

Report of Conference Attending
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During June 9 to 12, 2003, I attended the annual conference of Special Libraries Association in New York City. Besides the very inspiring key-note speakers, one each day, including Pulitzer Prize winning author, David McCullough, former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright and Futurist Steward Brand, other activities were concentrating on “special” subject areas. I devoted most of my time on: Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy- recent trends and problems of knowledge collecting, publishing and servicing.

In the field of physic, pioneer and leader of electronic publishing, I learned most from professional non-commercial publisher such as American Physical Society and the publisher from England, Institute of Physics. Generally, the amount of publication is decreasing and cost keeps going up. The movement of open archive and institute ownership of contents are still deeply skeptical by faculty who produce the knowledge. The real commodity is articles, not journals. IOP representative pointed out that open access and open archive are different animals. There is danger of “not indexed properly” in open archive. Ultimately, authors should have rights to their own works. Authors should take more interest in publishing terms which are rarely negotiated by them.

According to the Chief Editor of APS, publishing “conference proceedings” is pure profit, there is almost no cost. Commercial publisher, Gordon & Breach, publishes a large percent of conference proceedings. The prices of on-line journals also depend on a very important factor: commercial advertisement. That is the difference of costs between medical and physical science journals, lots of ad. in medical journals while almost no ad. in physical science journals. Society publishers are not aiming to make money, but they can not afford to lose money neither.

Information literature/literacy courses for physics students were discussed. Most ARL member libraries adopt one-to-one contact to graduate students and faculty while Yale organized formal mandatory program for first year graduate students.