

## **P-D-R Special Linking Meeting March 2000 - Press Release**

The Pharma Documentation Ring (P-D-R) held a Special Meeting on Linking on the 30-31st March 2000 in Runnymede, UK. Linking is a powerful capability that has emerged from the increased opportunities for R&D scientists to navigate through the scientific and medical literature in the electronic domain as a result of the widespread use of the world wide web, electronic journals, and on-line databases. The P-D-R is an association whose members represent the scientific information departments of the leading R&D-based pharmaceutical corporations. The meeting was attended by a total of 52 delegates, 36 of whom were from 21 different P-D-R member companies, and 16 from invited publishers, on-line information providers and scientific software suppliers.

Henning Nielsen, Novo Nordisk, reported on the progress that had been made on the development of a model licence for electronic journals and then summarised the user requirements for linking from the perspective of the R&D scientists within P-D-R member companies. He identified and prioritised a number of different types of link that users required. He also stressed the need for standards and increased levels of co-operation amongst publishers, intermediaries, aggregators and customers of their services.

Steve Young, MDL, summarised the current status of linking technology. He reported that linking had already evolved through three discrete technology generations. He highlighted the differences between static and dynamic links and discussed some of the outstanding issues, including the observation that the technology was developing at such a pace that businesses were finding it difficult to evolve new ways of working and new business models fast enough.

Speakers from CAS, Elsevier, ISI, MDL, and OVID, described their linking strategies and how linking had been successfully incorporated into their products. In a number of cases, the linking strategies originally adopted had already been superseded by more comprehensive linking approaches in their most recent product releases.

David Sommer (Blackwell Science) described the CrossRef initiative which was launched in October last year. This collaborative venture aims to deliver a direct link from reference citations in published articles to the on-line content. In some cases, the link will be to the publisher's abstract, whilst in others it will be to the full text of the article. Currently, 24 leading STM Publishers are participating in Crossref and the first release of the product is scheduled for mid-April 2000, with a total of 3 million articles.

Arnoud de Kemp (Springer), Maurice Long (BMJ), and Vitek Tracz and Ian Tarr (both Current Science) discussed the revolutions that were taking place in publishing both in terms of the impact of new technology, including the further development of multimedia and visualisation techniques, together with the introduction of new approaches to scientific and medical publishing, including the innovative Biomed and Pubmed Central initiatives.

The meeting was concluded by a panel session in which all participants could question the conference speakers. During this session, it was agreed that the P-D-R should approach the STM Publishers, with a view to establishing a joint work group to help further develop Linking and to help ensure that it meets the needs of information users.

The meeting, which was organised by a small sub-group of the P-D-R and hosted by Glaxo-Wellcome, was judged by all attendees to have been very useful and worthwhile. This was due to the high quality and relevance of all the presentations, the excellent facilities of the conference venue, and the thorough preparations of the organising committee and host.

The 42nd Annual General Meeting of the P-D-R will be held on 27th Sept. - 29th September 2000 in Cheshire, England and will be hosted by AstraZeneca.

The P-D-R web site, launched in 1999, can be found at <http://www.p-d-r.com>.