



Keynote Speakers

Mr Roy Page-Shipp

South African Research Information Service project

Curriculum vitae: Before his retirement in 2000 Roy Page-Shipp was Director, Strategy Support at the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) in Pretoria. During this period he was seconded to the RDP Office in President Mandela's Office to create the Programme Management Service (1994/95). His assignments at Strategy Support included Strategic and Scenario Planning and Refocusing of the CSIR's Information Services. He was also the Knowledge Management champion of the CSIR.

Roy is a part-time lecturer in Information and Knowledge Management at GIBS (Gordon Institute for Business Science) and led the SARIS project in 2004.

He undertakes assignments relating to Knowledge Management, Decision Support and Strategic and Scenario Planning for a variety of organisations

Abstract: (Summary by Greg Youngen and Erica van der Westhuizen)

He described the opportunities and potential pitfalls for information professionals dealing with electronic research and e-publications. The biggest issues he sees on the user side of this equation are affordability of e-access, archiving, training and marketing. For the suppliers: security, authentication and authorisation. He went on to describe Open Access activities in South Africa and some of the problems encountered in the local information infrastructure that is inhibiting potential growth in this area. He offered some closing suggestions for librarians: improve online support capabilities, recognise the limitations of user-based self-help, train users based on our experience, take over open access and digital curation activities, and to avoid disintermediation, take the lead to move the profession in new directions.

He discussed online access with all the positive and negative aspects. An amount of R110 million is spent per annum on online access but this does not ensure that all researchers have the same level of access to information. Some are well served, while others are very poorly off. The problem is that the publishers are still striving to make the rules.

Under the Open Access issues he mentioned that there are a few scattered initiatives but up to now it is still more important for a researcher to publish in a subsidised journal than in an OA journal. This means that publishing is limited to a selected group of journals.

eScience is the global collaboration in key areas of science and the next generation of infrastructure will enable it. Researchers need to be part of this infrastructure to be competitive.

The eResearch librarian is, according to Page-Shipp, the new way for the future. There will be opportunities for information specialists in the new research environment. They must be willing to move into online information support and recognise the realities of self help. They must show their users the right way to search for information, improving their searching skills. He advised the information specialists to take the lead to move the profession in new directions to avoid disintermediation.