Date: October 17, 2022
Time: 9:00am – 6:00pm CET
Location: Hotel Marriott Frankfurt
Attendees:
Aries: **Jennifer Fleet, Pierre Montagano, Ryan Walther, Kate Horgan, Jason DeBoer**
Industry: **American Chemical Society, American Society of Civil Engineers, Taylor and Francis, Wolters Kluwer, World Scientific, Mohr Siebeck**

The meeting commenced at 9:03 GMT. Jennifer Fleet, Managing Director – Aries Systems welcomed the Board, thanking them for their participation in the meeting of the AIAB. The Board last met virtually in June of 2022. Jennifer began with an introduction of Aries staff and Board attendees, along with personal goals for the meeting.

Jennifer then reviewed the Ground Rules for the Board and the meeting, including legal guidance and participant guidelines.

She continued with an Aries Business Update covering the following topics:
- A review of Aries organizational chart
- Discussion focused on where Aries is investing to support agile development, quality engineering and automation improvements, Amazon Web Services (AWS) migration, user interface and user experience (UI/UX), and billing and financial initiatives.

Ryan Walther, Senior Director of Client Services at Aries, introduced himself and shared his goals for the department.
- Department focus
    - Issue and incident management with a heavy emphasis on communication speed and time to resolution.
- Increased collaboration
    - Enhance internal collaboration by increasing avenues for knowledge sharing cross-departmentally to help all teams gain access to insights that will benefit customers.
- Proactive communication and planning
    - A goal has been set to reduce the number of dead spots across communication channels. Ensure Client Services is heavily involved in communication plans for large initiatives such as the AWS migration and UI/UX enhancements.
- Agile Transformation
    - The switch to Agile development will allow for additional departments such as Tech, Development, and Product to have more access and interaction with customers.

- Jason DeBoer, Business Development and Partnership Manager at Aries, introduced himself and presented Aries Partner Strategy.
  - Jason articulated Aries strategy of cross-functional collaboration to establish a Partner Program.
  - He then shared information regarding Aries partner channels: ecosystem and redistributors.
  - His discussion remained focused on Aries ecosystem which is comprised of both Aries and third-party technology that plug into Editorial Manager® and ProduXion Manager®. Our ecosystem grows and adapts through in-house innovations and strategic partnerships to meet the needs of our user and the scholarly publishing communities.
  - Pierre shared the seven branches of the ecosystem; manuscript analysis tools, publication fee processing, reviewer search & recognition, repositories, XML workflow tools, reporting & tracking, persistent identifiers, and provided some use cases.

Facilitated Discussion on Self-Reported Diversity Data led by Holly Falk-Krzesinski, Elsevier VP of Research Intelligence and Chair of the Joint Commitment Data Questions Subgroup

- Holly introduced the session as an open discussion on demographic data to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in publishing.
- Collection of DEI information in scholarly publishing enables important, large-scale scientometric studies.
- Holly then shared the first step:
  - Introduce gender question for reviewers (The Lancet) – well received – no negative feedback
- Group focus: 2 groups
  - Questions group and platforms group merged because of overlap
  - Only poses question at the first time user logs in after question policy/functionality implemented – will take a year to build out data
  - Migrate from "sex" to "gender identity" – which gender do you most identify?
- R&E Schema: Found that ethnicity and race are different and need separate questions
  - Sent invites to 100K active authors and closed when received >1% response rate (1173).
  - Responses: received feedback that people didn't understand that they could select multiple options
  - See stats presentation from Peer Review Congress
- Roll out:
  - Strategy is to pilot with Elsevier titles first to work through any issues, followed by Elsevier society titles, and then any participating EM clients
  - Limited pushback from Editors and Reviewers but no author has chosen to not submit due to questions
  - Roll out to 2000 journals – only 1 ed board member resignation over questions

Kate Horgan, Director of Product Development at Aries, presented Aries 2022/2023 Product Roadmap.

- Roadmap Themes for 2023:
  - User Interface and User Experience:
    - A focus on modernizing our system to enhance performance and experience.
    - Current priorities: a design system supported by ELS (UX resources) which will allow for common components across the platform and provide the ability to make changes across components therefore creating efficiencies and faster roll out.
    - Continued focus on accessibility improvements to meet WCAG 2.2 AA compliance.
- APS Services:
  - Kate shared our use case driven approach.
  - Generic APIs:
    - A focus on generic APIs help discover opportunities for Aries to better support the community and its partners in better ways.
    - Deliver value. The API is not the product but rather a means to facilitating the access/integration. The endpoint or result of that integration is the product.
  - On the roadmap
    - Pre-submission manuscript check API. This will work to enhance the quality of submissions by improving time to publication for journals and authors.
    - Single Sign-On beyond ORCID: this will allow for better connection with membership databased around OpenID connect
    - Preprint service integrations. These will provide real-time updates from EM to Preprint Server and/or ingest comments from preprint server
- LiXuid Manuscript
  - Aries is seeking a pilot partner to supply files to train AI and build out proof of concept end-to-end production workflow in ProduXion Manager.
  - **Update (21 December 2022):** Aries has identified a pilot partner to supply files to train the AI and build out our end-to-end production workflow in ProduXion Manager. We are currently looking for early adopters of our new XML first production workflow.
- AWS Migration to the Cloud.
  - Focus is on cloud migration efforts and modularization. Operating in AWS allows for automating product releases to enable a higher product release cadence. The migration and modularization process entails increased security and product simplification wherever possible, allowing faster product development in the future and an improved user experience.
- Workflow Enhancements and Features
  - Transparent peer review:
    - Benefits include greater visibility and recognition for reviewers, improved review quality with increased opportunity for scrutiny, research integrity and reproducibility improved with transparency, and reduction of review manipulation and fraudulent activities. Aries is planning to have a standardized export mechanism for all customers rather than varied ones we have today.
  - Diversity data collection:

- The intent is to remove the need for customers to build their own system. The work supports collection of data and would hope to open that up and then expand export.
    - o Mentorship in Peer Review:
        - Enabling a junior researcher. This is work is slotted for later in the year and requires more investigation.
    - o Organizational IDs:
        - Enterprise customer hub which is a database for linking to institutions and funders – brings linking to 98% fidelity

Kate Horgan, Director of at Aries, presented an update on the Aries/Elsevier Guiding Principles.

- Kate began the discussion with a recap of the Guiding Principles discussion that took place during the June 2022 AIAB meeting.
- Kate then walked through the revised language and use cases for each of the guiding principles.
- She then shared use cases that outlined opportunities and benefits around infrastructure support, in-product feedback, and powerful product analytics.
- Kate articulated how each use case is administered by others but only at the server level – not access to data.
- Aries continues to invest in process and infrastructure.

The meeting concluded with the following wrap up and action items for Aries staff:
- Distribute follow up resources from Holly's facilitated discussion on Self-Reported Diversity Data to board members. Specifically, the FAQ document.

Jennifer provided a brief wrap up and thanked the board members for their attendance and participation. The meeting concluded around 4:45pm CET.