

Information Access Alliance

American Association of Law Libraries

American Library Association

Association of College and Research Libraries

Association of Research Libraries

Medical Library Association

SPARC



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For Immediate Release—July 28, 2003

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INFORMATION ACCESS ALLIANCE RELEASES WHITE PAPER AND LAUNCHES WEB SITE

Publisher Mergers Threaten Access to Crucial Research

Washington, D.C. – The Information Access Alliance, a coalition of six leading library organizations in North America, has published a white paper that examines the impact of mergers among scholarly and legal publishers and calls for a new standard of antitrust review of merger transactions in this industry by antitrust enforcement agencies, <http://www.informationaccess.org/WhitePaperV2Final.pdf>.

The Information Access Alliance represents institutions engaged in research, education, law, and health care. The coalition is urging the U.S. Department of Justice to block Cinven and Candover's proposed purchase of BertelsmannSpringer, the academic publishing arm of Bertelsmann AG. The Alliance is concerned that this transaction will result in reduced access to critical research information.

Publisher Mergers: A Consumer-Based Approach to Antitrust Analysis, the white paper commissioned by the Alliance and written by Thomas M. Susman and David J. Carter of the law firm Ropes & Gray LLP, describes the issues that have emerged as the serials publishing industry has become increasingly concentrated. BertelsmannSpringer publishes approximately 700 science, technology, and medical (STM) journals. Kluwer Academic Publishers, which Cinven and Candover recently acquired and have indicated they intend to merge with BertelsmannSpringer, also publishes approximately 700 STM journals. The two companies combined would control approximately 20% of the STM market. Libraries are the primary market for STM journals. Over the past 20 years, the prices libraries pay for journals have risen at three times the rate of inflation. Recent studies have shown that merger activity has been a significant factor in this inflation. The emergence of electronic publishing and the Internet, rather than solving the problem, may actually be contributing to the concentration of market power in the hands of a few large publishers, according to the white paper.

The Alliance has also launched a Web site, <http://www.informationaccess.org>, containing information on the impact of publisher mergers on the market for STM journals, links to the above-mentioned white paper, and other key documents.

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Information Access Alliance member organizations

The **American Association of Law Libraries (AALL)** is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to providing leadership and advocacy in the field of legal information and information policy. Our more than 5,000 members respond to the legal information needs of legislators, judges and other public officials, corporations and small businesses, law professors and students, attorneys, and members of the general public.

The **American Library Association (ALA)**, the oldest and largest library association in the world, is a nonprofit organization of over 64,000 librarians, library trustees, and other friends of libraries dedicated to the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

The **Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)**, a division of the American Library Association, is a professional association of academic librarians and other interested individuals. ACRL currently has a membership of approximately 12,400, accounting for nearly 20% of the total ALA membership. ACRL provides a broad range of professional services and programs for a diverse membership.

The **Association of Research Libraries (ARL)** is a nonprofit organization of 124 research libraries in North America. ARL programs and services promote equitable access to and effective use of recorded knowledge in support of teaching, research, scholarship, and community service.

The **Medical Library Association (MLA)** is a nonprofit, educational organization of more than 900 institutions and 3,800 individual members in the health sciences information field, committed to educating health information professionals, supporting health information research, promoting access to the world's health sciences information, and working to ensure that the best health information is available to all.

SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) is an initiative of universities, research libraries, and library organizations that supports increased competition in scholarly publishing. SPARC publishing partnerships and educational activities encourage expanded dissemination of research and reduced financial pressure on libraries. Its worldwide membership currently includes 277 institutions and organizations, with 188 members in the United States.