

November 25, 2024

Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)
Executive Office of the President
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20504
Submitted by email to openscience@ostp.eop.gov

Dear OSTP Open Science and Accessibility Teams,

STM and its members are committed to expanding access to scientific and technical publications, aligning with the goals of the OSTP. Two of our established committees, the STM Social Responsibility Committee and the STM Standards and Technology Committee, have integrated accessibility into STM policies and workflows. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the OSTP and federal agencies on initiatives related to public access and accessibility.

Our members have a long-standing commitment to digital accessibility for the content they produce and disseminate. This has been a priority since the advent of the digital age. The launch of the [Charter for Accessible Publishing](#) has seen STM publishers adopt eight key principles, including the appointment of a senior manager responsible for overseeing accessibility and monitoring progress in this area. This initiative aims to ensure a comprehensive commitment to meeting the community's needs, including adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act and the European Accessibility Act, as well as addressing various other requirements and requests.

We therefore wholeheartedly support OSTP's "Voluntary Commitments to Improve the Digital Accessibility of Scientific and Technical Publications." Many STM members have signed up for the [Publishing Accessibility Action Group Charter](#), which has committed them to several actions that align with the OSTP's voluntary commitment.

Whilst STM itself is not an information provider, we support our membership in our mission to "Advance Trusted Research," including by promoting accessibility. Our contribution to the voluntary commitment will be to support our members to increase the digital accessibility of the resources they provide through information sharing and standards. This aligns most closely with OSTP's priority #2: "Promoting awareness of barriers to digital accessibility, advancing training to reduce such barriers, and increasing accountability for improving the digital accessibility of scientific and technical publications," but also will address Priority Area 1 items to both "Collaborate across the research and scholarly communications ecosystem to share resources and best practices for meeting WCAG 2.1" and "support establishment," "design and developments," and "a positive culture" for digital accessibility.

By the end of January 2025, STM will launch an accessibility resource web page designed for our members and the wider scholarly communication community. This resource aims to support efforts to enhance digital accessibility for their products. STM members actively engage in national trade association working

groups and collaborate with library partners to stay informed about relevant regulations and effectively implement them.

The purpose of the resource page will be to provide general information on accessibility and related policy/regulations, share best practices and examples that publishers can learn from, and inspire additional action from members and others. One example is [Benetech's Global Certified Accessible](#) program, where many STM members have used third-party certification programs.

The general information section will cover several important topics, including:

- Accessibility Primer
- International Regulatory and Policy Information
- Links to Standards and Tools
- Publisher and Publishing Platform Organization Accessibility Statements
- List of International Working Groups and Links

STM's resources will also be supported by webinars and other in-person-person events to perpetuate its utilization, building on STM and our members' ongoing activity on accessibility, and we are also well positioned to help amplify and share different approaches across its global membership, working closely with others like [Association of American Publishers](#)(AAP) and the [United Kingdom Publishing Association](#)(UK PA) to support global alignment.

Please include STM on the list of organizations making voluntary commitments, and please feel free to contact me (caroline@stm-assoc.org), David Weinreich, Director of Policy and Government Relations (weinreich@stm-assoc.org), or Donna Okubo, Community Engagement Manager (donna@stm-assoc.org) if we can further assist or collaborate on related issues.

Kind Regards,



Caroline Sutton
CEO
STM

About STM

At STM we support our members in their mission to advance trusted research worldwide. As academic and professional publishers, we work together to serve society by developing standards and technology to ensure research is of high quality, trustworthy and easy to access. We promote the contribution that publishers make to innovation, openness and the sharing of knowledge and embrace change to support the growth and sustainability of the research ecosystem. As a common good, we provide data and analysis for all involved in the global activity of research.

The majority of our members are small businesses and not-for-profit organizations, who represent tens of thousands of publishing employees, editors, reviewers, researchers, authors, readers, and other professionals across the United States and world who regularly contribute to the advancement of science, learning, culture and innovation throughout the nation. They comprise the bulk of a \$25 billion publishing industry that contributes significantly to the U.S. economy and enhances the U.S. balance of trade.