

Editorial



Your Eds having high thoughts
– with mentor

Supporters of ‘open access’ will be celebrating the high profile their movement has achieved over the last few weeks and months. First there was the JISC announcement about the national deal with BioMed Central and then more recently announcements and press releases from the Wellcome Trust, Oxford University Press, The Company of Biologists and the Public Library of Science (PLoS) expressing their support for the open and unrestricted access to the published output of research. Now the topic has been taken up by the national press with two articles very recently in *The Guardian*. The latest, published on 6 October, is entitled ‘Scientists take on publishers in an experiment to make research free to all’, and gives extensive coverage to the PLoS initiative and the launch of their first journal *PLoS Biology*.

So, what are we to make of all this? Many publishers remain sceptical that the open access model will be economically sustainable in the long term. After all, *PLoS Biology* is financed by a grant of several million dollars from a charitable foundation. But once the initial funding runs out, will the academic culture and the research funding structure have changed sufficiently for academics and researchers to be in a position to pay for having their work published in open-access titles? Such a change will require a complete re-think by

the funding agencies, research councils and charities who fund research. Moreover, how many open-access journals will have developed into the top-ranked journals in their subject disciplines? If that does not happen, then academics may well be strongly inclined not to publish in them. What interesting times we live in!

How is the latest issue of *Serials* contributing to the debate? Well, in this issue we publish the views of four librarians and one publisher in papers from the recent UKSG one-day seminar on institutional e-print repositories. Find out all about RoMEO and SHERPA and how JISC is supporting a number of open-access projects investigating such areas as content collection, IPR, maintenance, preservation and protocols. Read as well the profile of Chris Bailey, who explains the workings and future vision of JISC’s Collections Strategy. Our international coverage also continues with a look at ‘co-operation and collaboration’ from a range of geographical standpoints. In this issue we publish the research funded by the UKSG International Research Award, granted to Sally Brown, on assigning ISSNs to online resources. We are now looking for proposals for the 2004 awards. More information is available on the UKSG web site.