'No librarian is an island'
Developing a shared and collaborative approach to service provision

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As SCONUL notes on its website, university and other academic libraries have been developing shared or collaborative services for many years, and have an excellent track record of delivering efficient and cost-effective services via this route.[1] Links to a range of initiatives and resources relating to SCONUL's strategy in this area can be accessed from the referenced link.

The articles included in this issue of SCONUL *Focus* explore this theme and demonstrate how opportunities for developing shared and collaborative services are wide ranging and diverse, and include regional initiatives whereby organisations come together to explore the potential of collaboration in a number of areas. In this context, the article by Michael Fake describes a range of initiatives from the White Rose Consortium, a partnership between the universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York. The role of collaboration within regional consortia is further evidenced by the article from Thomas Baldwin, which highlights the work that the M25 Consortium has been undertaking in developing a shared approach to disaster management planning.

No doubt many SCONUL members are already aware of the initiative amongst nine partner higher education institutions to develop and deliver a shared library management system for Wales. The article by Gareth Owen and John Dalling describes the context for the project, including drivers that have made collaboration successful, and some of the benefits already achieved and being planned.

Collaboration can also involve bringing together organisations from different sectors or from different professional groups from the same sector. With regard to the latter, the article by Andy Horton shows how collaboration between librarians and learning technologists at Regent's University in London brought success to an open online course. With reference to the former, the article by Stephanie Allen describes the Hive – an outcome of a collaboration between the University of Worcester and Worcestershire County Council – which has resulted in the sharing of collections, resources, knowledge and space for the benefit of both university members and the wider community, with a particular emphasis on support for business.

Sticking with initiatives that focus on the sharing of space and resources, the article by Dave Puplett describes how the Drill Hall Library is shared by students and staff from three universities – Greenwich, the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church.

The number of UK universities launching a London base has been growing as an emerging trend in recent years. The article from Ellen Christensen describes the growth of a networking group of library professionals who support the London satellite campuses; this group has come into being in order to help to avoid isolation in the workplace, and to exploit already existing synergies.

Regional consortia for the purchase of collections have existed for a long time. However, there are much wider issues to address in relation to collection management than those relating to procurement. With this in mind, the article by Ruth Elder focuses on an initiative to launch a community of good practice around collections management.

With regard to the partnership agenda, many universities are now looking at ways in which students can become active partners in our work. Sarah Pittaway describes how at the Hive in Worcester they have started to engage students in the recruitment process for professional library posts, involving them in a range of activities that test candidates.

The variety of articles in this issue demonstrates the value of developing shared and collaborative approaches. Whereas these might be quite time-consuming in terms of project planning and in ensuring that a number of different

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requirements are catered for, they are surely evidence of the willingness of our profession to network, collaborate and share in order to develop services that meet the needs of our users.

Reference

1   http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/shared-and-collaborative-services [accessed 8 December 2015]