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Director's Matters

By *H. Frederick Dylla, Executive Director*



The budding ORCID

The leadership of a critical mass of scientific publishers met last week to commit to start-up loans for a new cooperative that will ultimately benefit all of the authors and readers of scholarly publications. The occasion was afforded by the 2011 Frankfurt Book Fair, a world famous event and AIP's most important venue for meeting with our international customers and partners. Beyond the Book Fair's positive benefits for business interactions (see the Publishing Matters story below), AIP and a number of Member Societies also use the opportunity to launch new projects that benefit the broader scientific publishing community. Together, publishers from around the world came together this year to advance the [ORCID](#) (for Open Researcher and Contributor ID) initiative.

ORCID was launched a little over a year ago to develop a consistent means of identifying authors of scholarly publications. This doesn't sound like a difficult problem until one

considers how many "Smiths" there are in English-speaking countries. At a different level of ambiguity is the assignment of a unique identifier for the more than 30 different Mandarin characters that are assigned to the anglicized name "Wang" in Chinese. The founding participants hope to move ORCID from the demonstration phase early next year to a full-fledged international nonprofit organization that will serve the needs of the entire scholarly community.



Outlook is good for ORCID, because it is modeled after the successful launch of another community organization, [CrossRef](#), which was founded 11 years ago, again by a group of scientific publishers meeting during the Frankfurt Book Fair. CrossRef is now a self-supporting consortium of more than 700 publishers, libraries, and research institutions that maintain a database of over 40 million publications. This database and the interchange rules associated with the database allow readers of journal articles to link smoothly from references in one article to the cited article in the reference. This simple service is a boon to researchers scanning the literature for desired information. See my *AIP Matters* article from December 13, 2010, "[Crossroads and Connectivity](#)" for more on CrossRef and its associated projects, CrossCheck, and CrossMark.

ORCID will most likely undergo a similar rapid transition from a founding group to a self-supporting consortium because it has already attracted member institutions that represent the entire spectrum of interested users—from libraries, research institutions, funding agencies, and standards organizations to publishers. AIP, APS, Wiley-Blackwell, Wellcome Trust, MIT Libraries, and Microsoft Research were among the founding sponsors of the demonstration phase. AIP was among 10 publishers who

volunteered last week in Frankfurt to loan ORCID sufficient funding to move from a demonstration project to a viable organization that solves a longstanding problem in the scholarly publishing community.

Publishing Matters

AIP Publishing exhibits at the 2011 Frankfurt Book Fair

As the leaves were turning here in the northeast United States last week, the leaves of more than 400,000 books were turned by the quarter of a million visitors to this year's Frankfurt Book Fair. Always a high point of our fall exhibits schedule, the Book Fair provides AIP with a valuable forum for meeting with our sales agents and customers from across the globe. It's also an important venue for connecting with international STM colleagues to talk about areas of mutual interest and discuss future business prospects.

This year's fair also gave us the chance to introduce Adriana Acosta, AIP's new chief marketing and sales officer for our Publishing Division. On board for only two weeks, Frankfurt provided an excellent opportunity for Acosta to meet with our sales agents and consortia clients from China, Japan, India, France, and a host of other countries.

The 2011 Frankfurt Book Fair proved successful on a number of fronts. In addition to benefiting from the ample networking opportunities, we significantly extended an agreement with a large national consortium and doubled our digital archive sales with another.

Physics Resources Matters

Inside Science brings the best minds to the public

Inside Science News Service has launched a new feature called [Inside Science Minds](#), an ongoing series of guest columns and perspectives on science geared toward the general public, presented by scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and others in the science community.

During Nobel Prize week, former AIP staffer Phil Schewe kicked off Inside Science Minds with his perspectives on the 2011 Nobel Prizes in Physics and Chemistry. Phil noted the similarities between the two prize topics, even though they deal with two vastly different length scales—at the scale of the universe (physics) and the atomic (chemistry). Both prizes honor ideas that were wildly contrary to scientific thinking at the time: in the case of physics, the notion that the universe is not only expanding, but accelerating in its expansion (seemingly due to mysterious "dark energy" in the universe), and in the case of chemistry, the existence of a kind of crystal—known as a quasicrystal—that seemed to be forbidden according to standard crystallography textbooks.



A connection between the topics of the chemistry and physics Nobel Prizes. The diffraction pattern for quasicrystals (left) and a galaxy-filled image from the Hubble Deep Field (right) look similar, but the dimensions between atoms and galaxies differ by about 100 million trillion trillion times.
Credit: ISNS | NASA | Shechtman

"One thing that seems to be accelerating even faster than the expansion of the universe is the expansion of human culture, particularly the enterprise of science," Phil wrote in the piece. Already a swarm of thinkers are trying to explain or measure the mysterious dark energy. And as soon as they accomplish that goal, some other mystery will present itself and need explanation."

Inside Science plans to run one to two guest columns per month. Future topics include searching for alien life in the climate of limited federal science funding, forecasting and planning for the most promising research areas a decade in advance, and communicating geology to the general public. We welcome ideas for guest columns and topics. Please feel free to send them to [Ben Stein](#), editorial manager of Inside Science.

Coming Up

Monday, October 24

- All-staff update at 11 am (College Park, MD)

Monday–Thursday, October 24–27

- ACP Employee Art Show (College Park, MD)

Wednesday, October 26

- Milestone luncheon, 12–2 pm (Melville, NY)

Thursday, October 27

- ACP Harvest Breakfast and food drive kickoff, 9 am (College Park, MD)
Please bring a nonperishable food item to the breakfast for the annual food drive.

October 30–November 4

- [AVS 58th International Symposium & Exhibition](#) (Nashville, TN)

October 31–November 1

- AIP/AVS Industrial Physics Forum: "[Energy: Transition to a Sustainable Future](#)" (Nashville, TN)

