

# PubMed Central and Plenary Follow-up Discussion

**Speaker:**

**Elizabeth Pope**

National Center for Biotechnology  
Information  
Washington, DC

**Reporter:**

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Dallas, Texas

Elizabeth Pope, staff scientist with the National Institutes of Health's PubMed Central, spoke about the opportunities offered by the government's PubMed Central initiative.

Pope began her presentation with a history and background of PubMed Central. It is a program of the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), which is a division of the National Library of Medicine (NLM). The NCBI programs include Basic Research, which is a center for basic and applied research in computational molecular biology; Databases and Software, which is the builder and provider of GenBank, Entrez, BLAST, and other resources; and Education and Training, which sponsors meetings, workshops, and lecture series.

PubMed Central is a natural extension of NCBI's PubMed program, a Web-based literature retrieval service that constitutes a new approach to biomedical bibliographic database management and integration. PubMed has about 150,000 unique users per day.

The focus of the presentation was on PubMed Central as an archival facility. Publishers can submit material at any time

for archival purposes. The service is free to the publisher (PubMed Central will bear all costs of archiving), and copyright is retained by the publishers. As an archive repository, PubMed Central has responsibilities that include facilitating the input of SGML-tagged content from submitters; developing the technology for enhanced retrieval, presentation, and navigation; improving access to and utility of content in PubMed Central for other information resources, publishers, and database groups; coordinating the repository efforts of international partners in the system; and archiving the content and work to guarantee accessibility in the future.

Any journal currently indexed by the major abstracting and indexing services (such as EMBASE, Biosis, MEDLINE, Science Citation Index, Agricola, PsycINFO, and Chemical Abstracts) can participate in PubMed Central. Organizations in the United States or abroad having at least three principal investigators in research studies funded by large government agencies or private foundations may also participate.

PubMed Central in its function as a digital archive will collect and test SGML, PDF, and graphics data for validation purposes, convert to a database, and perform automated quality assessment. It will support the Keton DTD (document type definition) and the Ovid DTD, as well as other publicly available DTDs. From the digital archive, the PubMed Central render program will create articles for users "on the fly".

Pope answered several questions concerning the archival function of PubMed

Central. The funding for PubMed Central is from NIH initially; NLM will ensure funding for the future of the archive. The individual journals determine when material is posted to PubMed Central to become freely accessible through the PubMed Central Web site. Links can be established from the PubMed Central site to journals' sites and their societies' sites. The rendering view of the article is printable.

The advantages to the publisher in having PubMed Central host the archive, rather than linking it to existing online sites, are quality assurance for SGML tagging and versioning and errata links from and to articles in question. Versioning will also be available for preprints on the PubMed Central server. Preprints are in a different area from the archival function for the journals. Use statistics will be reported to the publishers on any material posted to the PubMed Central site.

By archiving journal articles in SGML, PubMed Central can guarantee the ability to migrate the database of archived articles over time. No fees are charged for archiving a digital collection (backups and offsite storage are included in the archiving program). PubMed Central will serve as another source for disaster recovery as libraries prefer at least three sources to ensure accurate recovery from a disaster.

When queried about the current status of PubMed Central vis-à-vis other initiatives in Europe, Pope indicated that E-biosci is a member of the board of PubMed Central. 