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C4.3.6 REPORT of the first EDIT meeting on Scientific Publishing by Natural History Institutions

held the 8th of December 2008

hosted and organised by the Muséum national d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris



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For questions on the meeting or the meeting report, please contact the organisers:

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Introduction

The European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy (EDIT) is a network of 27 natural history museums, herbaria and botanical gardens. The network supports and facilitates integration of research infrastructures in taxonomy and biodiversity research at different (institutional) levels. Journals, Monographs, Flora's and Fauna's are part of the taxonomic research infrastructure. Natural history institutions are unique in academia when it comes to publishing their own scientific titles. Among the EDIT institutions over more than 100 titles are published of which are at least 67 research journal, most of them covering taxonomy and systematics. EDIT recognises that the scientific journals and series of natural history institutions are a window to the work of taxonomists and to the research on collections. They are a valuable infrastructure for the taxonomic community, but they can play a much more efficient role if integration of information, access, and quality are further optimised.

In the digital era of today the field of scientific publishing is rapidly changing. Publishing departments in natural history institutions have to respond quickly to new opportunities and new strategic questions about visibility, access, format, and financial structure of their titles. This was the main reason for the publishing department of the Muséum national d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN) and EDIT to sponsor and co-organise a meeting about scientific publishing for and with publishing representatives from different EDIT institutions. In the months preceding the meeting a wide range of publishing discussion subjects were suggested by different EDIT institutions to the organisers. These subjects were so rich that at it was decided that at least two meetings on scientific publishing are needed to cover them all. By bringing publishing representatives together EDIT and the MNHN want to create a platform for exchanging knowledge and explore opportunities for collaboration in the domain of scientific publishing. The publishing meeting(s) act as a sounding board and agenda setters for the EDIT steering committee and the EDIT directors.

This report lists the outcomes of the first scientific publishing meeting held December 8, 2008. The central objectives of this meeting were: to make the publishing departments acquainted with each others departmental organisation and work processes and to set the scope and to draft the work agenda for the second meeting. The second meeting will be held in June 2009.

Format of the meeting

The meeting of 8th of December had a small scale setting meant to facilitate an interactive discussion. During one day 17 participants¹ worked together among whom were 14 representatives of 12 different EDIT institutions, and 3 representatives of the EDIT network office. The morning was dedicated to short presentations by each publishing department. Every presentation summarised questions and challenges as they are encountered by each department. In the afternoon these challenges were discussed one by one and categorised under different themes. These themes are the framework for the agenda of the second meeting.

The second EDIT meeting on scientific publishing will be open to all EDIT publishing departments and others interested in the subject.

Outcomes of the meeting

The meeting of December 8 aimed to: 1) learn about the publishing departments in EDIT, their journals and scientific series, their organisational structure and their work processes; 2) prepare an agenda for a second meeting on scientific publishing in natural history institutions. A summary of the different organisational structures of the publishing departments and the suggested agenda topics for the second meeting are described in the following paragraphs.

¹ Annex 3 list of participants

1. *Scientific publishing in EDIT institutions*

All publishing representatives were asked to present the organisational structure of their publishing department, or if there was not a separate department - to amplify who is responsible and involved in the publishing process² in their institutions. Based on the presentations of 12 EDIT institutions, four organisational models can be distinguished:

1) **The institution only accommodates / hosts a postal address for the periodical (e.g. for taxonomic societies)** [SNM, RBINS]

Like natural history institutions, taxonomic societies publish periodicals. For legal or funding purposes the titles are sometimes hosted by natural history institutions. In practice this means that only the periodical's postal address is within the institution. The journal title however is owned by the society and they are responsible for defining the scope of the publication, the review (if there is one), the editorial and the printing process, finding funding, managing subscriptions. The editorial work is often coordinated by a researcher. The Entomologiske Meddelelser of Danish Entomological Society hosted by the SNM is an example of a journal published under this model.

2) **The complete publishing process is managed by scientific staff within the structure of the institution** [HNHM, SNM]

In the second model the chain of publishing activities - including the strategic questions, the editorial processes, and the technical processes - is carried out by members of the scientific staff along with their scientific activities.

3) **The institution has specialised publishing staff in-house, responsible for the edition, publication process and for technical aspects** [MNHN, MIZPAN, NHN, Naturalis, RMCA, RBINS, RBGK, BGBM]

Here is a clear division of labour between the administrative and scientific personnel and the publishing department. Administrative and scientific staff is involved in strategic decision making, the writing and reviewing articles is the responsibility of the scientists and the publishing process is carried out by specialised editorial and technical staff, employed by the institution. The printing and binding are in all institutions outsourced to commercial partners, selected on the base of quality and competitive costs. Often institutions give preference to work with printers in their own country, this for communication purposes and administrative reasons.

4) **Editorial process remains within the institution but the rest of the publication process is out-sourced to a (commercial) publisher.** [NHML, MfN, RBGK, BGBM]

In this model the publishing strategy is developed by scientists or scientific management of the institution. The institution appoints the editorial-board; the editor-in chief is employed by the institution. A commercial publisher will look after the technical publishing process and the printing. A contract with commercial publishers often includes agreements on the financial turnover of a journal title, the format, and the access options. Most contracts are binding for several years, within this limitation the institutions are the owner of the journal title.

Next to these four organisational models there exist several hybrid organisational models among

² An overview of the scientific publications [title, access, editorial scope] per institution is available in a separate document see EDIT website.

the EDIT publishing departments. Some institutions opt to publish one part of their periodicals under model 3 and other under model 4. For example RBGK publishes its Monographs, Floras, and Faunas under model 3 and its two journals under model 4. Naturalis publishes three journals under model 3 and two of its Floras - co-publications with other museums - are issued under model 4. This is similar to the structure in RBINS. Also combinations of model 1 and 2 exist [i.e. SNM]. Another organisational difference is the integrations or separation of the scientific periodicals and the publications for the general public. The RBGK and the RMCA have publishing departments where scientific and material for the general public are published within the same department. In the MNHN these are separate responsibilities.

Some departments use an explicit mission statement on why they published their own scientific journals and series. For example the journals of the MNHN and Naturalis aim to: promote the collections in their institutions, or to serve as a platform for the research of their scientific staff (Naturalis). The possibility to exchange an institutional journal against other journals was mentioned as one of the reasons why institutions continue to publish their own scientific journals and series.

2. Suggestions for the agenda for the 2nd meeting in Scientific Publishing in NHI

Next to a description of the institutional journals and series, and the publishing process in their institution, the participants listed the publishing challenges they encounter and ideas on how to overcome these. During the discussion, the following subjects have been identified as important for scientific publishing in several EDIT institutions:

Theme 1 – best practice in technical issues of publication departments

- Software (proprietary/open)
- Dissemination (e.g. CrossRef, Ingenta)
- How to manage the quality of English?
- Acquiring know-how for e-publication
- IPR and copyrights management
- Printing technology
- Environmental sustainability issues
- Dissemination of paper stocks.

Theme 2 - implementation of institutional policy

- Reducing fragmentation –start joint-publication?
- Impact factor
- New species description / alpha-taxonomy
- Limits of scientific publication (e-types, databases, association files)
- Going all-electronic?
- Copyrights, open access, creative commons, EOL issues
- BHL issues: Digitising/availability publication backlog
- Income and economic models, policy towards out-house commercial publishing by scientists
- Partnerships with private publishers

The list of proposed subjects for the agenda of the second meeting makes a distinction between technical and strategic policy issues. However, most subjects are related to both. A main subject of discussion was the possibility to start a joint descriptive taxonomic journal co-published by a several EDIT and other international institutions, an initiative proposed by RBINS. The idea was well received, but it was stressed that the scope and the possible organisational consequences for the different co-editing departments will need further investigation. Yet, the following advantages of a joint publication were stressed: standardisation of access and of the presentation/information format; access to a of better/more versatile

panel of reviewers; financial advantages – better stability against coming troubles; wider editorial staff; improved standing as a partner for ICZN, EOL, etc. Possible disadvantages that were mentioned were: loss of journal exchange potential and less alternatives for publication. RBINS will take a lead and further investigate the idea of a joint-published journal. The organisers of the meeting take the view that a formal proposal to the EDIT steering committee and/or the Board of Directors will give the proposal the weight it needs.

The discussion subjects that are mentioned above are integrated into draft agenda for a second meeting on scientific publishing in natural history institutions³. All publishing representatives present at this first meeting on scientific publishing volunteered to continue to work on at least one of the (sub) themes. During the following months 4 working groups with publishing representatives will prepare the final agenda and meeting programme of a second meeting.

Conclusion

The first EDIT meeting on scientific publishing in natural history institutions brought together 12 EDIT publishing departments. By way of this meeting EDIT and the MNHN wanted to make a start with the creation of a platform to exchange knowledge and explore opportunities for collaboration. The presentations and discussion demonstrated that there are differences in the organisation of scientific publishing but that they are facing similar challenges at the strategic, editorial, and technical levels of publishing process. The proposal to start a joint published journal was positively received but needs further investigation, feedback and support from the EDIT management level. An agenda for a follow up meeting was drafted together with a list of recommendation of the EDIT steering committee (see below). A second meeting is needed to further investigate the possibilities to develop a collective answer to some of the issues raised. The second meeting is planned of for June 2009.

Recommendations to EDIT

Next to the preparation of the draft agenda for a second meeting, the publishing representatives formulated general recommendations to the directors of EDIT institutions and to the EDIT steering committee.

- Provide a sustainable platform for the exchange of knowledge on publishing issues in EDIT
- Support and facilitate publishing collaboration initiatives
- Facilitate easy access to referees (integration in EDIT expert database?)
- Help publishing departments to formulate and implement a code of conduct for authors taking into account the Convention on Biological Diversity compliance
- Develop a methodology to evaluate how many new species are described in journals from EDIT institutions
- Investigate the possibility of starting a unified peer-reviewed journal for descriptive taxonomy on the Web.

*

³ Annex 4

ANNEX 1 - Acronyms

BGBM	Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum, Berlin
BHL	Biodiversity Heritage Library
EDIT	European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy
EOL	Encyclopedia of Life
HMNH	Hungarian Natural History Museum
ICZN	International Code of Zoological Nomenclature
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
MfN	Museum für Naturkunde Berlin
MIZPAN	Museum and Institute of Zoology, Poland
MNHN	Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle
NHML	Natural History Museum, London
NHN	National Herbarium Netherlands
RBGK	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
RBINS	Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels
RMCA	Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren
SNM	Zoological Museum, National Museum of Natural History, Denmark

ANNEX 2 – Meeting Agenda

Agenda

First EDIT meeting on Scientific Publishing in Natural History Institutions

A workshop organised by EDIT WP4 and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle

December 8, 2008

Meeting room Mineralogy (office building), 61 rue Buffon

09:30	Arrival - coffee available	
10:00	Start meeting	
10:00	Welcome EDIT - MNHN	Simon Tillier
10:10	Presentations by publishing delegates	
10:10	1 Scientific Publishing by the Muséum national d'Histoire Naturelle	Philippe Bouchet
10:25	2 Scientific Publishing by the Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum Berlin-Dahlem	Norbert Kilian
10:40	3 Scientific Publishing by the Hungarian Natural History Museum	András Gubányi
10:55	4 Scientific Publishing by the National Herbarium Netherlands	Connie Baak
11:10	5 Scientific Publishing by the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin	Eva Patzschke
11:25	Break	
11:40	6 Scientific Publishing by the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences	Koen Martens
11:55	7 Scientific Publishing by the Natural History Museum, London	Graham Higley
12:10	8 Scientific Publishing by the Zoological Museum, National Museum of Natural History, Denmark	Lars Vilhelmsen
12:25	9 Scientific Publishing by Naturalis	Sabine Verschoor
12:40 13:30	Lunch break	
13:30	10 Scientific Publishing by the Museum and Institute of Zoology, Poland	Katarzyna Wiśniewska
13:45	11 Scientific Publishing by the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren	Isabelle Gerard
14:00	12 Scientific Publishing by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew	Gina Fullerlove
14:15	13 Round table discussion	
16:30	14 Drafting of agenda for next Scientific Publishing meeting	
17:00	Meeting closes	

ANNEX 3 – list of participants**Organisers**

Laurence	Bénichou	Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle
Daphne	Duin	Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle
Julien	Marmayou	Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle

EDIT Network Office

Vanessa	Demanooff	Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle
Gaël	Lancelot	Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle
Simon	Tillier	Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle

Invitees

Connie	Baak	National Herbarium Netherlands
Philippe	Bouchet	Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle
Gina	Fullerlove	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Isabelle	Gerard	Scientific Publishing by the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren
Andras	Gubanyi	Hungarian Natural History Museum
Graham	Higley	Natural History Museum, London
Norbert	Kilian	Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum, Berlin
Koen	Martens	Royal Belgian Institute of natural Sciences, Brussels
Eva	Patzschke	Museum für Naturkunde Berlin
Sabine	Verschoor	Naturalis, Leiden
Lars	Vilhelmsen	Zoological Museum, National Museum of Natural History, Denmark
Katarzyna	Wisniewska	Museum and Institute of Zoology, Poland

ANNEX 4 – Draft agenda

2nd EDIT meeting on Scientific Publishing in Natural History Institutions

2 consecutive days in the WEEK of June 22, 2009

DAY 1	Item	Best practice in technical issues of publication	Working group	
	1	Software (proprietary/open)		
	2	Dissemination (e.g. CrossRef, Ingenta)		
	3	How to manage the quality of English?	[GROUP 1] Connie Baak (NHN), Laurence Bénichou (MNHN), Isabelle Gérard (RMCA), Eva Patzschke (MfN), Gina Fullerlove (RBGK), Katarzyna Wisniewska (MIZPAN)	
	4	Acquiring know-how for e-publication		
	5	IPR and copyrights management		
	6	Printing technology		
	7	Environmental sustainability issues		
	8	Dissemination of paper stocks.		
DAY 2		Scientific publishing and institutional policy		
	9	Reducing fragmentation – A EDIT joint publication?		[GROUP 2] Koen Martens (RBINS), Graham Higley (NHML), Lars Vilhelmsen (SNM), Norbert Kilian (BGBM), Connie Baak (NHN), András Gubányi (HMNH)
	10	Impact factor		
	11	New species description / alpha-taxonomy		
	12	Limits of scientific publication (e-types, databases, association files)		
	13	Going all-electronic?	[GROUP 3] Gina Fullerlove (RBGK), Sabine Verschoor (Naturalis), Graham Higley (BHL), Connie Baak (NHN)	
	14	Copyrights, open access, creative commons EoL issues		
	15	BHL issues: Digitising/availability publication backlog		
	16	Income and economic models, policy towards out-house commercial publishing by scientists	[GROUP 4] Gina Fullerlove (RBGK), Laurence Bénichou (MNHN), Eva Patzschke (MfN)	
	17	Partnerships with private publishers		