Session 3: Examples of good practice for the use of information and communication technologies

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GRV III Amsterdam 2000: Access to Publicly Financed Research

The third Global Research Village conference was held on 6, 7 and 8 December 2000 in Amsterdam. About one hundred representatives from governments, the European Union, research institutes and research organisations from 20 countries attended the conference. The conference was opened by Minister Hermans of the Netherlands, OECD Secretary-General Johnston and EU-Commissioner Busquin. Minister Wiszniewski of Poland closed the conference and offered to host the next conference in Poland in 2002. Like its predecessors, the conference addressed the policy implications of the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for the science system. This time the conference focused on access to publicly financed research. It discussed the enormous new possibilities of ICT for science, industry and society at large. The conference concluded that to realise this potential, governments (whatever their current level of development) and research organisations should pay more attention to the conditions for access to data, information and knowledge. Access to ICT-infrastructures and content was considered essential to prevent inequality both within society as well as between countries.

The conference agreed that the development of scientific knowledge has always been and will always be dependent on the sharing of relevant information between scientists. The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has increased the scale, scope and speed of scientific communication and sharing of knowledge. ICT have enabled scientific use of enormous databases and has enabled increased collaboration among publicly financed research institutes and between those institutes and industry. ICT have lowered transaction costs and increased productivity of research and its social returns.

The conference recognised Access to research networks as a most important precondition for access to research information. Additionally the conference concluded that it would be useful to try to develop a set of principles for (international) access to and dissemination of data, information and knowledge to be implemented in science policy and research management. These principles should address to following issues:

Openness
Research findings, but also data and other resources used in publicly financed research, should be publicly accessible as much as possible.

Availability
ICT-mediated access should not be seen as a formal condition, but rather as an important quality aspect of availability of scientific information.

Quality
Increases in scale, scope and speed of information disclosure in an ICT environment require additional procedures of quality control.
Accountability
In an ICT environment responsibility for dissemination of research information requires new procedures to guarantee origin, authorship, integrity and authenticity and completeness of reporting.

Fair use
Provisions should be made for the solution of conflicts to guarantee access to research information on reasonable terms for parties that can not meet the standard conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The conference invited the OECD Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy to explore the possibility to formulate commonly agreed principles which might be considered at a fourth Global Research Village Conference to be held in Poland.

The Conference Steering Group was invited to further report on these questions and issues, taking full account of current relevant work in the OECD and viewpoints from organisations like ESF, NSF and also the EC.

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