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## **ZB MED and TH Köln announce joint appointment of Professor Konrad Förstner**

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Bioinformatics expert moves from Würzburg to the Rhineland

**On 15 May 2018, Professor Konrad Förstner took up his new post as head of the Provision of Information Services focus area at ZB MED – Information Centre for Life Sciences. His responsibilities include LIVIVO, the ZB MED search portal for life sciences. At the same time, the bioinformatics scientist commenced a W2 Professorship in Information Literacy at the Faculty of Information Science and Communication Studies at TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences. This position stems from a cooperation agreement signed by the two institutions in July 2017.**

“I’m looking forward to working with my new colleagues at ZB MED and TH Köln. It’s great to see so much interest from all sides, and there’s a real sense of energy,” says Professor Förstner, who will be working in the field of information science at ZB MED and TH Köln. His work at ZB MED will focus on the life sciences, while his research work at TH Köln will primarily engage with information literacy in the context of large data sets.

“This is the first time that TH Köln and ZB MED have jointly appointed a professor in a research capacity, and it forges valuable ties between the worlds of university and non-university research. We are confident that these ties will have a positive effect on scientific cooperation, the development of regional networks of expertise, and the fostering of outstanding research and talented young researchers”, says Professor Simone Fühles-Ubach from the Faculty of Information Science and Communication Studies at TH Köln.

Born in Heidelberg, Konrad Förstner studied biochemistry in Greifswald with informatics as an additional subject. He took his PhD at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory in Heidelberg, choosing to focus entirely on bioinformatics. During a brief sidestep into industry, Förstner worked in a number of areas including software development. He subsequently joined research groups at the University of Würzburg as a postdoc. In 2013, he took up the position of Head of Bioinformatics at the Core Unit Systems Medicine at the University of Würzburg, eventually becoming the head of the entire unit.

Förstner is active in various working groups and other bodies. He represents the German Rectors’ Conference in the Digital Tools – Software and Services working group as part of the Digital Information priority initiative run by the

Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany. He is also a founding member of the German-speaking AG Open Science working group of the Open Knowledge Foundation. Förstner is active in the WikiCite community and co-hosts the Open Science Radio podcast.

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

ZB MED – Information Centre for Life Sciences is a key component of German and European information infrastructure in the field of life sciences. It is also a driving force behind the creation of an interconnected digital ecosystem of knowledge. As one of the leading service providers in its field, ZB MED is the perfect partner for anyone looking to take a more innovative approach to acquiring, processing and exploiting scientific information and research data. The Information Centre offers literature, specialist information and associated value-added services, primarily in a digital format. These are available through its semantic-based search portal LIVIVO and its publishing portal PUBLISSO, as well as at its sites in Cologne and Bonn. ZB MED firmly believes in encouraging a steady supply of high-quality scholarly and scientific resources, which is why promoting and supporting open access (OA) is one of its top priorities. The Information Centre also conducts applied research in the field of knowledge discovery.

Find out more at [www.zbmed.de](http://www.zbmed.de)

**Background information: TH Köln (University of Applied Sciences)**

The TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences offers students and scientists from Germany and abroad an inspiring environment to learn, work and research in the social, cultural, engineering and natural sciences. Currently there are more than 26,000 students enrolled in over 90 undergraduate and graduate programs. The TH Köln creates social innovation – this is our main idea as we approach the challenges of today’s society. Our interdisciplinary thinking and acting, as well as our regional, national, and international activities, have made us both a valued partner and a trailblazer in many areas. The TH Köln was founded as the Fachhochschule Köln in 1971 and is regarded as one of the most innovative universities of applied sciences.

Find out more at:  
[www.th-koeln.de](http://www.th-koeln.de)