Current Trends in the Information Society within the Arab World

The 18th Annual Conference and Exhibition of the Special Libraries Association – Arabian Gulf Chapter (SLA-AGC) took place from March 12-14, 2012 in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The conference program focused on current trends and practices in the library world and brought together expert knowledge from specialists in the field of library and information science. More than 200 delegates from around the Middle East countries alongside a number of valued exhibitors, including Springer, participated.

Topics discussed include:

- Mobile technologies in libraries
- E-environment and Arab societies
- New role of information professionals in the social networking environment
- Arabian gulf universities’ repositories
- How Open Access is changing scholarly communication
- Digitization and Open Access: the effective role of information professionals
- Social enterprise software
- eBook trends, practices, implications and challenges

Once again, the SLA-AGC was a great opportunity to highlight and present Springer’s eProducts and services to information specialists from various organizations. Alongside the well-known SpringerLink, another topic of interest was Springer’s new platform dedicated to corporate customers, Springer for R&D – rd.springer.com – which is currently available in its beta version. In addition to valuable discussions at the Springer booth and live demonstrations of various eProducts, everybody also had a good time at the Springer Dinner and Gala Dinner.
Springer was also happy to take part in the “Medical Librarian Round Table,” moderated by Hilda Nassar, American University of Beirut and Hatam Noor-Aldeen, World Health Organization. The main topic of this round table was mobile devices and technologies, and Springer representatives Nadja Madani and Alessandro Gallo gave an update on Springer activities, and were presenting a survey for the use of electronic content on mobile devices in the medical field. This analysis will be conducted by the University of Milan Bicocca New Media Centre Numedia Bios, exploring patterns concerning digital contents’ and devices’ usage and adoption. Springer is actively looking for institutions in the hospital/health/medical research field to join the research. Participating institutions will also get the data for their own use. A proposal to participate in this survey will be extended also to all attendees at the 1st Health Advisory Summit taking place in Amsterdam in March, which will see 27 key medical consortia and hospitals from Europe, Middle East and the US.

Finally, on the last conference day, we were also happy to announce the winner of the iPad raffle. Out of over 70 participants, lucky Abdullah Al-Sarmi from Sultan Qaboos University took the iPad home.