

Open-Access-Aktivitäten der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft

Vielen Dank. Ich hoffe, dass niemand sich benachteiligt fühlt, wenn ich meinen Vortrag auf Englisch gebe. Es dient der Klarheit und auch der Geschwindigkeit, denn die Zeit ist ein bisschen knapp.

I am here to talk about the activities in the Max Planck Society, and so I am speaking less over philosophy and general principles and more over practical issues. The Max Planck Society is grappling with the changing publication models and it is taking an active stand in doing things in it, but of course it is dealing with these in a very practical way, and so it is experiencing the difficulties as well as the excitement and advantages of an actually trying to do something with Open Access. So this is a view, if you like, from the coal face, from the factory floor of scientific research or scholarly research where we are trying to do our work and also get it published and do the distribution.

Max Planck has an advantage over many other organisations, particularly universities, in that it has a single budget, it can make cost trade-offs between paying for articles to be published and paying subscriptions to the publishers themselves, so Max Planck can see that the balance is completely in its own budget. It has however a disadvantage or at least an interesting side of complexity, because in Max Planck there is a huge variety of research fields and there are different practices and different needs between the physicists and the biologists, and the jurists and the historians have different practices, different orientations towards Open Access und towards web-publishing and different requirements in terms of protecting their information. So Max Planck is going slowly and trying to taking to account the different needs and therefore not be very prescriptive but actually to try to make opportunities for Open Access within the society.

So I want to talk to you about some of those things that are happening, but of course they are guided by principles. And I think, I am summarising these fairly, if I say, that Max Planck wants to move into an Open Access world. It feels that for the information that it produces, it wants the widest distribution. It doesn't want barriers for the scholarly research that it has produced; it wants the widest distribution of its output. Good-quality journals are very important, however. The key-function we don't see replaced by any of the other activities, is the refereeing, the evaluation. This is something

that Herr von Lucius stressed. In fact, in his talk he showed a list of all the different activities that go into scientific communication from the point of evaluating articles right through to archiving, and many of those things on the list now are affected by the internet. And people are trying different models for each of those little items. But the one item that still seems to be very clearly in the domain of the publishers is the evaluation, the refereeing. It's very important to Max Planck that its scientists are publishing in high quality respected journals. So this particular aspect is something that it wants to preserve. The distribution of the information, which is very well-handled now on the web, is a secondary function that it doesn't see as important from the journals as the refereeing. It also believes that the role of refereeing doesn't entitle journals to have a copyright. Max Planck would like its scientists to provide a licence to the journals, but not a copyright. And that is something that it is advising its scientists to try to work out agreements when they publish, that where they give a licence to publish but not give away the copyright. Max Planck is encouraging all scientists to place all their work in Open Access archives, but that's differently practiced in different fields. And it is looking for a responsible transition to an Open Access scholarly world.

So, what are the activities? It has, as is well known, issued the Berlin Declaration and there had been a number of conferences it's sponsored. It's created the Max Planck Digital Library, I will talk about all these items as I go along. And it is transitioning to Open Access through "Deposit Request" which is a sort of a less prescriptive version of what is often called the "Deposit Mandate". Assisting journals to make transition and negotiating system-wide journal subscriptions, which have realistic prices, and you may know, that it is in dispute at the moment with Springer Verlag over subscriptions. So that is something very close to the economic part of this argument.

A little about the Berlin Declaration, research organisations have responsibility not just to produce scholarly work but to ensure that is disseminated, that is the underlying principle. And that's why Max Planck gets involved in this question of Open Access. The Berlin Declaration is something that is not just a statement of principles, if you sign as an organisation the Berlin Declaration you commit yourself to certain actions. And the actions involve encouraging Open Access publishing, encouraging Open Access to cultural resources, developing high standards of assessment and assisting the development of relevant software tools, and so our signatories are organisations that will advance Open Access and not just sign up to some principles. There have been a number of follow-up conferences. The number of signatories keeps growing, when it first was signed in 2003 it were a couple of dozen signatories, now the number of signatories is up well over 200

and it seems we are growing linearly with time. And these are all universities and other scholarly research organisations, almost all the big research organisations in Germany for example, and all the Italian universities have signed up for it and so it is very wide spread in Europe particularly. Max Planck is active in creating publication archives It is not so clear to Max Planck that the journals are the right places for long-term archives of published material. or even that the standard libraries are the right places. So we want to archive our own publications. We have an archive called the “eDoc Server” which is partially successful but we are creating right now a replacement for it under a very significantly funded joint-project with FIZ (Karlsruhe) funded by BMBF called the “eSciDoc Project”. And “eSciDoc” will be open-source software as well for other organisations to use and it will create a publication archive, a scholarly workbench which has tools for information management, scientific information or scholarly information which is not destined for publication, and other discipline-specific tools. Max Planck has wrapped up all of its electronic information activities into the Max Planck Digital Library which took effect on January 1, 2007. It embraces the electronic subscriptions, the Heinz-Nixdorf Center for Information Management (which had been active in Open Access and created the original eDoc Server and that’s where the software creation is taking place and also the publishing), and there are new initiatives which are supposed to be expected to come from Max Planck Library as well. The headquarters are here in Berlin but there are also offices in Munich.

Max Planck is involved in publishing, and in fact that’s why I am standing in front of you, talking about Max Planck policy, because I created a review journal about ten years ago, called “Living Reviews”. Now review articles are particularly important in the physical and biological sciences. They are meant to be comprehensive summaries written in a kind of objective way by an expert covering an entire area and not just talking about the expert’s own work but surveying in some fair sense, and evaluating in some fair sense the entire body of research in an area. These are incredible valuable to scientists as they try to catch up with fields, try to understand what is happening in neighbouring fields, or a young scientist trying to get into a field. Review articles play a very important role, but they go out of date very quickly, so “Living Reviews” are a way of keeping things up: authors of “Living Reviews” keep their articles current. The articles are constantly under revision, and the idea is, that the review doesn’t go out of date. Now you can only do that on the web, you couldn’t conceive of doing that in print, the cost of reprinting with a few changes would be enormous. But on the web it is no cost at all. So “Living Reviews” started ten years ago in my own research field, which is General Relativity,

and it's become a standard resource, it's got a distinguished editorial board and a very high citation rate. We have now spread to other fields. There are four "Living Review" journals, and this whole idea is supported by the Max Planck Digital Library. The entire costs of the Max Planck journals are covered through the Max Planck Digital Library. The software base, the publishing tools, the BackOffice, the editorial tools and so on, were created specifically for this project, and they are open-source and available to other journals if you want to use them. The portal-web-page shows the different journals, one in relativity, the original one, one in solar physics, these are the two Max Planck based ones, and an external journal in european governance, that's based in Vienna and an external journal in landscape research, which a version of ecology, that is based here in Germany but not in the Max Planck system. The other thing that I want to mention, that Max Planck is involved in, but it's not an initiation of Max Planck, it's started at "CERN" and called "SCOAP3". High-energy-particle physics is probably the leader among scholarly fields in Open Access, they created this thing called "the arXiv" in the States, they put everything on to the arXiv, everything into Open Access before everything goes on the web. And yet the journals are very important to this field because of the evaluation-aspect and so there is an initiative to help, to identify the top six to ten journals and all the articles published and help them transition to Open Access by giving them a substitution. So gathering the money that would be used on subscriptions from research organisations and giving it directly to the publishers, to publish the articles, not to change the evaluation procedures, not to buy us anything – that Max Planck gets a better treatment for its articles or anything like that – but the money goes into the journals and then they publish for free all the articles are then on the website and free available for Open Access. And so, this is an initiative, it's a project, it is not yet running, they are still gathering up the money, but it's a very interesting thing, that Max Planck is supporting. So I stop there and those are links that you can find on the web:

Berlin Declaration

<http://oa.mpg.de/openaccess-berlin/berlindeclaration.html>

Max Planck Digital Library

<http://www.mpd.l.mpg.de/>

Living Reviews

<http://www.livingreviews.org/>

eDoc Server

<http://edoc.mpg.de/>