

Introduction

H. Frederick Dylla

Executive Director and CEO, American Institute of Physics, College Park, MD, USA

E-mail: dylla@aip.org

The 8th annual Academic Publishing in Europe (APE) Conference was held on January 29–30, 2013, in Berlin, Germany. This unique conference was initiated by Arnoud de Kemp in 2006, to bring together a range of stakeholders in the scholarly publishing community. The initial focus of the conference, as indicated by the conference title, was the academic publishing enterprise in Europe, but the international reach of this subject now also attracts a broader range of participants from beyond the continent. In 2013, 259 delegates from across the continent attended the conference, with additional representation from the Middle East, the USA and Asia. A particular attraction of the APE Conference is the mix of those attending, with policy makers, researchers and librarians supplementing the publishing community.

The 2013 APE Conference began with three keynote presentations addressing changes to the funding of scholarly journals. Professor Karl Ulrich Mayer, President of Germany's Leibniz Association, provided a continental perspective of the changing landscape for broadening journal access. Dame Janet Finch from the University of Manchester, who led the 2011 multi-stakeholder working group on scholarly publishing that now bears her name, described the unique experiment currently underway in the UK with so-called "gold open access". Authors cover publication costs up-front with article processing charges. Dame Janet described the give-and-take process that led to the recommendations of the working group. These have largely been adopted by the UK government, starting in April of 2013, for promoting open access to journal articles funded by UK funding agencies. A follow-on keynote from the perspective of a research university was given by Professor Adam Tickell of the University of Birmingham, who served on the Finch working group.

In the afternoon session, the perspective shifted across the Atlantic to the USA. Dr. John Vaughn, Executive Vice President of the Association of American Universities, chaired a 2009–2010 working group similar to the Finch group called the Scholarly Publishing Roundtable. Dr. Vaughn reiterated the importance, given its essential contribution to scholarship, of retaining the involvement of the entire community in the analysis and implementation of potential changes in the enterprise of scholarly publishing. He noted that because of their overlapping shared interests and responsibilities, the outstanding issues are best solved by joint efforts involving the publishing, research and library communities and the funding agencies.

Conference-goers heard from Brian Hitson from the US Department of Energy, who summarized the results of several ongoing joint efforts with the publishing community for enhancing access, such as the recently completed CrossRef pilot project FundRef, which will systematize the inclusion of article metadata in the CrossRef database which tags the funding agency responsible for the research leading to a journal article. Michael Mabe, CEO of the International Association of STM Publishers, closed this session by summarizing the results of the joint publisher EU-PEER-project, which analyzed a careful study of access to documents stored in institutional repositories.

A session on the important topic of opening up digital data included a talk by Dr. Thomas Lemberger, Chief Editor of the EMBO journal *Molecular Systems Biology*, who noted the importance and difficulty of the archiving, tagging and use of large data sets from the burgeoning field of systems biology. The session closed with a contribution from another field with large data sets – high energy physics. Dr. Salvatore Mele from CERN summarized the five-year point in the SCOAP3 pilot project to provide a funding mechanism for the conversion of high energy physics journals to a full open access format.

The first day of the conference closed with the APE 2013 Lecture by Dr. Wolfram Koch, Executive Director of the German Chemical Society, who highlighted the symbiotic relationship between learned societies and their journal publishing activities.

The second day of the conference was devoted to a series of talks highlighting various innovations in publishing, including: connecting open data initiatives to journals, integrating scientific work flows to journal producers, improved tagging of journal content for discoverability, patron-driven acquisition for journals and books, and the evolution of online distribution for books and monographs.

The APE 2013 Conference closed with a panel discussion on communications, chaired by Dr. Rick Borchelt, Director of Communications for the National Cancer Institute in the US. The problem addressed was the relatively poor understanding among the research community and some funding agencies of the value that publishers and the publication process provide to the academic community; from peer review, through production in constantly evolving digital formats, online hosting, and distribution, to the long-term preservation of journal content. Perspectives on this important problem were provided by Alice Meadows from John Wiley & Sons, Dr. Bernd Pulverer from EMBO, and Michael Mabe from STM. Naturally this important problem cannot be solved by one panel, but the discussion provided commentary for participants to ponder as they departed APE 2013 and prepared for another exciting year in the ecosystem of scholarly publishing.

For those who are interested in considering the information presented at this conference in more detail, the organizers have arranged for a complete video record, archived and available for casual viewing at www.ape2013.eu. In addition, two conference rapporteurs, Dr. Chris Armbruster (Glubal) and André Pleintinger (Friedrich-Alexander University, Erlangen-Nürnberg) have provided a detailed summary report for this journal. Also included in this issue of the journal are the three keynote addresses from APE 2013 by Dame Janet Finch, Professor Adam Tickell and Professor Karl Ulrich Mayer. And in the spirit of extending the reach of the APE conference across the Atlantic, readers will also find a summary of Dr. John Vaughn's invited overview of the evolution of public access policy in the US.