

The E-publishing Strategy of Springer-Verlag

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ABSTRACT

Unique challenges are involved in setting up and running a successful online service for scientific content. Many of the aspects are the same as any online information service on the Internet. Publishing scientific content requests a rapid and high-quality digital production workflow enhanced functionality.

In my presentation I will talk about the progress Springer has made so far as well as the challenges to which we are looking forward to. The second part of my talk deals with today's products as well as future products and the questions: How can we bundle them, how can we fix a price and how can we sell these products in print and electronic form. I will further talk about our co-operation with agencies, abstracting and indexing services, and content syndication partners who are involved in the information distribution.

INTRODUCTION TO LINK

Springer-Verlag has long been strong in publishing science journals for international distribution. Today more than 2000 books and appr. 450 journals are being published in the Scientific, Medical and Technical (STM) area. The majority of our publications are in English but there are still a significant number of titles that are being published in German.

The first experiences with online publishing are going back to 1986 when chemical databases were offered through STN and DIALOG. Our experiences from participating in several projects were taken into account when Springer-Verlag's online service LINK started. LINK, Springer-Verlag's platform for electronic content, was launched five years ago. Today the content in LINK comprises 450 journals and 1.000 monographs that belong to the book series.

The electronic publication process in LINK, the requirements and the solutions will be discussed here. Today more than 7.000 registered libraries access appr. 3 million full text documents per month.

LINK PRODUCTION STRATEGY

Since the very first start of LINK, the online publishing process had been an integral part of the print publication process. In order to meet our author's and reader's requirements we need to focus on the e-publishing process first. The strength of LINK is the result of the production of high-quality print products on the Internet that are supplemented by PDF versions. These

publications are written and edited by highly qualified scientists and professionals all over the world.

The Challenge: Science publishers can only be successful if they can anticipate the changing forces in the field of science publishing and respond accordingly.

- rapid publication;
- availability on the Internet;
- high-quality products;
- increased online functionality.

The question remains: How can a publisher provide continuous quality while shortening production times drastically and provide increased functionality at lower costs?

New Paradigm: We took drastic steps in revamping our procedures, creating a new paradigm for producing and publishing new scientific material.

Digital production and publishing is an innovative process of complex and interdependent steps, many of which are themselves innovative. By recombining the important and transformed modules, a process was created that takes only half the time to publish the print editions and that shortens the time to online publications to two thirds.

Among the important modules in this process are:

- supplying potential authors with templates to support the preparation of manuscripts that also create the basis for the automatic insertion of tags for numerous structures;
- a workflow in which much data movement has been automatized;
- creation of digital proof of the complete text including figures provided to the author prior to the page composition;
- validation of SGML data for an article immediately after completion of author corrections
- automatic generation of alerting messages about online publication;
- automatic publication of HTML version of an article in Springer LINK, identifier by its digital object identifier (DOI) and registered with CrossRef;
- online transmission of the SGML data to the compositor of automatic page make up and other parties.

This procedure puts the article at the center since it is the unit being published online initially. Currently marketed as part of the subscription; it also has the potential to deliver information on a single article basis in the future.

ELECTRONIC PRODUCTION IN LINK

Springer-Verlag's first experiences with regard to electronic publishing were made with e-only journals which were originally published at the University. The publishing process at the University compared to that in a publishing house mainly differs when it comes to networking the information beyond the scientific environment.

SGML DELIVERY

In order to supply biblio abstracts to different partners the data must be produced in a machine-readable form, which is SGML in our case.

Major partners for the abstract delivery are:

- abstracting indexing services;
- subscription agencies;
- consortia.

These services offer direct links to the full text via the abstract and hence chemical structures may be searchable even if the LINK system does not provide this functionality. We are now having approximately 40 existing contracts with our partners who offer a broad access.

CONTENT SYNDICATION

There are services which deliver collections of material from different sources and which offer these services to specialised information portals. Depending on the topic and the service the content may remain in this environment or may be visible for a limited period of time.

DELIVERY OF THE COMPLETE FILES FOR MIRRORS, ARCHIVES OR INTRANET APPLICATIONS

For many reasons an increasing number of customers prefer accessing the information via their own portals. However, many of them use the Science Server (Elsevier) and now agencies are having platforms for publishing electronic content. The challenge of the publishing house is to have the material available so that it can easily be distributed provided that the infrastructure is available. It is important to have a flexible digital production line that meet these requirements.

BOOK SERIES IN LINK

Springer is publishing about 40 book series, 17 of them are now available in LINK containing appr. 250.000 pages. Depending on the content these articles are similar to those published in the print journals and books. The main difference is whether a chapter is a complete object in itself. Monographs form one product category in LINK. To have them available on the Internet they need to be modified. The chapters were not designed for being distributed separately and need further modification regarding size, handling of references etc. One of the book series in LINK is Landolt-Börnstein, a data collection comprising 290 volumes which are completely online available.

ARCHIVING POLICY

Archiving is one of the major issues regarding the transition process from print to electronic. Perpetual access is the term, which is often used and demanded. The provision of archival material covers many aspects:

- participation in national projects (Deutsche Bibliothek);
- participation in international projects;
- archives according to subjects;
- retro-digitisation.

CUSTOMERS, CONSORTIA, LIBRARIES

Springer-Verlag's content is offered to individual customers via personal licenses in print or digital form. Electronic access for institutional customers (libraries) is bundled with the print subscription and available for 3 simultaneous users. This option is widely used. Until today appr. 100 international academic and consortia licenses have been negotiated. I will discuss details with regard to all different options during my presentation.

WHAT DID SPRINGER LEARN FROM THE MARKET?

Several surveys have been carried out over the past years. Some of the results as well as our experiences from negotiating with customers are summarized here:

- customers expect high-quality digital content ;
- customers are demanding various search options;
- content should be available via the services they are used to;
- access should be given 24 hours and 365 days;
- helpdesk should be offered;
- customers are demanding access to the back issues;
- customers expect the library to negotiate the contracts and provide access;
- print is still important.