

STM and Access

A statement made by Michael Mabe, CEO of the International Association of STM Publishers, at the Public Hearing on Access to and Preservation of Scientific Information, European Commission, Luxembourg, 30 May 2011, to be read alongside PowerPoint presentation

STM is the leading global trade association for academic and professional publishers. Our members include open access publishers, small and large publishers, not for profit learned societies and university presses, and for-profit private companies. Collectively our members are responsible for nearly two-thirds of all journal articles published each year.

At a strategy meeting of our members last year STM developed new positions on access which inform all our policies going forward:

- **Publishers are committed** to the wide dissemination of, and unrestricted access to, their content
- We support **any and all** sustainable access models that ensure the integrity and permanence of the scholarly record
- We **do not support** unfunded mandates that constrain scholarly authors or affect the sustainability of the publishing enterprise
- services that publishers provide **must be paid for** in some way

We believe that a level playing field with light touch regulation is the quickest and best way to realise the goals of widening access we ALL share, and recommend this course to the Commission.

The free market demonstrated this principle in the rapid progress of digitisation of journals, with now more than 95% of journals being online. The consequences of this publisher led initiative have been revolutionary: more people have access to more content than at any time in the history of mankind. A graph from the 2009 RIN/CIBER report shows the progress of electronic journals in the UK from a mixed print-electronic environment in 2001 to a majority electronic one in 2007. If these trends continue we could expect fully 100% electronic only in a decade or more provided all barriers are removed (see paragraph about VAT below).

A PRC global study shows that researchers in universities are highly satisfied with journal access (93%), although this varies throughout the world, being highest in North America and Western Europe and lowest in Africa. The same study shows that satisfaction levels with access to other types of literature are much lower. Lowest of all is access to data sets. Clearly **an important action that needs to be taken in Europe is to resolve the significant problems that exist with data.**

Non university researchers are also satisfied with journal access, although this is suboptimal for SMEs and "Others" (at 71% and 69% respectively). Publishers are working with other stakeholders to understand and close these gaps.

STM publishers are working on a series of initiatives to expand access. These are twofold: the development of new business models and information philanthropy. The new business models consist of:

- Gold open access, author pays models offered by almost every STM member
- DeepDyve, which offers immediate online access for a short time for very low fees
- Pay per view models
- Pilot projects looking at providing access to SMEs

Under all models there are those, especially in the developing world, whose access or ability to publish is disadvantaged. STM supports major information philanthropy initiatives to improve this, most importantly Research4Life, whose three programmes make biomedical, agricultural and environmental research available for free or at very low costs to the world's poorest nations. Over 8,100 of the top journals in the world are made available this way with training programmes for users and potential authors.

There is also a desire for patient access to the biomedical literature. Our initiative patientINFORM is one approach to this problem, providing guidance from experts in the Voluntary Health Organisations of the major disease classes to the key literature and access to that literature.

One of the biggest barriers to expanding access which the Commission could help remove relates to VAT on electronic products. Higher VAT rates on electronic products over print versions are acting as barriers to a fully digital environment. **STM's position is that the lowest possible (or zero) VAT rate should apply to all kinds of academic and professional publications (journals and books) irrespective of the format in which they are produced, commercialized or delivered , and we encourage the Commission to take this initiative up.**

In summary, STM publishers:

- deliver a **valued service** to the research community
- strive for the **widest possible access** to their publications and support ALL and ANY sustainable models
- **led the way** in a digital revolution that has expanded access
- are **experimenting with new approaches** to fill remaining access gaps and deal with the challenges of data

Europe is the global leader in STM publishing; we want to work closely with the Commission to ensure it stays that way.