

## Preface

This Special Issue of the journal “Information Services and Use” presents full articles and reports from APE 2006, held 4–5 April 2006 in Berlin.

The starting point for an international conference about the role of information in science and society was, rather than simply restating well known positions, to aim at a fresh approach “dealing with the many structural changes which have taken and will take place in the information and value chains”.

Several important conferences and meetings relating to information science, librarianship and publishing have in the recent years been held in Berlin, which have had broad vibrations inside Germany and abroad.

APE 2006 was the first conference bringing all parties together and is thus seen as a successful step towards improved communication between funding agencies, science societies, universities, scientists, publishers, subscription agencies, booksellers and librarians.

The APE 2006 Conference was organised by AKEP, ALPSP and IOS Press under the auspices of the European Commission and with the support of many publishers and organisations. The Max Planck Gesellschaft (MPG) and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) actively contributed to the programme.

AKEP is the Electronic Publishing Working Group (Arbeitskreis elektronisches Publizieren) in the German Association of Publishers and Booksellers (Börsenverein) in Frankfurt.

ALPSP, the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers has during the past decade brought together many European SME’s and societies in science publishing, now also with a North American chapter. ALPSP is registered in the UK.

IOS Press, a medium sized science publisher based in Amsterdam, has since 2002 taken the initiatives to organise annual conferences centered around the future of the industry. In 2003 IBM hosted one such event in Amsterdam on the “e-Book”, EUSIDIC in 2004 in Rotterdam on “The Future of Scientific Publishing”, and the Royal Library of Belgium in 2005 in Brussels “Communicating Scientific, Technical and Medical Knowledge 2005–2010”. In Brussels, the EC played an active role and for future conferences of this kind it is felt that they ought to be held under their auspices.

Together, AKEP, ALPSP and IOS Press commenced the preparations for “Academic Publishing in Europe” in the Summer of 2005, and it was considered that an appropriate day to hold such an event in Berlin would be 4 April, 2006, as this date would be the centenary of the founding of Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft (“Aka”) in Leipzig. Aka had been one of the most successful STM publishing houses in the period between the two World Wars, and a seminal company for the post-WWII STM industry. While the historic dimension was felt to be of less interest to a forward looking audience, a banquet and an after dinner speech to commemorate the day were planned.

APE 2006 was held in a beautiful setting, in the Leibniz Room of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences at the Gendarmenplatz in central Berlin. With some 165 participants from 15 countries it was generally considered an important event. A summary of presentations and discussions was circulated shortly after the event and is freely available at DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1477/5.814>.

The idea to collect the full articles based on presentations at the conference, and publish them in a special issue of “Information Services and Use”, was inspired by the publication in the same journal

of “Open Access to Scientific and Technical Information”, proceedings of the ICSTI/INIST/INSERM Seminar, 23–24 January 2003, in Paris: <http://iospress.metapress.com/link.asp?id=fq43700pphml>.

For those contributions that could not be written up, reports are provided.

The open access debate had been going on for almost a decade at the time of the Paris Seminar. The three years since Paris have seen developments in different directions, ranging from new search engines to vastly increased user access. Following outside commentators the Berlin APE 2006 saw a further development towards a mature debate between stakeholders – ranging from science funding agencies, librarians, societies and their scientists as well as publishers, large and small.

This collection of articles and reports from APE 2006 documents the wide variety of topics and the overall high level of the conference. We are very grateful to all speakers, session chair persons, reporters and organisers for their contributions to this special issue.

Many requests have been received to organise another conference in 2007. APE 2007 will be held 23–24 January 2007. For actual information we refer to: [www.ape2007.de](http://www.ape2007.de).

**Disclaimer**

Many of the reports and articles presented here have been produced from oral transcripts. The organisers have done all they can to avoid mistakes but apologise in advance for any errors that might have crept in during the taping, translating and typing.

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The Editors of this Special APE 2006 Issue