

## SOCIETY UPDATE

# ISMTE 2010 European Conference Summary

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The ISMTE European Conference once again took place at St Hugh's College, Oxford, where the sun shone even though it was mid-October. This was particularly fortunate as the fire alarm went off just as we were about to start, giving the delegates a little extra networking time on the lawn. There was a brief but heavy rainstorm during the day: after last year's thunderstorm, is this going to be a characteristic of the European meeting?

The morning session comprised two highly instructive presentations on plagiarism screening. Kirsty Meddings, Product Manager at CrossRef, summarized the development of CrossRef, described case histories of publishers who had been using it, and reminded us that not every case of overlapping text was necessarily deliberate plagiarism. Kirsty was followed by Alice

Malhador from Institute of Physics Publishing, who reported on IoPP's implementation of CrossRef. She explained that her colleagues had taken different approaches depending on the needs and nature of each journal. Although there was an impact on workload, rewards included better-quality articles, better-educated authors, and also some time-saving later in the editorial process as time spent on decisions was reduced.

Irene Hames then led a workshop session in which groups discussed two case studies on issues raised by the use of CrossRef. Irene gave us some useful pointers about how to avoid running foul of libel laws: for example, we should not accuse someone specifically of plagiarism, and we should avoid sharing information about possible cases with too large a group.

In the afternoon Geoffrey Bilder

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## European Conference Summary

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gave his hugely entertaining and enlightening views on social networking, in particular the relevance of Web 2.0 to scholarly publishing. In his wide-ranging talk, he emphasized that the challenge for publishers was not how to get more content to more readers but how to help readers minimise their reading load. The value of social networking was in helping researchers help each other discover what they should pay attention to. He also introduced many of us to



Figure 1. Attendees network on the lawn.

Web 3.0: helping researchers use machines to discover what they should pay attention to. He noted that this required publishers to structure text and publications so that information could be automatically retrievable.

Mark Patterson described how PLoS facilitates rating, commentary, and bookmarking of articles. He also explained



Figure 2. Irene Hames was recognized at the ISMTE European meeting for her years of service to the ISMTE Board of Directors and her leadership in our industry.

Figure 3. Participants attending a session at the beautiful St. Hugh's College.



how PLoS is moving beyond the confines of the traditional journal through initiatives such as PLoS Hubs (which aggregate and build communities round open-access content) and PLoS Currents (which uses a web-based authoring tool and small review boards to facilitate very rapid publication). Mark proposed that the level of commentary – such as social bookmarking and blog coverage – was a new way of measuring research impact. He suggested that publishers should not try to build artificial communities themselves but instead should ensure that their content is open to and is picked up by existing social networks.

After these two stimulating presentations, Davina Quarterman from Wiley-Blackwell introduced and facilitated a breakout session in which delegates discussed how two different journals could face the challenges and seize the opportunities of social networking tools. In the context of the afternoon session, we were delighted to find that Davina, Kirsty Meddings and Alice Ellingham had all tweeted about the meeting, and Kirsty commented on it in the CrossRef blog. Many thanks for that!



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