The Migration from Print to Net: Challenges and Opportunities

Chair:
Susan Knapp
American Psychological Association
Washington, DC

Speakers:
Peter S Greene
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Baltimore, Maryland

Karen Hunter
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New York, New York

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As the world continues its fast-forward move into the age of technology, the Internet is increasingly a part of everyday life. The speakers in this session discussed the challenges and opportunities presented in developing online versions of publications.

Peter S Greene, associate professor of surgery at Johns Hopkins University and editor of Cardiothoracic Surgery Network, described how to use interactive media on the Net to aid in the transfer of information. He described integrated media as the "Wild West" of the Net as its use continues to be explored.

Greene gave several strategies for developing an integrated Web system. The strategies included creating an information infrastructure to draw on, organizing a collaborative community through which to access information, ensuring full integration of journals into the system, and creating valuable hyperlinks. He noted that online videos can be used to show meetings or to depict procedures such as those in surgery. He also stated that journals must do their homework to ensure that their video systems are easy to use. He suggested using uncompressed files, encoding to emphasize clarity rather than smoothness, and creating short segments for users who want to see only parts of a video.

Karen Hunter, senior vice president of Elsevier Science Inc, described Elsevier's 20 years of experience with the transition from

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print to Net. Elsevier is still in the learning process; the transition is not easy, and it uses lots of resources.

Hunter stated that the creation of a business model and rights management are important in the print-to-net transition. The value of electronic journals and their role in the business are still being figured out. She cited a recent article that found 13 variations on electronic-journal pricing; no model prevailed. She said that journals must prepare for a financial model different from that of their paper subscriptions.

Regarding rights management, Hunter said that the availability of text on the Web raises issues of copyright, publishers' and authors' rights, litigation over document delivery, and new categories of materials and distribution. No one is yet sure how such issues will be resolved.

Archiving, Hunter said, is the most talked-about unresolved issue among research librarians—what to archive, who should be responsible, and what will be used to access archived material. Hunter said that although publishers think that they should be responsible for archiving, libraries are concerned about whether publishers can be trusted.

Susan Knapp, director of publications of the American Psychological Association (APA), described the steps that APA is taking to move its journals onto the Net. APA initially focused on developing a database of all the articles in its 35 journals in the preceding 10 years or more.

APA faces several important matters, such as the choice of a linkage system, development of relationships with other publishers to permit cross linkages, appropriate ways to use and monitor links to other publications, generation of electronic files for back issues, and the possible loss of subscriptions when journals go online. Knapp said that APA's greatest concern is what will happen to subscriptions when people can access journals free, online, at libraries. But, Knapp said, a "head in the sand" approach will not work when publications are going in that direction. Knapp emphasized that one active approach at APA is to work with the membership department to find ways to encourage membership other than by offering paper-journal subscriptions.