Innovation in research support

While we were compiling the copy for this issue of Focus, the much-anticipated Finch report[1] on the future of access to publicly funded research in the UK was published. The outcomes of this report are potentially far-reaching and may radically change the information landscape in relation to research outputs, but as we went to press the impact was still being hotly debated. We have reproduced here the initial response from SCONUL/RLUK but this is a topic we will certainly return to as the recommendations of the report are implemented. Most of the articles submitted for our research theme deal with the role of libraries in research support. New roles for library staff, preservation of research data, and developments in training for researchers are all covered by authors experimenting with different ideas and developing their professional roles.

We received a very interesting selection of good practice articles, all bringing innovation to traditional areas of library work. These include a solution to the perennial problem of keeping study areas quiet, the use of new technologies in user education, communicating with users using Twitter and promoting print collections using QR codes. Daren Mansfield provides a personal reflection on the role of working fathers and we have a report from the University of Bradford on a very practical project to demystify library terminology for international students. News from member libraries and a varied selection of book reviews contribute both to the main research support theme and current topics of interest in collection management and service development. One of my highlights of the year was joining the local conference team organising the SCONUL annual conference in Liverpool, and I hope I have conveyed the enthusiasm of the speakers and appreciation of the delegates in the conference report.

In forthcoming issues we will highlight excellence in new library buildings or refurbishments and take a look at the evolving skill set required to support our library users in a fast-changing environment. Calls for articles will be circulated to local contacts by the editorial team and publicised via our Twitter feed (@sconulfocus) and on the Focus blog (http://sconulfocus.wordpress.com).

1   Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings (2012), *Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications*
Available at http://www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Finch-Group-report-FINAL-VERSION.pdf (accessed 30 September 2012)