*RA 21 Update ALPSP International Conference 14 September 2017*

1. **Opening slide**

Thanks to the organizers for this opportunity to give you an update on the RA21 project.

Apart from working for Brill, I am the current chair of STM’s Standards and Technology Committee where RA21 originated. With RA21 I am at the Outreach and Communications Committee.

1. **What is RA21?**

RA21 stands for Resource Access in the 21st Century. It is a joint STM NISO initiative aimed at optimizing access protocols across key stakeholder groups.

The most important objective is to give users of scientific content a seamless experience across devices, across platforms, across content types.

Network security at both the customer and the supplier side and user privacy are important conditions.

The aim is to come to a set of best practices by involving all stakeholders in scholarly communications: researchers, libraries, content providers, platform providers, and identity providers and their associations.

RA21 started as a STM Taskforce in the summer of last year.

1. **From print to digital**

Setting the scene: in the print days things were easy and transparent: libraries preferably worked with one subscription agent with one predictable workflow.

When academic content went online, simple solutions were preferred, by and large imitating the print days.

By the turn of the century:

* Agents still did most of the subscription handling.
* PDF provided a trusted format.
* DOI’s allowed you to hop from one article to the next, across publications and across platforms.
* Online platforms were still low in numbers: a few larger publishers and some aggregators.
* And above all, IP recognition delivered an efficient and effective access protocol, with guaranteed on-site desktop access.

1. **Early 21st Century**

However, as time moved on this simple solution of on-site IP recognition eroded.

More and more publishers started their own platform, selling directly into libraries. Proxy servers and federated systems entered this world. Local access gave way to the need for off-site access on a growing diversity of devices.

Most important, our users became citizens of the web expecting to have frictionless access to ALL content from ANYWHERE, ANYTIME and ANYHOW.

But as we have realized by now, off-site authentication can be very cumbersome – requiring many steps and clicks – before finally arriving at the content one is entitled to. With a different user experience on every platform.

As a result users easily turn to tested alternative solutions, like ResearchGate or Academia or pirate sites. Piracy has become highly sophisticated, as an entire content platform can be copied overnight.

1. **Problem statement**

So this was the task of the STM Taskforce: to come up with better solutions to provide a greatly improved user experience across devices, locations and platforms, while also addressing piracy and security.

With as an important challenge how to offer improved personalized services to our users, while at the same time preserving their privacy, also in the light of the imminent GDRP regulation in the EU.

1. **Best Practices**

It was decided that the delivery of RA21 should be a set of best practices; best practices to move beyond IP recognition, to come to new protocols for access, privacy and security.

This should be accomplished by setting up pilots with representatives from across the industry and the library world, because we realized that without the involvement and commitment of all stakeholders nothing would change.

What we were not going to do was to come with one specific technical solution for industry-wide authentication.

1. **Fifteen Use Cases**

To make sure that the Best Practices would be adopted, the Taskforce set itself to identify all issues around access among our stakeholder groups.

The resulting set of use cases that a possible solution should be able to address, can be found on the RA21 website.

1. **Five Guiding principles**

In order to direct and monitor the pilots the STM Taskforce produced a set of 5 Guiding Principles.

The most important elements from these guiding principle are showed on the slide. Most of them I have already mentioned.

An important principle is that whatever the solution would be, it should recognize that not every institution or every publisher has time and resources available to immediately adopt new standards, so it should allow for a gradual transition – side by side with current access solutions.

1. **Three Pilots**

RA21 went public in December last year during the STM week, where the first of a series of international workshops was attended by many representatives of key stakeholder groups.

Very soon 3 pilots emerged from these workshops: 2 academic pilots and 1 corporate pilot.

The corporate pilot is the most advanced and concentrates on problems and a federated solution specific for the pharma industry.

Both academic pilots try to develop access protocols by concentrating on the WAYF-question: Where Are You From, using SAML technology.

One pilot is working on a solution based on local browser storage and the other on a centralized cloud based solution.

Recently, both academic pilots decided to join forces in the key areas of user experience and privacy and security issues.

I do not have the time to go into further details here, but please visit our RA21 website to learn more.

1. **RA21 Timeline**

Looking back, in the past 12 months a lot has been achieved.

An important milestone was the adoption of RA21 by NISO extending it into a sector wide project.

The pilot results are expected by the end of this year. A first draft of the Best Practices should be open for commenting early 2018.

In the meantime one objective of RA21 already has been accomplished and that is to bring the whole sector together to work collectively on a solution for problems collectively recognized.

1. **RA 21 Organization**

RA21 is being managed by a professional staff consisting of Julia Wallace as Project Director and Pilot Coordinators Heather Flanagan and Jenny Walker.

The original STM RA21 Taskforce was dissolved and succeeded by a Steering Committee representing the whole sector.

Stakeholder participation is high, with more than 30 people involved in each of the pilots.

1. **Final slide**

I realize there is much more to tell about this initiative. But if you want to learn more visit our website and in case you want to get closer involved in one of the pilots, or in one of our committees, please do not hesitate to contact our staff.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION