

PEER – Publishing and the Ecology of European Research

News Release

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Pioneering collaboration between publishers, repositories and the research community launched

PEER (Publishing and the Ecology of European Research), supported by the European Union, will investigate the effects of the large-scale, systematic depositing of authors' final peer-reviewed manuscripts (so called Green Open Access or stage-two research output) on reader access, author visibility, and journal viability, as well as on the broader ecology of European research. The project is a collaboration between publishers, repositories and researchers and will last from 2008 to 2011.

Peer-reviewed journals play a key role in scholarly communication and are essential for scientific progress and European competitiveness. The publishing and research communities share the view that increased access to the results of EU-funded research is necessary to maximise their use and impact. However, they hold different views on whether mandated deposit in open access repositories will achieve greater use and impact. There are also differences of opinion as to the most appropriate embargo periods. No consensus has been reached on a way forward so far.

The lack of consensus on these key issues stems from a lack of clear evidence of what impact the broad and systematic archiving of research outputs in open access repositories might be, but this is about to change.

The aim of PEER is to build a substantial body of evidence, by developing an "observatory" to monitor the effects of systematic archiving over time. Participating publishers will collectively contribute 300 journals to the project and supporting research studies will address issues such as:

- How large-scale archiving will affect journal viability
- Whether it increases access
- How it will affect the broader ecology of European research
- Which factors influence the readiness to deposit in institutional and disciplinary repositories and what the associated costs might be
- Models to illustrate how traditional publishing systems can coexist with self-archiving.

The International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM), the European Science Foundation, Göttingen State and University Library, the Max Planck Society and INRIA will collaborate on PEER, supported by the SURF Foundation and University of Bielefeld, which will contribute the expertise of the EU-funded DRIVER project.

Michael Mabe, CEO of STM and Chair of the PEER Executive said "STM is delighted to take a leading role in PEER. Not only will PEER lead to a greater understanding of journal and repository use in the digital age, but it will also do much to foster trust and mutual understanding between the stakeholders in academic research and scholarly publishing."

For further information on PEER, please contact Michael Mabe, STM, Prama House, 267 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7HT, UK (tel: +44 1865 339324/fax: +44 1865 339325/e-mail mabe@stm-assoc.org)

PEER Partners:

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