

Editorial

by TRIX BAKKER

This double issue covers the 33rd LIBER Annual General Conference *Integrating Europe! New partnerships across old borders* in the National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, 29 June to 2 July 2004.[1] There were over 200 (!) participants, among which were many new members and participants from Central and Eastern Europe.

The conference was preceded by the LIBER pre-conference seminar *SPARC Europe* organised by David Prosser, director of SPARC Europe. The seminar explored the significant changes in the scholarly communications environment since the formation of SPARC Europe 2 years ago. David Prosser's article "Snapshots of a Changing Scholarly Communications Environment" is based on the five talks given during the seminar. It highlights the activities being taken at all levels by a wide variety of stakeholders in the scholarly communications process: small and society publishers, funding agencies and research organisations, institutional repositories, and libraries.

The conference itself offered lectures on a variety of topics librarians are confronted with nowadays. The first of the five sessions was on "Integration of research and teaching services in the library". You'll find only two articles (Virakis & Metsar and Kairamo & Pasanen) of these interesting lectures on the library's role in distance education, information literacy and supporting research in an integrated virtual environment. After this session were two lectures given on electronic resource management (ERM) systems to manage the increasing complexity of acquisition and administration of electronic journals (Ellingsen and Sadeh).

The second session "Collaboration to unlock access" was supported by a grant from the Open Society Institute (OSI) to assist delegates from Central and Eastern Europe to attend the conference. Fred Friend made a compilation of the presentations of the speakers: Mark Walport, director of the Wellcome Trust, a major funder of medical research; Jan Velterop, director and publisher of the BioMed Central group; and Theresa Velden, executive director of the Heinz Nixdorf Centre for Information Management (Max Planck Society). Each of these three speaker were very positive about the value of open access to research and see it as viable in the long-term. Two librarians presented different perspectives on open access. Ann Okerson of Yale University Library saw the future for better access as a mix of various improvements. Lars Bjornshauge, director of Lund University Libraries, presented the practical steps Lund and other Swedish universities are taking to encourage open access as part of the global open access movement. The Directory of Open Access Journals - now listing over 1300 journals of which more than 300 are searchable at article level - is the most visible of the Swedish developments.

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The third session was on “Safeguarding the European cultural heritage” and “Life cycle collection management”. These reports on preservation, conservation, and cost models for cultural heritage institutions - archives, museums and libraries - were all very interesting and stimulating for further thought and discussion.

In the fourth session “Libraries and archives - uneasy partners?” the organisation of libraries and archives were compared. There are many differences, but fundamentally there are several similarities. The major challenge for both institutions is to develop enhanced services that meet the needs of the users. The second part of this session was about “Libraries and the law - partners or adversaries?” Librarians need to be more and more legal competent because of the increasing complexity of copyright legislation concerning digital material. For this session was also a speaker from EBLIDA invited, because EBLIDA - an independent umbrella association of national library, information, documentation and archive associations and institutions in Europe - is best known for its work concerning the copyright directive.

For the local session four Russian speakers were invited. Three of the four presentations were in English and can be seen on the ENSSIB website, but there are no written papers in English to be published in this issue.

The last articles, although these are not based on lectures given during the conference, are published because two fit very well in the context of the conference. The article of Bas Savenije can be seen as extra information on SPARC, and the article of Julien van Borm and Natalia Sokolova is about Copeter, a project for co-operative management of electronic document provision between three universities in St. Petersburg (Russia). The very last article “Challenges in Digitisation” is based on a paper given by Elmar Mittler in honour of professor Esko Häkli, former director of the Helsinki University Library, The National Library of Finland, on November 23, 2001.

NOTES

1. All presentations are mounted on the ENSSIB website:
http://www.enssib.fr/article.php?id=183&cat=Biblioth%E8que+num%E9rique&id_cat=183

WEB SITES REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

BioMed Central. <http://www.biomedcentral.com/>

Copeter. <http://www.ruslan.ru:8001/copeter/>

EBLIDA is the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations. <http://www.eblida.org/>

Max Planck Society. <http://www.mpg.de/english/portal/index.html>

OSI - Open Society Institute. <http://www.soros.org/>