

Closing addresses

Christine Deschamps

President, IFLA

On behalf of the organisers, I would like to thank the interpreters for their excellent work over the past two days, and the persons responsible for the transcription of these proceedings. I would also like to thank the hostesses who supplied microphones to all speakers. I would like to thank IN2P3 for organising the broadcasting of these proceedings on the Internet. I would like to thank H el ene Bosc of INRA, for her contributions to the seminar's website. Finally, I would like to thank the Ministry of Research for hosting this seminar in its buildings.

Genevi ve Berger

Director General, CNRS

I am very pleased to be here today to close this meeting on open access to scientific and technical information. These two days have been very interesting, rich, intense and stimulating. I am convinced that the 21st century will be the century of dissemination of information. The world has already seen some dramatic changes in the area of information and communications. This field is indeed changing rapidly, and today's technological innovations are challenging yesterday's methods. In this context, the CNRS and other public research institutions are extremely interested in the new models for scientific publication that have emerged from open access initiatives.

Given that researchers are both the main producers and users of scientific and technical information, they must again obtain control of the system of scientific publication. Given the exponential growth in the volumes of data produced each year in all scientific disciplines, the speed at which information is provided to researchers is a crucial part of the research process. In this context, the contribution to be made by the new technologies is an obvious one. This does not mean that we have to completely replace traditional publishing systems by open access. Rather, the aim is to provide new solutions that are better adapted to the needs of the scientific community.

Furthermore, we should be cautious in our assessment of these new tools, like open archives and e-print servers. Certain issues relating to the evaluation of articles and their long term archiving remain unresolved. For the moment, there are no structures that are solid enough to replace traditional systems.

As a major producer of knowledge, the CNRS is obliged to organise information resources through the use of efficient and effective systems within its own laboratories, and through opening itself up to the whole scientific community with a view to the safeguarding and sharing of knowledge.

At the same time, the question of access to data produced by public research is not limited to the research or academic community. Scientific progress is an element of growth and development, transforming society and raising questions as to our future. Therefore, the CNRS also has to address ethical and societal problems, as one of our missions is to transmit information to the community at large.

New initiatives can add important value to the traditional scientific information infrastructure, like the European E-BioSci project which was presented here and which we are involved in.

As far as future developments in scientific and technical information are concerned, we mainly rely on INIST. I would like to thank the Director of INIST for its work on access, for public research institutions, to information services that offer, by means of a unique platform, cross-searching in huge information resources and linking to the full text of electronic publications.

CNRS must support and promote initiatives on open access, such as a recent agreement reached between CNRS and BioMed Central. In organising this meeting, in conjunction with the Ministry of Research, INSERM and ICSTI, our aim was to bring together representatives from the research community, academia and publishing houses in order to discuss recent changes and future trends in this area.

I believe that this meeting has been a success and will lead to other such meetings in the future. We will continue to remain involved in the strategic and technical issues raised over the past two days.

At the end of the last century, Karl Popper stated that we should fight against the disintegration of knowledge, master the increasing amount of information and take advantage of the new possibilities of archiving of scientific results. I would imagine that you will all abide by this motto.

Christian Brechot

Director General, INSERM

I am very pleased to be here today and very pleased that INSERM was able to play a role in this meeting. We all believe that scientific and technical information has become a major challenge for public and private research organisations, at both the national and international levels. The new technologies for dissemination of knowledge have profoundly changed the practices and expectations of researchers, and they should have as consequence an increasing support by the organisations who employ researchers and a change of their mentalities. What is INSERM's evolution in this field? When looking back over the last decade, we observe an extraordinary acceleration.

In 1992 as a first step towards electronic publishing, a project on computer-assisted publication of the reports of the French Academy of Science was instigated. In 1998, the first discussions were held with publishing houses in relation to access to journals. At that time INSERM had paper subscriptions to about 400 journals. The main result of the discussion with publishers was the signing up for Science Direct, giving us access to all Elsevier journals. In parallel, we were involved in co-operation activities with PubMed Central, E-BioSci and then BioMed Central. In 2001, a pre-preprint-based archiving prototype project was launched, strongly stimulated by the Ministry.

Since then, momentum has gathered in relation to creating an integrated system for online publishing, information handling and access to publications. Our underlying strategy can be characterized by three kinds of actions; the first goal remains to facilitate online access to the international literature. To achieve it, the establishment of the BiblioInserm portal, in partnership with INIST, was an essential step forward. It enables our researchers to have access to a very large majority of journals via links from important biomedical databases to the full text. It was a great pleasure to work with the CNRS on this project. Secondly, as pointed out by P. Oudet yesterday, we are involved in the development of institutional archives, major event in the STM information landscape. It is an experimental programme based on preprints, allowing INSERM researchers to submit papers that are not yet published. Raw data will eventually be added. The broader portal will include reports, clinical trials, cohort studies, etc.

Finally, in relation to the development of free and open access to information, INSERM is a member of BioMed Central, which has provided a great encouragement to our researchers. We have signed an agreement with the National Centre for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), under which INSERM's training workshops will be available online via PubMed. This will enable us to think more carefully about new models of evaluation for future work. We all want abolish our dependence on impact factors

and citation index. We now have a real opportunity to work together on this major challenge in the coming years.

All of this can only be achieved if many different organisations become involved in the process. This is the spirit behind this meeting, which aims to avoid duplication and redundancies and to ensure interoperability and permanent availability.

This meeting has been a great success in terms of the number of participants and the quality of speakers, and we must make sure that it is followed up.

Research organisations both act and finance the development of knowledge. They thus have a duty to take part in reflections on all of these issues. In this context, we have a number of underlying principles: the protection of intellectual property, the quality and validity of results, and the visibility of all actors in the publishing and archiving process.

I would like to thank all the organisers and participants in the meeting. I hope that INSERM, with its partners, will be able to host another such conference in the near future.