

Press Release

SPARC Europe and DRIVER sign Memorandum of Agreement

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ISTANBUL, TURKEY - As part of the **LIBER** 37th Annual Conference held at the Koc University Suna Kirac Library, Istanbul, from 1 to 5 July 2008, SPARC Europe and DRIVER have agreed to work closely together on promoting repositories, signing a Memorandum of Agreement to take this collaboration forward.

SPARC Europe and DRIVER today confirmed a need for cooperation in order to progress and enhance the provision, visibility and application of European research outputs through digital repositories, in systems providing access to texts, data or other types of content.

DRIVER is a joint initiative of European stakeholders, co-financed by the European Commission, setting up a technical infrastructure for digital repositories and facilitating the building of an umbrella organisation for digital repositories. DRIVER relies on research libraries for the sustainable operation of repositories and provision of high quality content through digital repositories. SPARC Europe and DRIVER share the vision that research institutions should contribute actively and cooperatively to a common, pan-European data and service infrastructure based on digital repositories.

In recent years, research libraries have been pressed to improve scholarly communication by establishing digital repositories to expose institutional research outputs to the world. Networks of individual repositories and overarching information services for aggregation, retrieval, share and re-use are being built on the basis of institutional national and regional location, or by subject areas.

Collaboration between SPARC Europe and DRIVER is framed by their joint support for an Open Access model for repositories in research institutions. They will present a common lobby at a national and international level to leverage change through the scholarly community within respective institutions and countries. Their reciprocal support will ensure wider access to standards for interoperability between repositories, and the adoption of emerging technical standards to facilitate open archiving. This agreement demonstrates their joint commitment to promote a European network of repositories offering access to research outputs across institutional and national boundaries

David Prosser, Director of SPARC Europe, said 'Europe is well placed to take a leading role internationally in the development of institutional repositories. A combination of institutional interest, progressive policies from funding bodies, and strong support from the European Commission creates the perfect conditions to foster an open research environment. DRIVER is a key component in underpinning the European repository infrastructure and we are very pleased to cement our already close relationship by signing this agreement.

Norbert Lossau, Scientific Coordinator of DRIVER and Director of Goettingen State and University Library commented: “DRIVER has always been understood to provide a permanent infrastructure for digital repositories. To achieve the necessary outreach, this infrastructure needs to build on collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. Signing the Memorandum of Understanding with SPARC Europe, the central lobbying and support organization for Open Access in Europe, is a significant and welcome consequence of the collaboration agreement concluded with LIBER in August 2007.”

SPARC Europe is an alliance of 110 research-led university libraries from 14 European countries. It is affiliated with SPARC based in Washington, D.C., which represents over 200 institutions, mainly in North America. SPARC Europe and SPARC work to develop and promote new models of scholarly communication that increase the access to and utility of the research literature.