On the circuit

27th annual Society for Scholarly Publishing (SSP) meeting
Boston, MA
1–3 June 2005

Report by Dan Tonkery

> *"The British are coming! The British are coming! The British are coming!"*
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> … and so did the Canadian, the French, Chinese, Japanese, Dutch, Australian and Swedish publishers come to Boston to attend to the 27th annual Society for Scholarly Publishing (SSP) meeting in June. This time the cry that the British are coming to Boston was met with open arms and open access issues. Over 600 publishers and a few enlightened librarians assembled in Boston for one of the best meetings I have been to in years.

SSP is becoming the place to be as more and more international publishers are drawn to the outstanding program that just gets better every year. Maybe it is the state in which we find the publishing industry with the changes in the market brought on by technology or perhaps it is the looming government intervention in the flow of scholarly information that brings in the record attendance. Everyone will agree that the issues and topics this year at SSP were right on target. The program committee needs to receive a well deserved thank you from all of the attendees.

If you were looking for the latest information on the NIH initiative where they are forcing open access on the biomedical publishing community or what is happening with institutional repositories, the SSP sessions were full of current and valuable information. From the first day, with the sold-out seminars on such topics as the evolving business models and pricing update to new trends in outsourcing or optimizing content for search engines, attendees were flocking to hear in-depth presentations on some of the more pressing issues of the day.

The rest of the program delivered as promised on the four conference tracks including ideas, access, innovation and global markets offering a well balanced set of sessions that provided insights into the future as well as advice on how to improve the present. Having just attended the NASIG meeting where the librarians dealt with the technical and administrative aspects of e-journal management and access, and then being able to hear the publishers' perspective, was a real plus.

It is a shame that more of the publisher focused issues cannot somehow be shared with the library meeting programs. Our two professions often operate as two separate communities that only share or talk to each other when we are threatened by a common enemy but once the threat is over we go back to our respective communities and little communication occurs. Perhaps the NASIG and SSP Boards can find a way to have a meeting in the same city and plan for one day of overlapping sessions. The UKSG program includes more publisher related programming and is perhaps more integrated with the community.

The next opportunity for SSP attendance will be at the 28th annual meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, on 7–9 June 2006. Given the exchange rate for one thing and continuing issues facing all of us, I will not be surprised to again see more international participation. See you in 2006!