

Living Knowledge – Building Partnership for Public Access to Research

Newsletter – July 2003

Dear reader!

This is the second issue of the bimonthly Living Knowledge Newsletter. The newsletter is intended as a link between the Living Knowledge Discussion List with its brief information and ongoing discussion and the Living Knowledge Magazine with its detailed reports and articles that represent the current state of the discussion on community based research matters.

This newsletter lives from your participation: So please feel free to criticise, prompt and contribute news, events, short reports or experiences from your special field of work.

Yours sincerely
Norbert Steinhaus

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EC conference highlights the role of civil society in governing the European Research Area

'Citizens' relationship with science and technology has deteriorated in recent years. People have high expectations of scientific progress, but there also exists a degree of apathy [...] and a certain anxiety, which is a problem for researchers and politicians, as well as citizens themselves,' said the Commissioner Philippe Busquin at an international conference in Brussels on June 12-13. The aim of the conference was to examine the governance of the European Research Area and the role that civil society should play in the process.

As for the Commission's role in fostering greater links between science and society, Mr Busquin highlighted the role of the Sixth Framework Programme: 'For the first time there is a budget line within the framework programme for science and society activities. 80 million euro [over four years] may not sound very much, but at the same time it is a great deal.' Finally, as well as funding initiatives aimed at promoting civil society participation in scientific policy making, Mr Busquin promised that the Commission would develop best practices in the public governance of science, and disseminate successful models throughout the EU. From this perspective the IFOK (Institut für Organisationskommunikation) interim report of the study “Governance of the European Research Area: the role of civil society” was an important starting point for the discussions and working groups at the conference. Proceedings of this conference will be part of the final report of the IFOK study.

The interim report can be downloaded <http://www.scienceshops.org/> (see 'News')

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International workshop on interfaces between science and society: Collecting experiences for good practices

Milan, November 27-28, 2003

In recent years science has come down from its academic ivory tower and is now managed as a producer of intellectual property in a marketplace of corporate customers. It is now appreciated that in a fully democratic society, science must submit to public scrutiny and participation in the appropriate ways. At this workshop the variety of interfaces between science and society will be explored, so that guidance on the best practice in each area can be achieved.

Themes covered by the workshop

- COMMUNICATING AMONG PLURAL PERSPECTIVES: Exploring the communication of different kinds of information among participants with different backgrounds and perspectives.
- MANAGING UNCERTAINTY, COMPLEXITY AND VALUE-COMMITMENTS: Exploring the management of these qualitative aspects of information among the diverse perspectives. Implementation of precautionary principles.
- KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT: Integrating the different methods and criteria of assessment of information among the diverse perspectives.
- TRANSPARENCY, OPENNESS AND PARTICIPATION IN SCIENCE POLICY PROCESSES: Developments in the principles and conduct of governance, especially regulatory agencies, enabling broader participation, at both national and EU levels.
- COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH: Reviewing relevant worldwide experience on community based research, e.g. science shops, including their societal and policy impacts. Exploring how these can be useful in the context of new EC initiatives such as science & society interfaces; science & governance; risk and governance; etc.
- EMERGING STYLES OF GOVERNANCE AND NEW ICT: Exploring how the new Information and Communication Technologies can become a convivial medium of social learning and governance of scientific issues in the EU context. ("e2 governance" = electronic and extended).

Contact: silvio.funtowicz@jrc.it or angela.pereira@jrc.it,
More information at <http://alba.jrc.it/interfaces/>

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Call for papers

Living Knowledge – Journal of Community Based Research

Deadline for submissions: October, 3rd

Living Knowledge – Journal of Community Based Research (LK) will be the official publication of the International Science Shop Network. The first issue will be published in November 2003. The magazine will be distributed to the members and subscribers of the network as well to journalists, mediators and project partners.

The magazine welcomes the contribution of reports, articles, news, press releases and clippings, letters, contribution to discussions, job offers, internet links etc.

The purpose of LK is to disseminate timely and informative articles that represent the current state of the discussion on science shop / community based research matters. The articles will be selected for appeal to readers engaged in research and applications across the broad spectrum of community based research. Information about LK and the editorial guidelines can be found at the homepage of the science shop network (www.scienceshops.org).

Please send your contributions until October 3rd to:

Norbert Steinhaus, norbert.steinhaus@wilabonn.de or Caspar de Bok, C.F.M.deBok@bio.uu.nl

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Science shop brochure

A coming brochure on science shops, published by the European Commission, will provide a lively and engaging overview of the important role science shops play in bringing research closer to the community. It will reflect the enormous diversity of approaches and models science shops provide. The brochure will also contain as many real life examples as possible to illustrate the concept in a colourful and interesting manner.

Contact: Caspar de Bok, C.F.M.deBok@bio.uu.nl

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Call for papers and participation

Session “Socially Acceptable Cultures of Science” at the International Conference “The Unifying Aspect of Cultures”, Austria Centre, Vienna, Austria, November 7-9, 2003

Deadline for Submissions: September 14th, 2003 (date of arrival)

Chair: Michael Straehle, Science Shop Vienna

The session will explore the following questions:

- How do we envision socially acceptable science? How is it organized and institutionally integrated?
- Can scientific knowledge be combined with other forms of knowledge without dominating them? What epistemological and methodological consequences would a non-comprehensive claim of the sciences have?
- Measures, initiatives and proposals such as, for example, consensus conferences, science shops, expanded peer review and the inclusion of consumers in research projects, have to do with fostering the social acceptability of the sciences by the participation of people who are not members of the scientific community. Is participation really being practiced here? Are the non-scientific participants viewed as partners or as supplicants? How is the social acceptability presented?
- Many of the initiatives that make an effort to carry out socially acceptable science move to the margin or outside of the scientific realm, if they do not remain invisible. Apparently social acceptability is not inherent in the field of the sciences. What prevents socially acceptable sciences?
- The universities are no longer the sole places, which evaluate whether knowledge has been gained in a legitimate way. The manner of maintaining discipline over the forms of knowledge is changing. What new forms of oversight have been introduced? In what relationship do they stand to the demanded social acceptability of the sciences?

Submissions are welcome from all disciplines. Both theoretical and empirical approaches are welcome. Papers can be presented in English, French and German. The length of a presentation should not exceed 20 minutes. Please submit abstracts of papers, max. 300 words, in the body of the message in English or German to michael.straehle@jku.at. Participation is free for speakers. Additionally, for speakers some travel grants are available (First come, first served!).

All papers presented at the conference will be published in Trans, a cultural studies on-line journal (<http://www.inst.at/trans>). Selected papers will be published in a themed volume as part of the INST series of books.

Further details and information at http://www.inst.at/kulturen/index_e.htm

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Conference on the role of science in policy-making

Brussels, Belgium, October 16th, 2003

A conference on science communication will take place on October 16th in Brussels. The conference will bring together environment and health stakeholders, environmental journalists, policy-makers and science communicators to discuss the following topics:

- the use of science in environment and health policy debates;
- the state of communication between scientists and non-specialists;
- the role of scientists in society, the media and decision-making;
- the evolving nature of environmental debates.

The conference is being organised by the GreenFacts Foundation, an international non-profit organisation dedicated to providing factual scientific information on environment and health matters.

Further information: <http://www.greenfactsfoundation.org/conference/index.htm>

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European science education initiative

The German National Contact Point for 'Science & Society' was organizing a brokerage event on July 2nd in Bonn, Germany, to assist applicants in the formation of consortia and to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas. The presentation sheets are now available for download at http://www.eubuero.de/education_brokerage. This site is hosted by the National Contact Point for 'Science & Society' in Germany. Please note that an online partnering forum for this call is available on this website.

Contact: Ms. Kathrin Stratmann, EU-Bureau of the BMBF, kathrin.stratmann@dlr.de

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SCALE – A strategy of the European Commission to combat diseases linked to environmental factors

The European Commissioners responsible for the Environment, Public Health and Research have unveiled a new strategy that will examine the link between health problems and environment, and identify measures to overcome diseases caused by environmental factors. Introducing the 'European Environment and Health Strategy' in Brussels on June 11th, the Commissioners pointed to the dramatic increase in the number of Europeans suffering from conditions such as asthma. They promised that measures would focus on the most vulnerable and susceptible groups in society, particularly children. The strategy is called SCALE, due to the five key elements upon which it is built:

- S** – science will be used to improve understanding of the often-complex link between environment and health. Research will focus on how pollutants move in the environment, how they interact with one another, and what effects these pollutants have on the human body;
- C** – children will form the focus of the strategy, as they are most vulnerable to environmental hazards;
- A** – awareness raising initiatives will be a key element in the strategy, focusing on environmental health issues and solutions;
- L** – legislation, at EU level, will seek to complement national and international initiatives;
- E** – evaluation of actions taken will be ongoing, and will allow policy-makers to address new concerns as they arise.

The European Environment and Health Strategy will be implemented in cycles. The first cycle covers the period 2004 to 2010, and will focus on four main health effects: childhood respiratory diseases, asthma and allergies; neurodevelopment disorders; childhood cancer; and endocrine disrupting effects. An Action Plan 2004 to 2010 will be produced, which the Commission hopes to adopt in spring 2004.

Further information: http://europa.eu.int/comm/press_room/presspacks/health/pp_health_en.htm

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Living Knowledge Newsletter:

Editor: Norbert Steinhaus, Wissenschaftsladen Bonn e.V., Buschstr. 85 - D-53113 Bonn,
tel + (49) 228 201 61 22, fax + (49) 228 26 52 82, norbert.steinhaus@wilabonn.de

with contributions from: C. de Bok, M. Straehle

Living Knowledge Website:

www.scienceshops.org

International Science Shop Office

isso@bio.uu.nl

The newsletters are archived on the Living Knowledge homepage: www.scienceshops.org.

Please recommend this newsletter to your colleagues and partners.

If you want subscribe or unsubscribe to the newsletter please send a message to C.F.M.deBok@bio.uu.nl or visit our website at <http://www.scienceshops.org/list%20and%20newsletter.html>

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