

Delivering the new SCONUL Strategy

We're delighted to be able to share an update on implementing the new [SCONUL Strategy](#) and to highlight some great opportunities for colleagues at member institutions to get involved in shaping the community's future.

Content

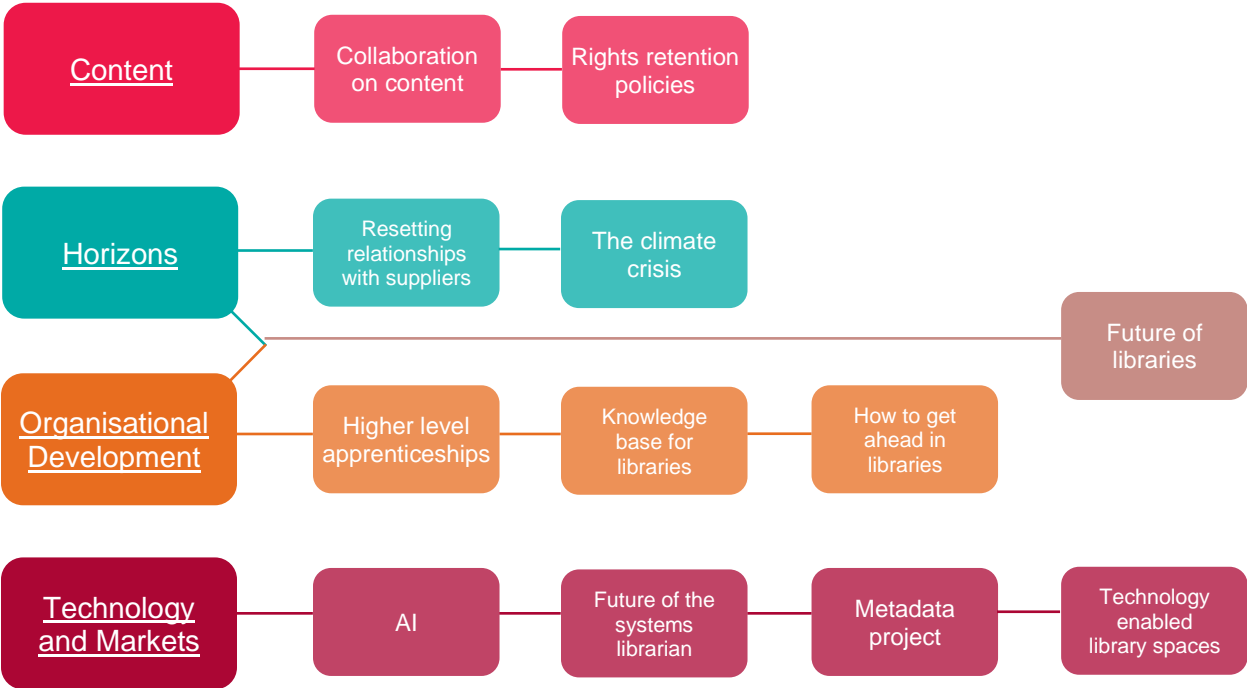
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New projects and new services

Our strategy groups are leading on many of the major challenges and opportunities facing the community including driving the changes we need to see on sustainability; on equality, diversity and inclusion; and on greater collaboration. They are exploring and articulating a positive vision for the future of libraries including how AI can be harnessed for the benefit of our users; how new technologies enable us to support our communities in new ways driven by modern pedagogical insights; and how we might support and develop the diverse, agile library workforce to deliver this positive future.

They are also supporting the community through the development of new services such as an organisational development base for libraries; a technology survey to support procurement decision-making; and CPD opportunities for staff.

There are more details on the individual projects below but in summary the groups are working in the following areas:



Each one of the project groups has been asked to make the drive to improve EDI central to their project conception and delivery as part of our shared objective to deliver a fair and open community.

There will be many opportunities to find out more about the projects and to get involved. If you or colleagues want to keep up to date with these please make sure that you are signed up to lis-sconul. Please email SitMui.Ng@sconul.ac.uk to be included.

Community of interest groups and coffee mornings

Between 2020 and 2022, SCONUL ran a set of [pilot community of interest groups](#) to test whether there was an appetite from the SCONUL community for collaborating in this way. We reviewed the findings from the pilot and will be establishing a new set of community of interest groups as part of the new strategy.

We are keen to hear from members who would like to take part in CIGs either as a member, as a co-chair, or as an organiser, on the following potential subject areas by the 19 April:

Higher-level apprenticeships: for those who are interested in sharing practice on the development of a higher-level apprenticeship for your own library, including funding and business cases.

The Future of the Systems Librarian: for those interested in exploring the role of the systems librarian in supporting the evolving needs of the library and looking at challenges around recruitment and succession planning as the systems themselves continue to evolve.

Open-source solutions: for those interested in the development of open-source solutions

for libraries own systems and for partnerships with both teaching/learning and research at our institutions.

Academic Libraries and learning technologies: for those managing learning technologists and those interested in developing in this area.

AI and information literacy: for those leading on the provision of advice to library users of AI tools and techniques.

Library analytics: for those with an interest in exploring the use of library data and analytics for service improvement.

[Want to contribute?](#)

AI coffee mornings

There is a huge amount of interest across the community in AI developments. In addition to a programme of webinars focused on particular aspects of AI, we are also bringing together those with an interest in AI developments within libraries on the last Friday of every month from 10am to 11.30am for the remainder of this year for an AI coffee morning.

These will give an opportunity for library colleagues to come together, share experiences and ask questions so that we can explore these tools and techniques as a community. These are not expert forums but for sharing information and experiences as practitioners and they are open to all, whatever your role or level of expertise. Please bring your own coffee and biscuits!

At the first meeting, members of the SCONUL AI team will share findings from the series of conversations that they have been holding with library service providers about their AI roadmaps.

Dates:

- 26 April
- 31 May
- 28 June
- 26 July
- 27 September
- 25 October
- 29 November

You can register for the first coffee morning here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrde2hqTwtE9K-2rIFR54tuF89xFeg54Yj>

Small and Specialist Institutions Forum

SCONUL runs a Small and Specialist Institutions (SSI) Forum which provides an opportunity for institutions which define themselves as small or specialist (or both) to come together to share knowledge and experience.

The Forum meets four times a year and is chaired by David Archer of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Amy Straker of Norwich University of the Arts.

In 2024 we will have the following meetings:

Spring meeting:

Wednesday 17 April

10.30am – 12pm

We will be sharing outcomes from the recent series of meetings with AI providers and discussing implications for the sector. We will also an update on the current review of the SCONUL statistics and invite members to share their thoughts on how the statistics collection and reporting can be improved. Members are also invited to suggest topics or issues to cover.

Register here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kf-GqrzsjGt1ZxJB8WFTfbB9-xVZn6VVT>

Summer meeting:

Thursday 11 July

2.30pm – 4pm

We will be discussing initiatives across the library community on climate change and sustainability and sharing information on evaluating and reporting on their own emissions. We will also hear an update on plans for the further development of the SCONUL Access Scheme. Members are also invited to suggest topics or issues to cover.

Register here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pceCrrjwoEtQky2v8U144sKbO8oZNQPuM>

Autumn meeting:
Wednesday 13 November
10.30am – 12pm

We will receive a briefing on learning from the SCOUNL Technology Survey and discussing the adoption and support of library technologies for small and specialist institutions. Members are also invited to suggest topics or issues to cover.

Register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYpfugpqTooHd2_9Xc8QKSV-k4I_zOXC7dq

EDI

SCONUL is committed to be an active partner in driving the change we all recognise is needed to foster equality, diversity and inclusion and to supporting our members to do the same.

Leading on Race Training

SCONUL works with AdvanceHE to bring members subsidised development workshops on 'Leading Change on Race Equality', the next dates for which are 10 and 24 April. You can register by completing the form [here](#). The deadline to register is 22 March.

The two linked workshops are designed to strengthen knowledge, skills and confidence to lead progress on race equality in college, national and university libraries. SCONUL Executive Board members previously trialed this workshop and found it "thought provoking, challenging" with 'facilitators who were very knowledgeable about the library context' and felt that it was "a very valuable experience".

In partnering with AdvanceHE, we are able to offer a significantly discounted rate to support participation and development across the membership.

Library EDI Coordinating Group

SCONUL organises the Libraries EDI Coordinating Group which provides a forum to share information on EDI-related activity across participating organisations; to promote this work to the broader community; and to coordinate activity as required.

The group meets three times a year and we produce a news update for community following each meeting. We welcome other library and associated bodies which are interested in getting involved. Please contact Jenelle.Negraeff@sconul.ac.uk to find out more.

EDI statistics

Last year SCONUL collected data on the ethnicity of our workforce for the first time and published a report in October with a number of recommendations for the future:

https://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/SCONUL_Equality_Diversity_and_Inclusion_statistics_report-Ethnicity_of_our_workforce.pdf.

We have just finished our collection of our second year's worth of data and our statistician will be collating this with a view to producing an updated report in the late summer.

Case studies

In the summer we will be asking members to share with us examples of projects or practices within your own libraries which are making a contribution to improving equality, diversity and inclusion. We will be producing sets of case studies to highlight effective practice in this space along the same lines as the positive action case studies:

[https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/positive-action-case-studies.](https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/positive-action-case-studies)

[Want to contribute?](#)

Events coming up

You can also keep an eye on the SCONUL website, [lis-sconul](https://www.lis-sconul.org/), or our newsletter for more information about some of the events we have coming up. These include:

19 April - Rights retention policies

Find out about progress across the sector on introducing rights retention policies; share information on overcoming barriers and hear an update from Jisc on the support available in this area.

You can register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_g3y0g4UpT6uZlmnlUNJKHA

Friday 26 April and then the last Friday of every month - AI coffee mornings

Join colleagues from across the community on the last Friday of every month to share observations, questions, and practice on the AI tools and techniques member institutions are exploring to support their users.

You can register here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrde2hqTwtE9K-2rIFR54tuF89xFeg54Yj>

3 May - SCOPE 3 emissions requirements

Explore what this means for our institutions and how we can work with our supply chain, our spaces and our people to drive the change we all need to see.

You can register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IXB2XKHXSzG-gwM0B6343w

8 May - Controlled Digital Lending

Find out how libraries can use controlled digital lending to provide access to content not otherwise available in digital format; to allow us to provide accessible and inclusive readings to students; to provide remote access to special collections; or to supply out of commerce works.

You can register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FPu9RaWZRYWhPtJeCPHKyA

June - Changing our relationships with suppliers

Join the project team to consider how we can calculate our collective spend and maximise its impact and find out more about the SCONUL Technology Survey which will help underpin this work.

June - Collaborating for change

Learn about The Green Libraries partnership and how we can work together with colleagues across the whole library community to campaign for a greener future.

June – Plan M: from principles to practice

We will be hosting a one-day face-to-face event in London alongside the RLUK Content Strategy Network to look at how the sector can operationalise Plan M.

15 July – SCONUL members meeting and AGM

Join us for our SCONUL members webinar, including our annual general meeting. You will have the opportunity to engage with SCONUL's work and get involved in shaping the community's future.

Our programme of events will continue through the Autumn including a face-to-face conference exploring the future of libraries. And if you missed some of our recent webinars you can catch up here:

Technology-enhanced
library spaces

This webinar discussed the challenges and successes of introducing technology-infused spaces in libraries, including staffing, funding, risk assessments, and building a case for investment. The panel shared valuable insights on evaluating usage, engaging students and faculty, and seeking external funding. <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/exploring-technology-enhanced-library-spaces-webinar-20-february-2024>

Content Forum: The future
of subscriptions

This event brought members together to hear an early insight into the Critical Review of Transitional Agreements, published on 7 March, and to debate options for the community on the future of subscriptions. We have made a recording and write up of the event available to members on an on-request basis to ensure confidentiality, and if you would like to find out more, please contact SitMui.Ng@sconul.ac.uk

Exploring practical
problems and potential
strategies to fund
equitable OA book
publishing

This webinar, held jointly with COPIM, brought members together to share advice and practical strategies on supporting the shift to open access for books including overcoming the challenges of funding. You can find out more here: <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/copim-and-sconul-webinar-25-january-2024>

Future of the Systems Librarian

This webinar marked the launch of the SCONUL project on this issue, exploring the role of the systems librarian in supporting the evolving needs of the library and looking at challenges around recruitment and succession planning as systems themselves continue to evolve. You can listen in and read a write up of the event here:

<https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/the-future-of-the-systems-librarian-31-october-2023>

AI and the library's role in supporting students, academics and their institutions

SCONUL held two linked webinars exploring aspects of the library's role in supporting students, academics and their institutions to navigate the AI revolution. These brought SCONUL members together to share experiences, resources and explore responses to challenges. You can access recordings of the events here:

<https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/ai-and-library-support-for-students-webinar-15-september> and

<https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/ai-and-library-support-for-the-institution-webinar-29-september-2023>

Modernising our existing services

We are modernising our services to make sure that they are fit for purpose in four key areas:

Benchmarking statistics

We are keen to ensure that the statistics we collect can deliver the evidence that members need in the right areas so that they remain an effective benchmarking tool for institutions. We have commissioned a formal review led by Professor David Baker and Allison Alden which will report in time for changes to be made for the next round of statistics collection in September. This is taking evidence from members and stakeholders in the UK and internationally.

[Want to contribute?](#)

We are also exploring how the statistics can be presented and shared in a way that maximises their impact including how we can support their integration with institutional data and systems. We hope to report in May.

Access scheme

We are building a new dedicated student-facing website for the Access Scheme which will help improve the student experience and ensure that scheme information is transparent and clear for users and administration staff alike. At the same time, we will be undertaking a light touch review of the scheme rules to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The new website will be in place by before the start of the next academic year, around August 2024.

[Want to contribute?](#)

SCONUL website

We will be launching a new easily navigable SCONUL website shortly which will allow us to share information with the community and will allow you to browse and access resources much more easily. It will include a dedicated CPD portal which will allow colleagues to explore the opportunities available and resources pages on key themes such as AI, sustainability and EDI matters. There will be no need to members to re-register for the new site and we look forward to your feedback.

Technology Survey

In May we will be launching a detailed survey exploring the sector's use of library technologies across a range of functional spaces which will run biennially. This follows a successful pilot which indicated that the survey provides valuable insights into the usage of particular services and how these are rated in terms of value for money and functionality. It will also give important sector-level information about the performance of providers and identify areas of insufficient competition. We will be holding a webinar providing further details of the survey shortly and will be providing members with detailed guidance on responding.

Library Design Awards

SCONUL's Library Design Awards have been running every three years since 1973, with the most recent winners being announced in 2019 <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/library-design-award>. As a result of the pandemic, the awards were paused, and we are now returning to them with updated and new categories to reflect post-pandemic realities.

The next round of awards will take place in 2025. We will retain a category focused primarily on space: **excellence and innovation in library space planning and design**. This category will include repurposed, refurbished, rebuilt and new build spaces, with a continued emphasis on creativity and impact on users, rather than purely architectural merit. This single category will be open to larger or smaller projects with an emphasis would be on what was delivered for library users.

We will also be introducing a new category: **excellent and innovation in library service planning and design** with a similar focus on creativity and impact for users, rather than on back-office functions, efficiencies or other functions.

We'll be recruiting a steering group for the awards which will produce detailed criteria for judging these categories and act as a judging panel for the awards themselves.

[Want to contribute?](#)

More about our projects

Some of our projects have been running for six months while others are just beginning their work. We will be sharing regular updates on their progress and findings over the life of the strategy.

The future of subscriptions

The Content Group is working closely with colleagues in Jisc, RLUK and others across the library community and beyond to shape the future of subscriptions in the UK and explore the scope for developing collective collecting approaches. This is particularly timely with the publication of the Jisc Critical Review of Transitional Agreements; renewed pressures on budgets; and the slow pace of change towards open access internationally. The group held a Content Forum meeting <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/event/sconul-content-forum-2> in early February where there was lively debate about the short and longer-term options on subscriptions and the group will continue to work through the implications of this debate and equitable and sustainable options for the sector.

Rights Retention

The group is also working on the development of rights retention policies and is holding an event to explore progress across the UK towards their adoption and how any barriers might be addressed. https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_q3y0q4UpT6uZImnluNJKHA

Collaboration on content

The group will also continue its engagement with other issues including the development of collaborative collections infrastructure and the development of OA monographs.

Resetting our relationship with suppliers

This project, led by the Horizons Group, is exploring how we might make the relationship between library service providers and member libraries more responsive to member needs. With increasing vertical and horizontal integration in the provider landscape this project will explore how the sector might make use of its significant purchasing power to drive improved pricing transparency, supplier responsiveness and overall cost effectiveness. It will look at how we can develop and use intelligence on sector spend and the outcomes of the [Technology Survey](#) to pro-actively manage these relationships at a national level.

Climate crisis and sustainability

This project will work with the sector to provide support and information on our collective drive to improve sustainability and deliver on the [Sustainability Development Goals](#) with a focus on sharing expertise and resources. There will be an inaugural webinar exploring the impact of the requirement to measure [SCOPE 3](#) carbon emissions for libraries https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IXB2XKHXSzG-gwM0B6343w followed by another webinar exploring the campaign for green libraries with CILIP. Other early activity will include engaging with the procurement agencies on the development of requirements for suppliers, and with AUDE (estates) on their work on space and sustainability.

Future of libraries

This project will define and articulate our organisational identity and purpose, grounded in our heritage and values while projecting a compelling vision for the future. It will engage and support members in considering their own responses to technological, social, financial and other developments, and use case studies and storytelling approaches, underpinned by qualitative and quantitative evidence to assert a positive, forward-looking future for libraries with our community and stakeholders. It is a joint project between the Horizons and Organisational Development Strategy Groups.

[Want to contribute?](#)

Higher Level Apprenticeships

A Level 6/7 Library and Knowledge Management professional standard is due in 2024 and this project will support the community in the introduction of higher apprenticeships for libraries and explore their scope to provide for new routes into the profession. The project will focus on sharing experience and practice.

How to get ahead in libraries

This project will provide positive support for staff who want to progress their careers through practical advice and guidance, for example on how to read and respond to job descriptions, providing examples of leadership journeys, and how to manage your own career.

Organisational development knowledge base for libraries

Members often share organisational development resources including job descriptions, team and organisational structures and this project will provide a formal structure for sharing this information through the development of an organisational development knowledge base, including JDs, internal staff structures; and functional / service maps. It will also identify and survey emerging or good practice including with an EDI focus. The project will be consulting members shortly on practical considerations around the development of the knowledge base.

AI for libraries

The team from the Technology and Markets Group which is leading our work on AI has been very active in exploring the opportunities and challenges that the new technologies present for the sector. The team held two webinars covering these issues and is planning a series of further webinars sharing emerging practice and information on developments in teaching and learning and research, for example AI and transformation of the content space; the world of work; the impact of AI on user behaviour; on repositories and AI and ethics.

The group is setting up a new initiative to bring practitioners together to share information and experiences in a relaxed way through AI coffee mornings. At the first of these meetings members of the team will be sharing the outputs from a series of meetings held with library service providers over the first two months of this year to explore their roadmaps for the development of AI-enabled services.

The future of the systems librarian

This project is looking at the role of the systems librarian in supporting the evolving needs of the library and addressing challenges including difficulties in recruitment and succession planning. It is exploring the implications of AI and other developments; the nature and breadth of the skills required; and implications for role descriptions, grading and salaries for systems librarians. It is also looking at organisational models for deploying these skills within institutions, including the experience of peer professional services.

The project opened with a scoping webinar and consultation which explored these issues <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/the-future-of-the-systems-librarian-31-october-2023> . The group is analysing the results and further outputs may include a survey of member experience and developing requirements in this area, case studies, job descriptions, salary and banding scoping and other good practice materials plus analysis of the sector's current and future needs.

Metadata project

This project will explore a series of interrelated themes around the supply, use and sharing of metadata in libraries and the development of new services and collaborations in this area. This includes a more efficient bibliographic metadata supply model. The group is planning a joint event with RLUK's metadata group in June. This conference will explore the meaningful actions we can take as a community to affect change in key focus areas or to influence change with partners and providers to meet the long-term requirements of the sector.

Technology-enabled library spaces

This project is showcasing technology-enabled libraries including exploring pedagogical drivers for their design; underpinning business cases; the development process; delivery and evaluation. The project held a launch webinar <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/exploring-technology-enhanced-library-spaces-webinar-20-february-2024> with three case studies and a second webinar is planned with a focus on the library and digital humanities. The project will also produce a series of approximately a dozen case studies to highlight innovation across the community in this area.