

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am really pleased that you chose Golm as the venue for today's conference.

Over the past 15 years, this area has become the largest science park in the federal state of Brandenburg. The investment here amounts to a total of 225 million Euros.

Golm brings together leading international research, ranging from biotechnology to gravitational physics, with the education of young scientists at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Potsdam. The cooperation between the university and the non-university research institutes here works in an exemplary way.

About 4,000 young people study here today and the research institutes employ 1,500 scientists and staff members. In three years there will probably be twice as many.

Every day these individuals add to our treasure of knowledge – how can we deal with the dissemination of this knowledge?

Open access to scientific information – this is the aim of the *Open Access* movement that will be discussed from today. I am very pleased to be here and to represent the politics of science and research in this discussion. I am a mathematician myself, so I fully understand the interests of the scientists concerning access to information. However, the different – to some extent even opposed – interests of the various camps involved in the transfer of knowledge, as authors, publishers, universities, research institutions, and readers, have to be considered and balanced in a reasonable way.

*Open Access* promises to optimize the access to scientific information in every possible way. The development of digital forms of publication and the Internet make it easy to distribute scientific results worldwide, cost-effectively, and without delay. The utilisation of

this information for the purposes of science and research using the various *Open Access* models is therefore an important step toward effective information management.

However, *Open Access* must also be seen in the context of a more general economic and social viewpoint. That is, authors and holders of a copyright, in particular the publishers, lose returns by virtue of open access. Their economic interests are understandable to me. On the other hand, quasi-monopoly structures have developed on the publishers' side, limiting competition and leading to an inflationary spiral. The effect has been that universities have had repeatedly to reduce their holdings, especially of journals. Their duty to maintain the supply of information is harder and harder to fulfil. This limitation in providing resources in turn affects Germany's competitiveness and reputation as a location for science.

Furthermore, the knowledge in question is being generated at universities and research institutes with public funds. At present, the state pays three times for the scientists' publications: for the equipment of universities and research institutes and their infrastructure, for the salaries of the scientists, and finally for the access to the scientific results by purchasing the scientists' publications.

The state is even asked to pay a fourth time in situations where a further royalty is required for the use of certain works in the libraries. A reduction of these costs eventually would unburden the public purse.

One thing is clear: the technical development of recent years in the so-called new media and the World Wide Web will proceed further. Even though the practice in different disciplines is still rather different – the humanities are significantly less inclined toward digital publishing – the trend toward www-based information exchange is clear and irreversible.

The Internet was developed by scientists for scientists. It is natural, therefore, especially in the scientific context, not only to use but also to promote the possibilities of the Internet for access to and distribution of information. One of the main criticisms the Open Access movement must face is the question of quality control. For printed material the publisher takes on this responsibility. How can an adequate control mechanism be created for the Internet? For *Open Access* reports and online journals, ways and means still have to be found in order to guarantee the scientific quality. This issue is already, of course, being worked on. At the same time, *Open Access* publications have to gain acceptance for the review of research activities as well as for evaluating scientific careers.

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in Germany, after having weighed the different arguments, encourages the new trend toward electronic publishing. The financial problem of scientific publishing mentioned before, burdening the public purse, might be remedied this way. The Ministers recommend as a first step the setting up of servers at academic libraries.

The government of the federal state of Brandenburg shares this position. It has supported new structures and new publishing forms and will do so in the future as well. The current state of affairs is a good start: publications are made available on servers of all three universities at Cottbus, Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, and Potsdam, as well as at the Film and Television Academy. The internet search engine of the Cooperative Association of Libraries in Berlin-Brandenburg (KOBV) allows access to almost all library stocks in the region, and since the end of 2004 it also provides a new OPUS service. That means that software all university libraries now have software that provides integrated workflows for authoring and editing, in order to enable electronic publishing of locally produced documents. This service will in the future be used by all higher education establishments in Brandenburg.

In addition, KOBV offers the archival storage of data as an additional service. This subject is becoming more and more important with increasing digitizing of publications.

The success of these new structures and of *Open Access* as a whole ultimately relies on scientists supporting these new developments. The regulators and funders of universities and research institutes can provide the necessary legal and financial foundation, but the job of convincing the scientific community has to be done by you, ladies and gentlemen.