

English translation for an

**Welcome Address for the international Open Access-conference of the Max-Planck-Society, 29<sup>th</sup> of March, 2006**

*by the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Innovation, Science, Research and Technology of the state of North-Rhine-Westphalia*

to be read by a delegate of the Max-Planck-Society

I was very pleased being invited to contribute a welcome address to the opening of this conference. I wish I could have delivered it personally, because the Max Planck Society succeeded again to expose the topics of the Berlin Declaration in such a distinguished and internationally prominent form.

I expect the next three days to give vital impulses on the way to a sustainable architecture of the future information and publishing system in the sciences and humanities.

Such a sustainable information- and publishing system is crucial for preparing the next generation of the knowledge society. Efficient scholarly communication and cooperation structures are indispensable prerequisites of excellent research. They determine the quality of the academic practice in general and, therewith, of the whole research landscape.

It is essential to explore innovative forms of scholarly communication and publishing. This implies risks, too. Risks that conventional players often cannot take but that are worth to explore in order to open up new opportunities. Therefore, North-Rhine-Westphalia selectively funds novel forms of scholarly communication and publishing, such as eJournals that are committed to innovative online communications and free access, world-wide.

It is obvious that funding of research also implicates availability of the research results. But when it takes several years for an article to be published in a journal, the research results have already lost a large part of their potential benefit.

Therefore, we must jointly assure that knowledge, which is created by research remains available for research.

One thing is clear: Changes in the value systems of the sciences and the humanities imposed by the digital world are inevitable.

- Better than now, we must be able to respond to the question of reputation and evaluation of research output in the digital world.
- Reliable standards for networked digital infrastructures are required.
- We need sustainable operational models for open access publishing systems and
- we also need an enhanced preparedness for sharing and remix of primary research results by the researchers themselves.

We must realise what it means to share knowledge in order to augment it. This also implies to think about more provident forms for the conventional patent and copyright issues. We must critically ask ourselves whether protective provisions and restrictive legal clauses or liberality and openness lead to higher innovation.

I am convinced that – without an efficient, timely and open exchange in global knowledge networks – research landscapes will become increasingly pressurised. Global and fair solutions can only be accomplished jointly and in active networks. This event, taking place for the fourth time, will provide an excellent forum.

I wish you interesting and controversial discussions with a strong repercussion in the sciences and humanities, and in politics.

gez. Christiane Dusch

(Übersetzung: Wolfram Horstmann)