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MPG – Max-Planck-Gesellschaft
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DAAD – Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
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WGL – Leibniz-Gemeinschaft
Eduard-Pflüger-Straße 55, 53113 Bonn

FhG – Fraunhofer Gesellschaft
Hansastraße 27 C, 80686 München

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Brohler Straße 11, 50968 Köln

25 March 2009

Joint Statement by German Science Organisations

Open access and copyrights: no attack on freedom of publication

The Alliance of German science organisations (*Allianz der Wissenschaftsorganisationen*) considers the statement published by numerous publishers and authors, “In Favour of Freedom of Publication and Copyright Protection” (*Für Publikationsfreiheit und die Wahrung der Urheberrechte*), to be an unacceptable allegation that the Alliance intends to limit authors’ freedom of publication in a way that violates the German constitution. On the contrary, the Alliance’s Digital Information initiative – the target of the statement referred to above – strives to provide scientists with the best-possible information infrastructure so they can excel in their research. In response to the accusations, the Alliance maintains the following:

1. The Alliance insists on free publication (open access) for readers, but only for research findings that come as a result of publicly funded projects that are pursued for the good of the research community and society as a whole. In no way does the Alliance support open access to fiction that is intended to be a source of income for the author and publisher. Such an insinuation is misleading.
2. The Alliance is not calling for illegal activity. The Alliance’s open-access policy does not infringe on an author’s copyright or disregard the interests of publishers. On the contrary, the call for changes to scientific publishing practices is accompanied by a call for a redirection of funds that allow for new business models compatible with open access. Publishers can benefit from these new products. In fact, many of them have adopted open access as an effective business model. All the guidelines urging scientists in Germany and elsewhere to make their work available via open access are compatible with copyright law. There are no grounds for the accusation that copyrights are being expropriated; scientists are and have always been the sole owners of the copyright to their work.
3. Freedom of the scientific community is a valuable commodity; it is enshrined in the constitution and is an essential principle of the organisations in the Alliance. The scientists employed and funded by the Alliance have the freedom to choose

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any primary forms of publication they like. However, given that tax money makes their work possible, the researchers in the Alliance are expected to choose a form that provides easy access to their publications and puts minimal financial strain on the taxpayer. In cases where an open-access medium is not available as a primary option, authors should publish in open access repositories whenever legally possible. Most major publishers already allow this.

4. As far as publicly funded research is concerned, the partners of the Alliance use the funds at their disposal to cover the entire scientific value chain, from procuring information to surveying the literature and performing the first experiments to selling the publications produced with public funds. Whenever publishing services are utilised to make open access the primary form of publication, they are always reimbursed. The organisations in the Alliance set aside a portion of their budget for this very purpose.

More information is available at

[http://www.dfg.de/aktuelles_presse/das_neueste/download/pm_allianz_digitale_infor
mation_details_080612.pdf](http://www.dfg.de/aktuelles_presse/das_neueste/download/pm_allianz_digitale_information_details_080612.pdf)

<http://oa.helmholtz.de>