

The Nordic Conference on Scholarly Communication (NCSC)

Lund, Sweden

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Report by Zuzana Helinsky

Lund University Libraries arranged The Nordic Conference on Scholarly Communication for the second time in Lund. An impressive number of well-known international specialists covered such key topics as new financial publishing models and their expected consequences for present stakeholders, principles of intellectual property rights/copyright law, and mechanisms for quality control. Below is just a snapshot of this wide-ranging conference.

According to *Colin Steele*, Emeritus Fellow of the Australian National University, too little money is spent on scholarly communication research. Vice chancellors, provosts and presidents often neglect the big issues in scholarly communication. Political steps from the bottom up to the highest political level are needed to effect the necessary changes. An article economy and a 'just-in-time' mentality is to be preferred instead of the big deals.

The peculiar market for academic journals was expertly analysed by *Theodore Bergstrom*, Professor of Economics at UCSB: "OA (open access) introduces a real element of competition on the market, as the competition on the author side is likely to be much stiffer than on the readers' side".

In the session on copyright law and intellectual property issues Michael P Spinella, JSTOR Executive Director, presented a modest proposal: "Scholarly work should have a shorter protection time. Seventy plus life is too long, educational exceptions should be universalized, archival rights and responsibilities should be retained, some author rights should persist even if copyright is transferred, and authors should never be able to change or take away their original articles." Reliable methods for quality control and evaluation are fundamental for scholarly publishing. *Erik Sandewall*, Professor of Computer and Information Science, Linköping University, found that current rules and practices of the publication game should be revised as some of them stand in the way of the best possible use of new information technology for scientific communication. *Gunnar*

Sivertsen, NIFU (Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education), Oslo, discussed electronic distribution and open access and the specific problems for minor languages from the viewpoint of research assessment and funding. *Tim Brody* from the University of Southampton explained the concept of 'digitometrics'. Digitometrics is "bibliometrics for the online age". Results from citation analysis are combined with web logs, counting the number of times an article has been downloaded, to assess the impact of the article.

Peter Suber concluded the conference with his personal assessment of the open access movement and a proposal for future priorities. The number of quality-controlled OA journals and OA archives has increased steadily. The main search engines are interested in spreading OA. OA content does not need marketing. It will be found by default of doing nothing.

Authors are those who decide on the future of scholarly communication and the largest obstacle to OA is still author inertia. Universities, foundations, governments and others must help authors to see the connection between OA and career-building and research impact and help them to archive their works and to retain key rights. The main task is to build OA, not to undermine conventional publishers.

Read the full report on:

http://www.sciecom.org/sciecominfo/artiklar/rabow_04_2.shtml

The Third Nordic Conference on Scholarly Communication will be held in Lund, Sweden, from 24–25 April 2006