

13th Berlin Open Access Conference

Berlin, 22 March 2017

Welcome & Opening by the Conference Chair

Ulrich Pöschl, Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, Mainz, Germany

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen!

On behalf of the organizing committee and advisory board, I would like to welcome you to the 13th Berlin Open Access Conference at the Harnack House of the Max Planck Society.

This house has a long tradition of scholarly exchange and discussion. It is a place where Albert Einstein, Max Planck and colleagues discussed fundamental laws of physics; and as the conference venue of the Max Planck Society, it continues to serve the advancement of the sciences and humanities.

14 years ago, at the first Berlin Open Access Conference, the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities has been publicly announced in the same room in which we are convening today.

In the meantime, the support for Open Access has grown considerably, and the Berlin Declaration has been signed by nearly 600 scholarly organizations around the world. It has become a milestone in the development of open access.

Some of us were already involved in the Berlin 1 Conference and may remember that many of the initial discussions back then revolved around the question if and why open access should be a goal of scholarly publishing and communication.

Since then we have come a long way, and today the benefits and viability of open access publishing are clearly proven by an increasing number of highly successful open access journals and other platforms.

Most scholarly journals, however, are still based on the subscription business model with its inherent deficiencies in terms of access, cost-efficiency, transparency, and restrictions of use.

To gain the full benefits of open access and enable a smooth, swift and scholarly oriented transition, the international initiative OA2020 aims to transform a majority of today's scholarly journals from subscription to open access publishing in accordance with community-specific publication preferences.

At the same time, full support shall be continued and extended to other established, new, and improved forms of open access publishing and archiving. Thus, the OA2020 initiative is not in competition with but complementary to other open access initiatives.

This approach was discussed and agreed upon during the Berlin 12 Conference in December 2015, and OA2020 was officially launched exactly one year ago on 21 March 2016 with the public release of the "Expression of Interest in the Large-scale Implementation of Open Access to Scholarly Journals".

The document has already been formally signed by over 80 scholarly organizations worldwide, and more are about to join in and provide growing support.

In particular, the support from the United States of America is strongly increasing, and we are very pleased that the Universities of California at Berkeley, Davis, and San Francisco have officially signed the Expression of Interest during the past couple of days.

The first day of the Berlin 13 Conference yesterday was reserved for exchange and networking between the signatories of the OA2020 'Expression of Interest' and other scholarly organizations who are already engaged or considering to join the initiative.

The second conference day today is open to a wider audience and all stakeholders, including the publishing industry. In total, we have well over 200 participants from over 34 countries.

Yesterday, Martin Stratmann, the President of the Max Planck Society, quoted the past president Peter Gruss who asked at the first Berlin Open Access Conference and release of the Berlin Declaration in 2003, whether it would be really necessary to answer every question before supporting the right idea.

President Stratmann's answer and message was: "Well, certainly not! But in the process of attaining Open Access we have now arrived at a critical point where we need to find answers to questions – precise answers to real-life questions of research and research policy. What we need now is a kind of "engineering approach" to the matter." And he confirmed: "Over the last 13 years, our belief in the open access vision and our commitment to its realization have not changed. The Max Planck Society fully supports it."

With this firm commitment, let me outline the agenda for this morning:

Following up on this welcome address, Daniel Spichtinger from the European Commission Directorate-General for Research & Innovation will present an official declaration of support from the Director-General Robert-Jan Smits.

My colleague Gerard Meijer will contribute some introductory remarks and a status report on open access, including recent developments in the Netherlands. Then Louise Page from the Public Library of Science will provide a keynote speech on the "Development of a sustainable open access market". In the second half of the morning session, we will hear about and discuss different concepts of transformation.

With this outlook on stimulating exchange and discussions, I would like to welcome you again and thank all participants for joining in and contributing to the goal of this conference, which is the building of capacities for the upcoming transition to open access.

Now let me give the floor to Daniel Spichtinger from the European Commission.