Can libraries be intermediates for the acquisition, production and presentation of scholarly information?

Visions of a dynamic electronic publishing environment as added value to electronic library portals

Ronald M. Schmidt
HBZ Cologne

LIBER workshop on OAi and peer review journals in Europe - CERN, Geneva, March 22-24, 2001
The initial position

- Funding of academia is based on the impact factor of scholarly published communication
- Publish in a peer reviewed journal - or parish
- These journals belong to publishers currently dictating the marketplace
- Content and technology merge towards one stop shops: Elsevier and Endeavor, OCLC and FirstSearch, Bertelsmann (Springer) and TV, etc.
- Can the library community break the vicious circle?
The initial position of libraries

- They make use of Digital Libraries or actively participate in acquisition and archiving of electronic full texts: Theses, courseware, etc.
- They invest staff and funds into electronic media: electronic journals and other sources
- They are forced to redesign their services and reallocate funds: networked information supply
- They are forced to cancel journal subscriptions
- Can they successfully play a role as intermediates of scholarly publication/communication?
Three questions libraries should consider first

- Can the technical environment be generated to accomplish e-journals competitive with established journals?
- Can archiving and distribution be guaranteed?
- Can a backoffice organisation be generated to accomplish quality control comparable to established journals?
If the answers are Yes, what are the backoffice tasks

- Starting a new journal requires marketing
  - Generating a community amongst scholars
  - Generating an editorial board for reviewing
  - Preparation of a business model

- E-publishing requires professionals for the publication process
  - Acquire authors and link to editors
  - Organize the reviewing and indexing
  - Take care for legal topics (copyright)
  - Supervise the technical publication process
The role of leadership

Publisher’s tasks

- Fund raising, business model supervising
- Be active on the marketplace
- Define a publisher’s policy for subjects covered
- Negotiate with partners
- Play an active role in developing the network, build alliances with other e-publishers
- Promote further development of products to multimedia journals
The quality circle as a chance

- Dynamic publishing
- Peer reviewing
- Multimedia options
- Archiving and distribution
- Integration within portals for scholarly information

This product is a gem, but does anyone out there wants it?
Where can libraries act?

- Publisher’s tasks
- Marketing roles
- Publication professionals

Require a cooperative structure

Librarians responsible for collection development:
- intermediates for their faculty
- acquire articles and link to backoffice
- Integration into cooperative library portals
Other agents concerned?

- Library networks supporting portals and technical solutions
- Library organisations supporting coordination and funding
- Scientific societies supporting by cooperation
The political dimension

- Coordination is required between:
  - Scientific societies
  - Library networks
  - Academic librarians via their societies
  - Administrations (Federal States e.g.)
  - International Societies (LIBER e.g.)

- A coordinator is required to play an active role in the amalgamation process
Amalgamation of demands

- Key issue if at all achievable
- Chance to act at least Europe wide and coordinated
- Diversification may result in poor performance
- Libraries can participate, but they need not:
  - Other parties may easily fill the gap:
    - Scientific societies, Computing centers, Information brokers, Publishers .... And another vicious circle may emerge