

The 15th Anniversary Symposium of
Science and Technology of Advanced Materials
“A break point in building research career - Messages to young scientists - ”

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Distinguished speakers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my great honor to have an opportunity to say a few words in the opening of the 15th Anniversary Symposium of Science and Technology of Advanced Materials. This symposium has very attractive sub-title of “A break point in building research career - Messages to young scientists - ”, which I think is timely, because young people are likely to keep distance from profession as scientists in this country.

Therefore, I really appreciate the splendid ideas and practices of Professor Toyonobu Yoshida, STAM Editor-in-Chief, and his editorial team who organizes this symposium. I also would like to express my great respect to Professor Sukekatsu Ushioda, President of NIMS, who has strongly supported the publication of STAM for the sake of our community of science and technology. I am proud that STAM is now standing as one of leading journals originating from Japan.

In 2008, the Science Council of Japan published the result of our five year deliberations on the dissemination and acquisition of scholarly research outputs.

Our discussions revealed the financial difficulties that libraries faced in subscribing journals for their institutes. Specifically, we found the need for immediate measures to deal with the then ‘double-punch’ of burdens: that is, increasing subscription fees charged by publishing companies and currency fluctuations.

Notably, open access policies in the USA and Europe and the resulting dramatic increases in open access journals have caused confusion and bewilderment in academic societies in the world. And, some academic societies may not be able to come up with these changes and to have difficulties in publishing even their own journals with excellent quality, of course this is true in Japan too.

We recognize the importance of implementing policies to provide researchers with barrier free and equal access to journals regardless of the location and size of their institutes. However, in spite of the launch of initiatives in Europe, such as “open data” or “open access”, Japan is lagging behind in taking such a direction.

Possible solutions to this situation include an open access, publically funded institutional repositories. That is, the use of public funding to establish, manage and maintain national infrastructure on scholarly information.

The Government could also give financial support to academic societies for the publication of open access journals, at least in the initial stage of its establishment to counter the effects of open access policies initiated by the USA and Europe.

But one trend is becoming more apparent month by month, year by year. That is the increasing global domination or hegemony of scholarly publication by a few massive publishing companies and academic societies based on USA or Europe. In private, some academics even refer to this domination as a form of 'Imperialism in Scholarly Publication'.

This situation required prompt actions to be improved. A couple of them should be taken urgently. One measure was obviously to create a new scholarly community rooted in our culture, to meet global changes in publication.

Notably, the directors of the National Institute for Materials recognized as early as the year of 2000 the necessity for establishing a leading journal to highlight Japan's excellence in material science. This recognition of crisis led to the birth of STAM.

Then, in 2008, STAM became an open access journal. This was a pioneering challenge in publishing models in Japan.

Now, in 2014 as we celebrate the 15th anniversary of the publication of STAM, it is published today in collaboration with colleagues in Switzerland. This is a major and brave step towards expanding the journal's readership and stabilizing the publication process.

On behalf of the Science Council of Japan, I wish the editors, managers and staff associated with the publication of STAM every success in the future.

The Science Council of Japan fully understands the aims and philosophy of STAM and would like to see the ideas on which they stand permeate scientific societies in this country.

Through today's symposium, I hope you will understand the fruitful results of publishing an open-access journal for the last 15 years and develop the experiences you have got towards the next decade.

Thank you very much for your attention, and I hope you will enjoy the symposium.