Towards a concerted action for a European network of e-print servers

4 opinions:
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• Do we need a co-ordinating organisation?
  – Technical standards, protocols and tools: OAI does the job
    (but quality electronic publishing may require some additional help!)
  – Awareness raising for server setup, author contributions, certification, acceptance by funding agencies and career assessors: ??
    Clear need of structural and authoritative support!
• How is the situation in the U.S.A.?
  – Strong national organisations (ARL, CNI, DLF,…) are supporting OAI financially; they deliver representatives
  – SPARC under umbrella of ARL – although actions were up to now rather along traditional publishing channels – recently getting more interested in OAI-activities
  – Rich sponsoring foundations (e.g. Mellon)
  – NSF sponsoring individual projects
• What do we have in Europe?
  – In several countries strong national library coordinating societies, individual e-publishing initiatives
  – LIBER insufficiently recognized as leader in the field: no relation with national societies, perceived as too academic, low budget
  – SPARC is discussing setting up an independent European division (under LIBER umbrella?)
  – Sponsoring is difficult: EC is industry-related, SOROS for Eastern-EU, ESF depends on national funding agencies…
• Possible solution?
  – Upgrading of LIBER:
    • Externally as agglomerate of national societies
    • Internally by rejuvenation: more dynamic, action-oriented
    • Extending its membership
  – SPARC-like subdivision (eventually with separate membership)
    • Awareness building within academic community
    • Co-ordination of electronic scholarly communication: networking of e-publishing, certification,..
    • Lobbying for academic recogniton of its products; organising contact with other organisations (ESF, EC, national groups, learned societies, SPARC-US, industry,..)