

PRESS RELEASE: 15 January 2010

STM responds to US Scholarly Publishing Roundtable Report and Recommendations

STM applauds the efforts of the Scholarly Publishing Roundtable (set up last year by the US House of Representatives Committee on Science and Technology in collaboration with the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy [OSTP]) in seeking to establish broad stakeholder agreement and for involving leading researchers and incorporating their research in the Roundtable deliberations.

STM supports the general principles that the Roundtable has generated: the critical need for peer review, the importance of sustainable business models, the goal of widening access, and the move to improved utility and interoperability. We also strongly support the recommendation that OSTP establish a public advisory committee on which interested parties, including STM publishers are represented.

STM takes issue, however, with some of the other recommendations and goals expressed in the Report. Firstly, while STM supports US agencies in the development of public access policies to the results of research funded by those agencies, we do not agree that the scholarly articles arising from publisher investment and value add fall under this category. Government research grants currently cover the cost of the research *only*. Government research grants **do not** cover the costs of publication.

Secondly, while welcoming the consultation and collaboration that has occurred with our industry, STM believes the goal of US agencies in establishing a “global publishing system” is redundant and wasteful and ignores the essentially international nature of STM publishing, which has, without any government assistance anywhere in the world, enabled more access to more people than at any time in history.

Thirdly, if there is to be no compensation for the use of journal mediated content, STM supports the need for embargo periods. There is, however, no evidence whatsoever to support the recommendation that embargo periods of 0 to 12 months could be adopted for “many sciences” without problem. STM is leading a three year experiment part-funded by the European Commission (the PEER Project) to find out the effects of various embargo periods on journals. We strongly encourage such an evidence-based policy investigation in the US as well.

Finally, while STM supports the recommendation that the final published article should be given primacy (the so called VoR or Version of Record) over the proliferation of other imperfect earlier versions, it is through this final version – and the creation and maintenance of their authoritative

journals – that STM publishers provide significant added value; to make final published articles (VoRs) free immediately upon publication must involve some mechanism of financial compensation.

Commenting on the Report, the Chief Executive Officer of STM, Michael Mabe said:

“STM member companies publish the largest number of open access articles in the world. They have taken the lead in discussions with Funding Agencies regarding their access policies and many have made their final published articles available immediately under various business models, including open access. The Roundtable Report represents a good-faith effort to maximise the public good in a sustainable way but still needs more work to attain this lofty goal.”

STM is an international association of about 100 scientific, technical, medical and scholarly publishers, collectively responsible for more than 60% of the global annual output of research articles, 55% of the active research journals and the publication of tens of thousands of print and electronic books, reference works and databases. We are the only international trade association equally representing all types of STM publishers - large and small companies, not for profit organizations, learned societies, traditional, primary, secondary publishers and new entrants to global publishing.

Contact:

For further information, contact Michael Mabe, STM, Prama House, 267 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7HT, UK
tel: +44 1865 339324/fax: +44 1865 339325

e-mail <mailto:mabe@stm-assoc.org>