

## Current activities in scholarly publishing and communication issues in Sweden

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Dysfunctionality and current problems in scholarly publishing and communication have during the latest years caught increasing attention from the scientific community. The creation of SPARC [1], the Budapest Open Access Initiative [2], recent reports from the Wellcome Trust are but few examples of an emerging movement stemming from criticism of the current model where the scientific community more or less have outsourced publishing and dissemination to corporate companies.

### Swedish universities and university colleges

Decision makers at Swedish universities and university colleges have during the last two years gradually devoted more attention to the current problems. Originating from concern of the continuous price increases of scholarly journals the Swedish Association of Higher Education (SUHF) [3] in 2002 commissioned a study on library related issues.

The Annual General Meeting of SUHF in 2003 accepted the recommendations of the study: "Roads for Knowledge – the need for a new strategy for universities and their libraries" [4].

Regarding scholarly publishing the most important observations and recommendations were:

There is a need for changes in the current system for scholarly publishing

The universities need to establish conditions for creating professional publishing services within universities and university colleges

As of today the libraries are the natural choice for the organisation of such activities.

Based on the study SUHF has appointed a working group to deal with several important aspects of the scientific publishing process as well as intellectual property rights, tenure and promotion processes and their relation to the current publishing system. The working group shall as well promote alternative approaches based on university publishing and other initiatives for open access publishing.

Currently the working group is dealing with intellectual property rights (IPR) agreements that will secure that researchers can publish, disseminate and archive publications on university servers (institutional repositories).

New IPR agreements will focus on the author´s right to use the document, that the copyright should remain with the author and that this will be acknowledged by the publisher in the copyright line. The author will retain the right to use the document for research, educational or other purposes of the author´s university/institution. The IPR-agreement will as well allow that the document can be mounted on a server within the domains of the institution and/or posted to free public servers of preprints and/or articles in the author´s subject area.

The Annual General Meeting of SUHF October 2004 decided to sign the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, and this will be followed by an attempt to raise the issues of scholarly communication and open access for the Swedish Research Council.

The working group will initiate a study as to current practice and implementation of tenure and promotion schemes and their dependency on existing measures of research impact (i.e. journal impact factors) in order to be able to recommend additional measures, for instance including citation counts of open accessible versions of documents, downloads etc.

The SUHF working group will as well shortly deal with a common format for registration of publications in order to pave the way for standardization of university based publication databases and cross evaluation of research output and impact.

## **Electronic publishing**

Although not a new activity [5] a number of universities and university colleges are now working on developing their electronic publishing services, often initiated by the libraries. To a certain extent the recommendations of the SUHF have helped in that regard but at least equally important is that a number of university libraries has entered a common project – the SVEP project - coordinated by BIBSAM [6].

The SVEP project [7] is a Swedish national project aiming at coordinating and supporting e-publishing activities at universities and university colleges in Sweden.

The aim of the SVEP project is to promote, support and coordinate electronic publishing at Swedish universities and university colleges. Running from September 2003 to September 2005 with funds from BIBSAM, the activities within the project are carried out in collaboration between a number of Swedish university and university college libraries and the National Library.

The main areas for the work within the SVEP project are: interoperability, preservation, dissemination and advice as to which software to use for institutional repositories. The SVEP project has as well run a series of workshops and seminars in order to raise the awareness of the issues and as well to establish contact between staff involved in setting up electronic publishing activities at the Swedish universities. One of the first specific deliverables of the project is an integrated search service for Swedish undergraduate theses and diploma work using OAI-PMH.

### **Raising awareness of the issues**

As indicated above SUHF – that is the vice-chancellors and university directors of the Swedish universities and university colleges – has devoted attention to the current problems in the scholarly publishing system and voted in favor of open access to the intellectual output from their institutions. The libraries at these institutions are also busy in developing and implementing electronic publishing services – institutional repositories. What is still to do is to bring the issues to the agenda of the major research funders and to the level of government.

Of course the activities performed within the network of the Swedish Resource Centre for Scientific Communication (SRVK) helps a lot in this regard but hopefully the signature of the Swedish Universities and University Colleges on the Berlin Declaration will facilitate that the research funders will take notice of the issues.

## Notes and links

[1] <http://www.arl.org/sparc/>

[2] <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/>

[3] The membership of SUHF is the 40 Swedish universities and university colleges - <http://www.suhf.se/>

[4] <http://www.suhf.se/pdf/Biblioteksrapporten.pdf> - summary of recommendations on pages 21-22.

### **Minutes of SUHF 2004-10-21**

[5] A number of Swedish universities have in operation dissertation databases with fulltext and institutional repositories.

[6] BIBSAM - the Royal Library's Department for National Co-ordination and Development - <http://www.kb.se/ENG/kbstart.htm>

[7] <http://www.svep-projekt.se/>

## **Svensk sammanfattning**

Artikeln ger en överblick över pågående arbete i Sverige kring vetenskaplig publicering och kommunikation. Arbetet inom SUHF och särskilt SUHFs arbetsgrupp för informationsförsörjning redovisas översiktligt. Även det pågående arbetet med elektronisk publicering och implementering av institutionella arkiv inom Sveriges universitet och högskolor och SVEP-projektet redovisas.