

MAX PLANCK SOCIETY

Press Release



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Science and Culture Accessible to all Internet Users

"Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities" signed

On Wednesday 22nd October, the President of the Max Planck Society Professor Peter Gruss signed the "Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities" together with representatives from other large, German and international research organizations. The signing of this declaration was preceded by a three-day conference in the Harnack House of the Max Planck Society in Berlin-Dahlem where leading, international experts discussed new ways of accessing scientific knowledge and cultural heritage via the Internet.

For the first time ever, the Internet offers the possibility of making knowledge universally accessible. As a result, publishing practices and the system of quality assurance used thus far in the sciences and the humanities are expected to undergo considerable changes. In signing the "Berlin Declaration", the research organizations advocate consistently using the Internet for scientific communication and publishing. Their recommendations in favor of open access are directed not only at research institutions but also and to the same extent at cultural institutes such as libraries, archives, and museums.

The Berlin Declaration states that, "Establishing open access as a worthwhile procedure ideally requires the active commitment of each and every individual producer of scientific knowledge and holder of cultural heritage". Open access contributions include original scientific research results, raw and metadata as well as source materials and digital representations of pictorial and graphical materials. The authors and right holders grant to all users a free, irrevocable, and universal right of access to these contributions and allow their work to be used, reproduced, or disseminated in digital form (provided correct attribution of authorship or copyright owner is given). Together with supplemental materials and the declaration of the right of use, the complete version of the work is to be made accessible in at least one electronic online archive. Such an archive can be maintained by academic institutions and federal or private organizations that subscribe to the principles of open access to and long-term archiving of publication material.

The signatories of the Berlin Declaration intend to make progress by

- encouraging their researchers or grant recipients to publish their work according to the principles of open access
- encouraging cultural institutions to support open access by providing their resources on the Internet
- developing means and ways to evaluate open access contributions in

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order to maintain the standards of quality assurance and good scientific practice, and by

- advocating that such publications be recognized in promotion and tenure evaluation.

The "Berlin Declaration" is in accordance with the spirit of the "Bethesda Declaration on Open Access Publishing" and the "Budapest Open Access Initiative". Both also endorse fundamental changes to the practice of scientific publishing. The "Berlin Declaration" incorporates cultural heritage, a point stemming from the ECHO (European Cultural Heritage Online) initiative, one of the pilot projects supported by the EU Commission. The ECHO-Project involves sixteen partners from nine European countries, which develop solutions to make cultural heritage accessible via the Internet.

Related Links:

[1] [Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities](#)

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