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## ZB MED launches "Living Handbooks" open access platform

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A pilot project promoting the collaborative creation of handbooks

**ZB MED – Leibniz Information Centre for Life Sciences is committed to the principle of providing open access to research results worldwide. Now ZB MED has launched a pilot project of its own which is designed to help promote this goal. The Living Handbooks platform at [www.gms-books.de](http://www.gms-books.de) enables scientists and researchers to create handbooks in a collaborative process. The first monograph to be included on the site is the "Living Textbook of Hand Surgery" which was developed in a joint project by GMS gGmbH and the hand surgeon Dr. Richarda Böttcher from the organisation Handchirurgie Weltweit e.V.**

Scientific handbooks are typically weighty and expensive volumes which quickly go out of date due to the rapid developments seen in many scientific disciplines. In addition, the authors of these handbooks generally have to sign over the rights to their work to their publisher. ZB MED hopes that the Living Handbooks pilot project will help remedy this situation. The platform enables handbooks from various life science disciplines to be published online and made freely accessible to everyone – and it enables the authors who collaborated on the handbook to retain all the rights to their work. Another advantage over printed textbooks is that the contents can be kept up-to-date by modifying the textbooks chapter by chapter whenever the authors feel this is necessary. Living Handbooks also caters to a wider range of media, allowing the publication not only of text, but also of pictures, graphics and videos.

"All the works included on our Living Handbooks platform are quality-assured because every version passes through a peer review process," explains Ulrich Korwitz, Director of ZB MED. This peer review process is supervised and safeguarded by an editorial board from the relevant subject area. All the contributions are also carefully checked and proofread. Persistent identifiers such as DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers) are used to ensure that the content remains citable and accessible at all times.

The first "Living Handbook" was developed in a collaboration with Dr. Richarda Böttcher from the organisation Handchirurgie Weltweit e.V. The first parts of the "Living Textbook of Hand Surgery" are already available online. ZB MED will be developing the next Living Handbook in collaboration with the European Association of Urology (EAU). Additional handbooks from a range of life science disciplines are already at the planning stage.

Check out the Living Handbooks platform: [www.gms-books.de](http://www.gms-books.de)

**Background information: ZB MED – Leibniz Information Centre for Life Sciences**

ZB MED – Leibniz Information Centre for Life Sciences is Germany's central service centre for specialist information and research support in the field of life sciences. It includes the world's largest library in its subject combination of medicine, health, and nutritional, environmental and agricultural sciences. ZB MED's primary goal is to support researchers, students and key disseminators and multipliers working in these disciplines. To achieve that goal, ZB MED offers literature and specialist information in both digital and print formats, both on-site and through its semantic-based search portal LIVIVO. ZB MED has its own open access portal – German Medical Science (GMS). It also offers a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) registration service, providing articles and research data with a persistent identifier which ensures they are kept permanently available online. ZB MED has two sites, one in Cologne and one in Bonn. As a member of the Leibniz Association, ZB MED helps provide the information infrastructure required for scientific research and plays a major part in maintaining Germany's status as a key player in the world of science and research.

You can find out more by visiting the following website: [www.zbmed.de](http://www.zbmed.de).

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