises quick and hurried solutions. In the late 1980s anthropologist Paul Stoller likened poorly written and standardized research to “bad sauce” prepared without passion and care. But at least back then, the bad sauce was hand-made. Today’s AI-produced sauce is even more uniform, inauthentic, and lacking in flavor, tradition, and nutritional value.

The proposed edited book calls all critics of AI-powered research to outline their reservations and propose alternatives. Researchers from all disciplines are invited to contribute to an intellectually diverse and global chorus of dissent. Loosely organized around the theme of “organic,” “slow,” and “handmade” scholarship the book will not simply be “against” AI-enhanced research, but “for” a return, or turn toward, a more human kind of intelligent inquiry that emphasizes quality of flavor over quantity and speed of production. Loosely influenced by the Slow Movement, and by the notion of organic food, the book will argue that slow and organic research is conducted without the use of intellectual pesticides, epistemological pollutants, and other artificial intelligence agents. Like organic food, organic research is meant to be healthful, flavorful, respectful of difference and relations among living things. Organic research un-hurries scholarship and roots it in an ecology of relations based on intimacy, proximity, care, and wisdom. Organic methods are handmade and embrace scholarship in all its uncertainties, ambiguities, volatilities, and all-too-human human imperfection and unpredictability.

Comprised of 25 essays of **4,000 words** each, the book aims to serve as a manifesto for a slower, organic, and handmade form of research and scholarship. Critical of strategies that confuse efficiency with frenzy, reliability, and uniform superficiality, essays will embrace the positive alternative of tasteful research that stimulates the imagination, encourages curiosity, endorses the unconventional, advocates for the whimsical, and pleases the senses. Respectful of diversity of craft, there will be no standard format for essays, and contributors will be welcome to make human errors.

Please send a title for your proposed 4,000 word essay (inclusive of references), a **250 word abstract**, and a **250 word short bio** to Phillip

Vannini: phillip.vannini@royalroads.ca by January 5, 2026.

Selected authors will be notified by January 10, 2026

Deadline for chapter contribution will be **September 10, 2026**.