



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL & MEDICAL PUBLISHERS

Publishers Reaffirm Mission to Make Research Information Widely Accessible

The Hague , The Netherlands, 4 November 2003 - The International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM) announced in a statement today that it believes that "broadening and ensuring continuity of information access for researchers, scholars, and practitioners is a critical mission for all publishers." Issued on behalf of its twelve-member Executive Board, the statement continued:

"Scientific research has never been more accessible than it is today. In recent years, STM publishers have been working closely with scientists, researchers, and librarians to lead the ongoing revolution in the dissemination of scholarly information. We have leveraged emerging technologies and invested hundreds of millions of dollars to make more scientific research information more accessible to more people than ever before. In the process, we have developed - and continue to develop - innovative and accessible business models to broaden information access. Recent developments such as flexible subscription licensing arrangements customised to meet the needs of libraries and consortia; "pay-per-view" article access at prices within reach of non-subscribing individuals; and implementation of standards such as cross-linking protocols (such as CrossRef) and enabling technologies (such as the digital object identifier) have made seamless navigation and discovery possible across a growing web of published resources. The HINARI and AGORA initiatives are examples of how publishers are bringing current research information within the reach of those who need it in low-income nations worldwide."

"Scientific disciplines differ in their scholarly communication practices. Journals differ from one another in their editorial content, features, sales models, and how they serve the needs of their specific research communities. STM applauds the multiple journal business models that have successfully emerged to serve the needs of authors and customers by ensuring the wide and continuous dissemination of consistently high-quality, independently validated research. We welcome additional publishers to our markets. As publishers of science, we naturally look forward to any new experiments in our field."

"Abandoning the diversity of proven publishing models in favour of a single, untested model could have disastrous consequences for the scientific research community. It could seriously jeopardize the flow of information today, as well as continuity of the archival record of scientific progress that is so important to our society tomorrow."

"It is the competitive and well-functioning market, and not governments, that must choose which business models and which publishers are best equipped to stay apace of the ever-increasing demand for information exchange."