
CURL/SCONUL digest of scholarly communication news

Fredrick J. Friend
Honorary Director Scholarly
Communication
University College London
JISC Consultant
OSI Information Program Senior Consultant
Tel: 01494 563168
E-mail: ucylfjf@ucl.ac.uk

This is taken from the CURL/SCONUL Digest of Scholarly Communication News of December 2004. This online newsletter (supplied to SCONUL representatives in member libraries) is a service provided by the CURL/SCONUL Group on Scholarly Communication for internal distribution to staff of library and information services in SCONUL institutions.

The Group also encourages the use of the 'Digest' to inform academic staff within universities in the UK and Republic of Ireland of developments in scholarly publishing.

1 RESPONSES TO UK PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Six documents in response to the Report on Scientific Publications (HC 399) were published as HC 1200, together with comments by the Science and Technology Committee on the responses received. Ian Gibson MP spoke at the SCONUL Conference on the day of publication and expressed the Committee's disappointment with the negative tone of the Government Response, which incorporated some positive points from JISC but was largely dismissive of open access journals and promised no practical support for repository development. The input from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) into the Government Response sounded like an echo of the views of the major publishers. However, the hope is that the developments recommended in the Science and Technology Committee Report will continue. JISC is maintaining its support for both repository development (through a new Repositories Programme) and for open access journals (good quality bids have been received for the second

round of funding for publishers moving to open access.) Research Councils UK is continuing to develop its new publications policy, apparently with support from Lord Sainsbury. And repository development continues within many universities. In his address to SCONUL Ian Gibson MP spoke of the important role the library community has in supporting change in scholarly communication, and there will be an opportunity to lobby MPs once the date of the parliamentary debate on scientific publications is announced. The CURL/SCONUL Scholarly Communication Group will be producing a lobbying document for use with local MPs. Meanwhile the DTI, perhaps now concerned about its image, has set up a group to look at relationships with librarians and publishers.

2 JISC/SURF COLLABORATION

JISC and SURF have worked together in the past, but the partnership has moved to a new stage of collaboration with the announcement of a new agreement between the two organisations. The agreement builds on a series of joint activities over the last two years, such as the development of UKLight, now linked with NetherLight (currently contributing to the creation of an international experimental testbed for optical networking), the formation of the Zwolle Group (leading on issues of international copyright and intellectual property rights), and collaborative work between CETIS in the UK and SURF SiX (the expert group that improves knowledge and use of learning technology specifications within the Dutch higher education sector). The agreement will have immediate impact in the following key areas: sharing of information to contribute to the strategic development of both organisations; a commitment to knowledge networks and the further development of joint innovation programmes.

3 SCOTTISH DECLARATION ON OPEN ACCESS

An influential gathering of university principals and other senior university staff, representatives from Universities Scotland, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC), other research funders, and the Scottish Executive met in Edinburgh on 11 October to launch the Scottish Declaration on Open Access (<http://scurl.ac.uk/WG/SSISWGOA/declaration.htm>), drawn up by SCURL (Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries), the National Library of Scotland, the Scottish Library and Information Council, and the Centre for Digital Library Research. Since that date, almost all universities

in Scotland have signed the Declaration, which commits them to set up institutional (or joint) repositories, to 'encourage, and where practical, mandate' researchers to deposit their work in the repositories, and to review their intellectual property policies. The Declaration encourages funders to mandate self-archiving, following in the footsteps of the Report on Scientific Publications, and also to make provision for publication fees where this leads to open access. SHEFC is reviewing its policies in this area and may also sign the Declaration shortly. Moves are afoot to ensure that all Scottish universities have access to a repository (a number are in operation already), and to press forward with the culture change in favour of open access, which is now high on the agenda for senior management in many Scottish universities.

(Frederick Friend thanks Tony Kidd for supplying the text of this item.)

4 ITALIAN UNIVERSITIES SIGN BERLIN DECLARATION

At a meeting in Messina on 4 November the Rectors or Rectors' representatives from 31 Italian universities and a leading research agency signed the Berlin Declaration in support of open access. Credit for this commitment goes to the Italian library community, who have talked on a one-to-one basis with senior people in their local academic communities. The Italian decision also owes a lot to the UK Parliamentary Report and the work of JISC, developments which have helped senior figures in Italy to see the political importance of open access and its feasibility. Some Italian universities already have repositories up and running and more will follow as a result of this public commitment. They also wish to work with Italian publishers on the development of business models which suit the local environment. The Italians deliberately chose to use the Berlin Declaration as a vehicle for their support of open access as they wish to link their developments with those in other European countries. Web-site : <http://www.aepic.it/conf/> .

5 SURF ALSO SIGNS BERLIN DECLARATION

On 1 December SURF also signed the Berlin Declaration, signalling its intention to support and promote open access. According to Prof. Dr. Wim Liebrand, the SURF Director, 'Information arising from publicly financed research is a public resource that should be available to everyone'. SURF began its support for open access in 2003 with the DARE Programme, an initiative to set up repositories in Dutch universities. SURF has also

worked closely with publishers, for example in promoting scholarship-friendly copyright developments through the Zwolle Group.

6 IMPROVED ACCESS TO JOURNALS THROUGH IRISH LIBRARIES

The Conference of the Heads of Irish Universities (CHIU) Librarians' Group has announced the completion of the first phase of the Irish Research Electronic Library (IREL) Initiative. Under this national initiative, jointly funded by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA), researchers in Irish universities will have access to the contents of a wide range of electronic journals via their library web sites. The scheme, negotiated by the CHIU Librarians Group, provides the contents of electronic journals in the fields of biotechnology and information and communications technology, which form the focus of research by the teams of SFI Investigators in the country.

The first phase of the scheme provides access to the electronic content of eleven major publishers of science periodicals and approximately fifty other individual e-journals, involving a total of 2,000 individual titles. The selection of these journal titles follows a polling exercise to identify the journals 'most wanted' by the SFI research community. The second phase of the project is now under way and this will deliver the contents of an additional 850 titles to further support higher education research activities across the country. Journals such as *Nature*, *Science*, *Scientific American*, in addition to publisher packages from the Institute of Physics, Blackwell, Springer, the Institute of Scientific Information and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers titles, to mention a few, will be made available electronically over the next number of months. The two funding authorities are committed to providing €4.5m annually to 2008 in support of the project. Under the partnership between the SFI and HEA, existing subscriptions are maintained by individual libraries while new subscriptions are provided from the earmarked resources for those not already subscribing.

7 US CONGRESS RE-AFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR NIH PROPOSAL

The US Congress has again affirmed its support for the National Institutes of Health to enhance public access to NIH-funded research information. This support was expressed via comment in the Conference Report accompanying the FY 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act, legislation that

includes nine appropriations bills. The conference report language restates the NIH proposed policy of making research articles based on NIH funding available to the public free of charge. These articles would be publicly available via in PubMed Central within six months after publication in a peer-reviewed journal. The language also requests that NIH provide an annual cost accounting for implementing this policy as well as work with publishers of scientific journals to maintain the 'integrity of the peer review system.' The Appropriations Bill now goes to the President to sign.

8 GOOGLE SCHOLAR

Google has unveiled a search engine called 'Google Scholar' that focuses on academic materials. The new search engine limits its results to 'scholarly literature such as peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, preprints, abstracts, and technical reports,' according to a company statement. Google officials say they have the cooperation of a broad range of academic publishers and other content suppliers, including OCLC's WorldCat and some US universities (probably offering repository content). Google Scholar searches the full text of most of the documents it indexes, but in some cases the results point to articles or texts that can be seen only for a fee or with a subscription. In most such cases, users can see a free abstract of the article to decide whether they want to buy it. Perhaps the greatest value of Google Scholar, however, may prove to be in enabling efficient searches of open access content. Google staff are being coy about how they determine exactly what material counts as scholarly, or how Google Scholar decides which results are more relevant than others. Unlike most scholarly databases, Google Scholar does not allow users to customize searches or limit the kinds of results they receive. Some features for narrowing searches will be added in the future. It is likely that Google has introduced the new services to maintain its lead in the competitive search-engine business.

9 THOMSON SCIENTIFIC CONSIDER NEW REPOSITORY CITATION SERVICE

Thomson Scientific is investigating the possibility of establishing a new citation service for content in institutional repositories. If developed the new service would be in the same format as Web of Science, providing links and citation data at article level for open access content. The aim is to provide an index to high-quality content whether subscription-based or open access. Thomson Sci-

entific see this new development being of value to repository managers in providing another reason why authors should deposit content in repositories, awareness of citations being so important to authors. Discussions are taking place with repository managers about how the new service might be set up with their collaboration.

10 STANFORD ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY

For some time discussions have been underway to create a new business model for the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy and enable its publication to continue as a free and open resource. The new business model is a partnership open access model, whereby institutions world-wide where the Encyclopaedia is used for teaching and research collaborate to provide endowment funding. ICOLC and SPARC have led the way in enabling this new business model to get off the ground and recently the first seven consortia and institutions in four countries announced their support. JISC is currently establishing the value of the Encyclopaedia to the UK academic community. The Encyclopaedia's editor, Ed Zalta, believes that the publication is of value beyond the philosophy community and his view appears to be borne out by the use data from the Stanford server (not the Leeds mirror server) he has made available at <http://leibniz.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/library/usage.cgi>.