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Editorial information

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SCONUL Focus is the journal of SCONUL, the Society of College, National and University Libraries.

SCONUL Focus aims to bring together articles, reports and news stories from practitioners in order to generate debate and promote good practice in the national libraries and the university and college sector. As well as the paper copy, the current issue of *SCONUL Focus* is also available electronically via the SCONUL website (<http://www.sconul.ac.uk>). Contributions are welcomed from colleagues in all fields and at all levels: we merely request that the items contributed are concise, informative, practical and (above all!) worth reading.

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Transforming libraries

Perhaps it is a credit crunch thing but the national media seems to have recently (re-)discovered public libraries.

Some of the stories are 'doom and gloom'. Rachel Cooke, for example, has bemoaned the fact that 'yoga and coffee' are taking over from books in some libraries in a misguided attempt to widen participation, in her rallying Observer essay 'Time to go into battle to save our world of books' ¹.

Other articles have been more positive. Plans to build the UK's biggest ever public library in Birmingham received plaudits from the literary great and good in *The Guardian's* wonderfully titled 'Books at Birmingham's heart as recession begins a new chapter of public libraries' (where do these sub-editors get their training?!) ².

Of course, being a library issue, there are always going to be frank exchanges in the letter pages/blogs about the role of libraries but *The Guardian* piece was a bit more realistic than the usual 'spend less on buildings and more on books and that'll stop the rot' we get from Disgruntled of Tunbridge Wells. The Head of Birmingham Library Services was given the opportunity to pronounce his intentions at some length:

"We are trying to redefine the library and archive in a major city centre. For 150 years the role of the library was to democratise access to books and information which many could not afford. That model of service is being challenged.

"The number of books we loan out and reference inquiries we receive is sliding. We can all use Google and with discounts on Amazon, three-for-two offers in Waterstones and Tesco discounting every Harry Potter book, many of us have the means to buy books. We need to make the library more of an experience. Our role will now be less about transactions with users and more about aiding their transformation."

The rather tired-looking library will itself be transformed:

'Visitors arriving when the new library opens in 2013 will be confronted by an airy atrium filled with touch-sensitive computer screens and regularly changing exhibitions. Voluble group learning will take precedence over hushed reading rooms.'

Transforming tired-looking buildings into beautiful modern environments?

Transforming usage from warehouses for books into interactive forums for the use and creation of knowledge?

Transforming our users?

Doesn't this sound curiously familiar to those of us who have been working in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) over the last few years? All around us are magnificent changes to the physical library. *SCONUL Focus*, with its usual aim to assist in the sharing of good practice, has been keen to spread the word about developments, with articles on flagship spaces (the Saltire Centre ³, the Learning Grid ⁴ and so on) as well as reports on sometimes more modest changes in our 'News from member libraries' column. SCONUL itself has promoted and praised innovations as both an active partner in Designing Libraries (with its exceptionally useful online buildings database)⁵

and by celebrating excellence with its Library Design Awards⁶.

We thought it was now time that Focus included an update on developments and these are brought together in Carol Kay's excellent collection of essays that follow this editorial. This is an inspirational collection that shows just how wisely we have invested in our library spaces over the last few years. And – speaking partly from experience – this investment has paid off for many of us with increased footfall and increased student satisfaction (something perhaps HEI managers interested in getting a good return on future investments should bear in mind as we enter a period of financial stringency).

Elsewhere in this issue we explore innovative approaches to staff development and enquiry support, and offer top tips on how libraries can get the most out of Facebook.

As our friends at *The Guardian* would no doubt say, a full and exciting chapter.

Antony Brewerton
SCONUL Focus Editorial Board

NOTES

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All Web sites accessed 10 May 2009

Refurbished, remodelled ... and revitalised

- a round-up of recent library building projects



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In late 2005 I was offered the chance to project manage the extension and refurbishment of the Sydney Jones Library, the arts and social sciences library at the University of Liverpool.

The preliminary stages of the project involved visits to many university libraries in the UK and Ireland that were in the process of being, or had just been, rebuilt, extended or refurbished. These visits were invaluable to the project team and ideas gleaned from them were the origin of many of the developments and floor layouts that were incorporated into our project.

2006–2008 went by in a blur as I was then heavily involved in the library project. The first stage was completed in summer 2007, with the majority of library staff moving into new accommodation in the refurbished University Senate House, now called the Abercromby Wing, next to the library. A new 'link' was built joining the two wings. The second phase involved the refurbishment of the existing library, now called the Grove Wing, and the creation of a new special collections and archives area. In the process of this refurbishment every one of the 1.2 million books in the Sydney Jones had to be moved!

The project was completed in September 2008 and one of the things I have most enjoyed since then is showing various groups around our new facilities. It struck me then that it would be useful to have an overview of recently completed library projects published in *Focus*: the descriptions of the work done could help inform prospective visitors who are themselves planning to embark on building development work.

A few months ago I posted a message on *lis-link* asking for volunteers to write about their respec-

tive projects and got a very positive response. The resulting articles are from a wide range of institutions but they all have a strong theme: find out what your users want and then see how you can modify or extend your space to meet those expectations.

As one would expect, there is a move towards open, flexible learning spaces where students can chat and eat/drink while they work together. There is, however, still a demand for more traditional study spaces and most libraries have zoned their study spaces to meet these differing needs.

Traditional classroom becomes an innovative learning space at Leeds Metropolitan University

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Library space has been an important issue of debate and discussion for many years. Powell writes of the shift from teaching to learning and the important place that libraries hold in supporting the learning of students in the Higher Education sector.¹ Powell states that 'the design of library space can therefore either aid or impair the ability of students to achieve their academic potential' and that 'academic libraries must cater for an increasing range of learning activities' (p.112).

Academic libraries also need to cater for a wide range of learning styles. Collaborative learning is more commonplace now in higher education, as are group activities and assessments, and our library spaces need to be flexible and varied enough to accommodate these new ways of learning.

We recognise the importance of 'library space and ambience' in supporting the first-year experience at university: 'According to Bundy, libraries should be welcoming, inexpensive, flexible and

highly accessible. They should cater for all learning styles'.²

The recent refurbishment of a former 'classroom' in Leeds Metropolitan University Library gave the library the opportunity to put many of the above ideas into practice. The furniture chosen for the room is flexible and adaptable, to enhance inclusivity. There are comfortable seats with coffee tables, office chairs on castors and tables of different sizes and shapes that are easy to move around and arrange in a variety of ways.

'In line with the strategy of the university, our vision was of a contemporary library in a classic setting – a library in a listed building but designed for the students of the twenty-first century, a library that would meet the needs of current students but in a space that could accommodate change. We wanted an innovative library where, above all, the students come first.'³

As the amount of space available to us was reduced recently, we have to make the space we have work harder for us. This has been done by ensuring that the classroom can be used for a number of purposes. The whole library is connected to the wireless network and students and staff can borrow wireless laptops to use in the room. The result is a future-proofed, flexible, bold, creative, supportive and enterprising space in line with JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) guidelines.⁴ What was previously a traditional classroom is now multi-purpose and students can read, write, deliver presentations or use IT there.

The classroom was designed with the future and change in mind. Our approach was to have as little fixed furniture as possible and to harness the latest technology. Floor boxes and the wireless network allow wireless laptops to be plugged in anywhere and smartboards have been installed. The furniture is highly flexible and mobile. The tables can be easily rearranged to enable different types of studying and teaching. The room has been transformed from one of our more traditional teaching rooms into a high-tech, inspirational learning room for students to work in outside their classrooms. Library staff also use the room for teaching and delivering workshops.

At the last university staff development festival, library staff offered a 'sell-out' workshop on developing library research skills for academic staff. We were able to divide the furniture into five work spaces, to permit small-group working and competition as well as tutoring to the whole



assembly. Three of us facilitated the workshop as a team and we used the smartboard to demonstrate online resources, as well as the flip chart and the whiteboard. It was a creative blend of traditional and high-tech methods of teaching, making full use of the multi-purpose functionality of the room. The feedback that we received after the event was extremely positive, and we have repeated the workshop several times since.

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Learning hubs at the University of Nottingham

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Exciting developments over the last three years have led to significant changes in four of our twelve libraries. Changes cover the use of space, student experience and staff roles, and centre round the learning hubs we have developed in partnership with the centre for integrative learning (CIL), one of our four centres of excellence in teaching and learning (CETL).

The main enablers for these changes were, firstly, a new campus, to which most non-frontline staff and the whole department of manuscripts and special collections moved, and then the very active promotion of RFID self-service, resulting in about 80% of transactions being done by library users. Thus we had free space and available staff.

For start of session 2007–2008, we refurbished half of Hallward, all of George Green, all of James Cameron Gifford and all of Greenfield Medical Libraries, between them covering a wealth of subjects. These are very different spaces, but in each we have implemented the key principles of a learning hub, offering flexible learning to suit different needs. In summer 2008 we did the rest of Hallward and moved round some stock in George Green, so all four libraries now offer students a variety of learning environments, from the active buzz of the learning hubs to traditional silent study spaces, with some quiet areas in between. Student feedback has usually been very positive, and staff have moved into a different way of working, which is bearing fruit for the service and for individual career development.

So what do we mean by a learning hub? We describe this in various ways (according to the audience and the word-count limit) but the core is flexible, technology-enhanced space for group work and individual learning, in an open

environment or bookable group-study rooms, with roaming staff to support the variety of uses encouraged by these spaces. We didn't need to tell students what they could do here: we developed the space, put the equipment in and they came and did whatever suited their current needs. We took the opportunity to relax the rules on phones, food (allowed except hot food) and drink, so these spaces are truly flexible and at times really do buzz with activity. The quieter and silent study areas have much stricter rules on noise, food and drink (nothing except bottled water) and we worked closely with the students' union on developing those areas, giving them where possible a different look and feel to offer visual clues to the different uses.

Hallward is our largest, most heavily used library, open 24x7 for most of term time, and reaching visitor numbers around 9,000–10,000 a day at peak times. It has the richest learning hub, and also houses the CIL, whose pedagogic (and financial) input were very valuable as part of the project. Here we have several bookable group-study rooms (housing four to eight occupants), with smartboards and projectors or interactive Panaboard; two workshops (with six PCs round the edge, a central meeting table, projector and smartboard, with one room equipped for video conferencing); a computer training room for 30, with projector/smartboard; a video-editing suite for four; a screening room for 50, with cinema-style seats and superior projection and sound equipment (but no popcorn so far!). All of these rooms are left open for general use when not booked, and mostly they are booked through the library catalogue. We also have two CIL studios, each for 25, which can combine into one large room, with multiple projectors and smartboards which function separately or together and cameras for recording presentations and video conferencing. These rooms are booked through the CIL, but CIL staff encourage as much use as possible for any purpose.



Workshop in Hallward Library (Tim Hodges Photography, <http://www.timhodges.co.uk>)

In the large open space on this floor, we have short-stay PCs (for 15 minutes), a large mobile plasma screen/PC combinations (designed to be moved so you can create the space you want for your group), lots of soft seating and large computer tables with a mix of fixed PCs and laptop plug-in points, to use with your own laptop or one loaned from the lending desk (bookable through the library catalogue and extremely popular). Wireless is pervasive throughout the building. Photocopiers, printers and drinks vending machines are gathered into an equipment hub. We also have a Thunder Wall virtual flipchart. This is owned by another of the CETLs, the virtual learning laboratory (VLL) and is purposely located in the open space.



Thunder Wall in Hallward Library (Tim Hodges Photography, <http://www.timhodges.co.uk>)

Throughout, we have used light and space and bright colours, in contrast to what we had before and to the traditional library space people might expect. The entry floor also houses a mix of seating, PCs/laptop plug-in and a café with PCs, as well as the short-loan collection, self-service machines, another equipment hub and the lending desk. These are the noisy floors, and we work hard to keep the two upper floors dedicated to silent or quiet individual study.

The other libraries have smaller, less rich learning hubs, but follow the same principles and offer the same noisy/quiet/silent split.

We have grabbed the opportunities presented by these capital developments to progress staff roles. Roaming staff members offer active support to students using self-service and other technology, moving throughout the day between different activities and no longer stuck behind a lending desk which can form a barrier between them and the students. We have created a new role of 'information assistant', and these work closely with IT staff, developing new skills and expertise to increase their range and the service offered. The

staff have played a large part in the learning hubs' success.

After two years, we see these spaces as the norm for a university library, and we are delighted that we have enriched both the student experience and the career prospects of our staff. And we have almost forgotten the two summers when we felt like we were on building sites, keeping all library services going with a smile! The results are worth every penny and every speck of dust.



The George Green Library entrance floor with hub and self-service

Seeing clearly – the redevelopment of the Central Library, Imperial College London: a review of the extension and refurbishment of the Central Library, South Kensington campus, from concept to completion and beyond

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Opportunity is not a lengthy visitor. When a series of disparate factors became aligned in late 2005, the chance to redevelop level one of the Central Library was seized by the then Director of Library Services, Clare Jenkins.

INFLUENCING FACTORS

Over the past five years a number of department libraries had come into the building, maximising stock access but eroding study spaces and flexibility as collections grew.

Some influences were of our own design – a radical review of print collections against secure electronic alternatives allowed the library to

rigorously realign journal collections to electronic delivery.

Most crucial were timely external factors – the closure of a bookshop occupying a corner of the library building and the removal of a large part of the Science Museum Library’s older collections (almost 50% of level one was used for storage).

Underpinning all these influences was a strong desire to redefine library services for a twenty-first-century student, resident in an international institution. That the library should reflect user needs was a given. Evidence was gathered via student feedback, a postcard survey and of course benchmarking against the library sector generally.

The postcard survey was exactly as it sounds – a quick question survey focusing on student workspace preferences and habits, distributed on specially designed postcards using the tagline ‘The Central Library is changing – and so are you.’

The results indicated that 25% of users wanted to work in either a designated group space or somewhere that had a social buzz as a background. The majority of users work with a range of print and electronic resources at the same time. When asked to suggest one change or improvement, increased access to PCs was the number-one request.

DESIGNS ON CHANGE

Our remit was:

- to reflect the changing work patterns of students and support their broader learning styles
- to offer flexibility and adaptability of space to meet current and future demands on the library building
- to respond to the expectations of students and staff in an ambitious, demanding university.

Beneath these drivers was a much longer shopping list, including a learning café with a range of PC options, innovative and inspiring study areas for group and individual work, teaching and training rooms, interrelated service desk and staff space and the elusive ‘wow’ factor – level one would be our shop window; it had to mirror all our aspirations.

The design timeline for the actual library space was incredibly short for such an ambitious project. A small library design team met on a weekly basis

with the architects (A-EM) between October and December 2006 to work on the floor plan and concepts for the different types of space.

That the design had to incorporate certain fixed structural features – the main stairs, lifts and internal supporting walls – made the challenge all the greater.

The following year and a half saw level one disappear under a shroud of hoardings (or a hoard of shroudings!) and library services were delivered via a temporary location from the upper floors.

SEEING THE IMPACT

Level one opened in July 2008 and its success was transparent, translucent and clear. The innovative design uses a range of materials to divide and define space, creating a range of enclosed and open spaces which define use and purpose.

The group-study area offers a range of options from flexible open space with movable furniture to more defined work spaces called ‘think tanks’ and ‘c screens’.



The café is of course a study space too, though kept discrete as it can only be entered from before the library entry gates. Seating has been created to encourage both individual and collaborative PC use, as well as comfortable low seating for social



and chill-out time. College catering provides a staffed service between 08.30 and 23.00 during the week, though the space remains open for 24 hours with vending provision.

The individual study and training area has a different feeling. Muted blue walls and solid wood desks create a quieter environment. Three student-bookable rooms are also available for presentation practice and group work.

The staff- and service-focused zones were the most difficult to design: the configuration, interrelationships and travel routes through the building challenged everyone involved. That self-issue usage has increased (from 50% to 70% of all loans) by the clever positioning of our machines and that we have been able to make the coretext collection walk-in access are both indicators of success.



The floor has been enhanced by the generous donation of over 50 canvases by artist Bob Brighton. The bold colour themes challenge the eye and complete what is very much a visual space.

We have relied on college expertise to help support the promotion of the completed project. The online video tour remains the most watched videoclip on the college website. A direct link is available from www.imperial.ac.uk/library.

AN EYE ON THE FUTURE

Instinct and seeing the space in use tell us that the design is successful. Gate entries, circulation and head counts all confirm that we are a third busier than a year ago. For more formal evidence we have committed to monitoring and reflecting on the design throughout this academic year, considering both its impact on the library and our ambitions for library space in the future. In November last year a follow-up survey was conducted,

reviewing the student to study spaces ratio across all floors of the library. At the time of writing we are about to embark on holding a number of focus groups, with the student response to the group-study areas being key.

We have refurbished one floor of a five-storey building. The completed refurbishment continues to send ripples of change through the library service. What we do next may be curtailed by the financial climate, but certainly not by aspiration and ambition.

Oxford developments

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Oxford University Library Services (OULS) are currently engaged in a major programme of library-space redevelopment and refurbishment. Plans include a major new humanities library at the centre of the university's Radcliffe Observatory quarter and a dramatic remodelling of the New Bodleian Library.

Recently completed projects within science and medicine include a new library space for the medical community in Oxford and a major refurbishment of the Radcliffe Science Library.

Library spaces for scientists, healthcare workers, students and researchers are changing, evolving dramatically to meet the rapidly changing needs of library users. Library staff in Oxford are working hard to meet these new expectations.

Our users still want the 'cathedral hush' with comfortable and generously proportioned study spaces. They want strong collections of physical textbooks and professional library staff on call. However, they also want space to interact with classmates, colleagues and librarians. They want to interact formally and informally, in group-study spaces, in training rooms and in open communal areas with comfortable seats, refreshments, newspapers and current journals.

Our users want decent IT spaces and workstations – wireless access throughout, obviously, but also fixed PC workstations. Junior doctors or medical students dashing between wards and classrooms aren't able to lug a laptop about, and neither is a busy staff nurse coming off a twelve-hour cardiac shift at 5 am.

Of course this is very much the 'information commons' approach, with the library as the 'third place' (not a classroom/ward/laboratory and not home but something in-between work and pure leisure) or the learning/research café approach. In practice in Oxford science and medicine we describe it to our users and others as the best of traditional library services combined with better IT and teaching spaces and a more 'Borders' look and feel.

Historically, library provision for science was shared between departments, colleges and the central Radcliffe Science Library (RSL), scattered over 15–20 sites. With increasing use of e-resources delivered to the desktop, footfall in the smaller libraries has declined, and a decision was taken some years ago to concentrate printed resources for both reference and lending in one central 'hub' site.

The RSL is the chosen site. Originally erected in 1901 to accommodate the science collections previously based in the university museum next door, it was extended with a second wing in 1934, to house the legal deposit collections transferred from the central Bodleian Library. In 1975 an underground stack and reading room were constructed to meet demand, and a separate undergraduate science lending library (the Hooke Library) was opened in part of the original 1901 wing.

To adapt the building to its new role as a science 'hub', the RSL and Hooke Libraries have been merged and their reference and lending collections interfiled. The main entrance hall has been completely restyled to provide a bright, airy space with reception and issue desk, workstations for quick-reference consultations, self-issue machines and printing, photocopying and scanning facilities. One end of the room is devoted to a lounge area with comfortable seating where eating/drinking/talking are permitted, and the fresh white walls provide a home for a changing exhibition of artwork by students of Oxford's Ruskin school of drawing and fine art.

The two wings of the building were originally constructed on different levels, so access between them involved stairs. To improve this, the link



between the two wings, with its lift and staircase, has been completely demolished and replaced with an all-glass construction housing a new staircase and a re-oriented lift now serving all levels. As well as greatly easing day-to-day management, the new link provides superb, hitherto unseen views of the neighbouring museum and Rhodes House buildings.

The former Hooke Library space has been refurbished to provide additional staff accommodation, a café area with vending machines and a much-needed training room equipped with 30 workstations, projection facilities and a smartboard. When not in use for training, this is available as an additional study space for students, and can also be hired by academic departments for teaching.

The geography departmental library was incorporated in the 'new' RSL at the same time as the Hooke Library, and further departmental collections from experimental psychology, plant sciences and zoology will follow in 2009–10, in space released by the continuing transfer to off-site store of printed journals that are now available electronically. Usage is growing steadily, with over 1,000 users now a typical daily figure in term time, which is treble the former RSL usage. Many compliments have been received on the improvements and on the user-friendliness of both the design and the library staff and services.

Staff of Health Care Libraries (the clinical medical side of OULS) have also been working to redevelop and refocus library spaces in line with our users' changing needs – most recently with the opening of a new knowledge centre to replace two more traditional libraries.

Located in the heart of a £50 million new biomedical research building and three years in the planning and construction, the Knowledge Centre provides services to a very varied clientele, including



the biomedical research and student community based on the university's Old Road campus and all of the NHS staff based in the Churchill Hospital. The new service complements HCL's main site – the Cairns Library in the John Radcliffe Hospital.

The emphasis is very much on the zoning of space to provide a range of facilities and services in a relatively small physical footprint of just 330 square metres. Historical plans for a much larger facility with a large physical collection were dramatically revised at the start of the process as the impact of Oxford's growing electronic collections on user needs and behaviour became apparent. As our electronic collections increase, our paper collections shrink and so less space is required.

However, the Knowledge Centre still provides access to high-quality collections of books (the George Weirnik collection) and journals, as well as electronic resources. Other facilities on offer include spacious and quiet spaces for private study, WiFi access, networked computers with internet access as well as word-processing and related applications and self-service printing and scanning.

New services also include a group-study room (with a projector and laptops) that can be booked by any member of the library, as well as an inviting communal area with hot drinks, sandwiches, comfortable seats, newspapers and the latest journals.



As well as providing a greatly enhanced physical space for our users, the Knowledge Centre acts as a base for our outreach librarians – professional staff delivering high-quality information support for clinical research and patient care at point of need across the neighbouring hospital and university wards, labs and departments. It's not just library space that is changing and evolving in Oxford!

**'... you sort of lose the will to live if you spend too long in the [carrels] ...'
: improving facilities at Leeds University Library**

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The past two years have seen a flurry of building improvements at Leeds University library, which has included the refurbishment of our Health Sciences Library.

CONTEXT

The library is a key player in a university-level project to develop a ten-year vision for the use and management of learning and teaching space, to ensure continued improvement of the student academic experience. The university's learning and teaching strategy highlights the enhancement of learning and teaching through the use of technology, with a particular emphasis on blended learning. The student portal is well established and popular and a new virtual learning environment was launched in September 2008. Within the field of medicine, dentistry and healthcare, pedagogy is giving emphasis to self-directed and reflective learning, communication and the development of teamwork. There is an increasing emphasis too on interdisciplinary working, driving a need for provision where disciplines can meet together within the library.

Within this context the library has plans to develop all its library buildings to create premises that will be at the forefront of academic library provision. Flexible and IT-rich, catering for twenty-first-century teaching and learning, the facilities will accommodate individual and collaborative learning with seamless access to IT

and print materials. This report details our recent improvements to the Health Sciences Library.

HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY

The Health Sciences Library occupies 3142.23 square metres and is based in the Worsley building at the south end of the university's main campus. It contains the main collections for medicine and health-related subjects. It is a major, heavily used resource for university staff and students and, through a service-level agreement, for NHS staff employed throughout West Yorkshire who regularly use the library facilities. In 2007–08 there were 245,764 entrances to the library and in the same period 115,735 items were issued or renewed.

REDEVELOPMENT

In 2007 we were fortunate to be able to develop our group-study area into a flexible, IT-rich space. Previously home to long rows of desks that were unsuited to group work, the area provided great potential for development. This relatively small-scale project was planned and funded in collaboration with the assessment and learning in practice settings (ALPS) centre for excellence in learning and teaching (CETL) based at Leeds (<http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk/>). ALPS's aim is to ensure that students graduating from courses in health and social care are fully equipped to perform confidently and competently at the start of their professional careers.

Key features of this redesign work were:

- increased numbers of IT-enabled study spaces
- flexible furniture
- study booths
- soft informal seating areas.

After completion of this development we and the CETL staff undertook an evaluation of this space which highlighted issues with the rest of the library environment, hence the title of this piece!

With the assistance of the Wolfson Foundation and university funding we were able to follow up on this first phase of development to address the rest of the library space. Our objectives for the redevelopment of the rest of the library were to:

- create a multipurpose facility to be used for meetings, presentations, training and collaborative work: this room was to be equipped with flexible furniture, to provide plenty of

power and data sockets and a wireless router enabling use of IT within the space, alongside presentation facilities

- provide refurbished and enhanced library study space: the primary intention was to increase access to appropriate facilities for use of laptops and other portable devices, through provision of power and wireless routers. In addition some fixed-IT workstations would be provided and current furnishings (study carrels, seating etc.) updated to create a more comfortable quiet-working environment; with shelving running throughout this study space, enhanced IT provision allows students to work with print and e-resources in a seamless way
- re-locate the library counter to increase the space available to the users in the entrance area to the library: this space will be used to provide enhanced access to drop-in IT for external users
- enhance teaching facilities – two small teaching rooms were to be redeveloped to allow them to be used as either one training room or two, by use of a concertina wall; rooms are on open access as IT clusters when not used for teaching
- create an area for the high-demand collection: the library seeks to maximise the opening hours for customers by using custodian staff and self-service technology; having a self-access high-demand collection increases access to required materials during self-service hours.

Work commenced on the library in June 2008, with library services remaining open throughout, albeit with a reduced service. Bar some minor snagging, full service resumed for the new academic year in September 2008.

The newly refurbished library has proved popular with its customers: gate entrances have increased and we have received many positive comments on the facilities. The next stage is to undertake an evaluation of the improvements to the library from which we can learn to help us with our work in the future.

Cardiff University – architects, sponsors and Carol Vorderman: the remodelling of Trevithick Library

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Three years ago Janet Peters, the University Librarian for Cardiff University, approached me with the seemingly innocuous suggestion that an application be submitted for the next round of Wolfson Foundation/CURL (Consortium of University Research Libraries) libraries programme funding to refurbish Trevithick Library. This was a rather tired facility servicing the information needs of more than 3,000 students, plus staff, from the schools of engineering, computer science and physics and astronomy. This bid was successful and after a process involving the complete relocation of the library – twice – Trevithick Library has been utterly transformed for the better. As might be expected, this task was made possible through the hard work of, amongst others, our architect, library staff, university estates staff and the contractors. However, as will be highlighted, one unexpectedly vital partner in this enterprise was the university's development and alumni relations division.



The old Trevithick library – uninspiring and drab

To explain the background to this project, it is necessary to go back to 2004 when, immediately following an institutional merger, Cardiff University's Vice-Chancellor commissioned a full-scale review of the library service. Reporting in 2005, the review made many radical recommendations, including a major new build and the redesign of two existing libraries, including Trevithick Library, as part of a ten-year library strategy endorsed by the university. At that stage, Trevithick Library was struggling to provide a learning environment to match changing technological and pedagogical advancements. For example, there were no

group-study rooms and, consequently, researchers wanting quiet study areas competed with students who were required by their curriculum to work in groups. The library itself suffered from a lack of identity, and staff and students often complained about the low-level lighting and lack of ventilation. In short, the Trevithick Library did not inspire learning or, indeed, staying in the library any longer than absolutely necessary. The architect's brief was to create a prestigious facility: visually attractive, comfortable, efficient, well-stocked, well-equipped and, above all, carefully zoned to encourage a variety of learning styles. Key elements of the redesign included a new PC room, four group-study rooms, open study spaces and informal areas. This was a tall order for a relatively small area.

Working with architects based in the design research unit Wales – part of the university's school of architecture – had immediate benefits because they were active users of academic libraries themselves, and thus were familiar with some of the issues we faced. As part of a process of benchmarking, visits were made with the architect to the libraries of the Universities of Portsmouth and Southampton. Ironically, one of the conclusions we took from these visits was that, whilst architecture was important, to make a real difference we also needed to invest in good-quality furniture. The budget for the project was reasonable but, as is often the case, it would not stretch to the kind of furniture we really wanted. Despite this, we approached a local designer and furniture supplier for ideas. We identified suitable desking and a well-established range of chairs that had the benefit of being available in subtly different styles and a range of fabrics and finishes. We knew what we wanted: we just required the money.

The idea of sponsorship was mooted as a way of raising these additional funds. At first glance Trevithick Library might appear an unlikely target for sponsorship: it is a medium-sized library, located on the first floor of a multi-purpose, drably functional institutional building – hardly the most enticing of facilities to attract outside investment. Nevertheless, the school of engineering has many corporate contacts and, with the permission of the head of school, the development and alumni relations division set about making contact with companies, trusts and individuals that already had connections with the school. A proposal was written giving background information about the university, the library review, the current facilities, our vision and the investment to

date. The proposal also detailed what the library still needed, the benefits and recognition that the sponsors would receive and, finally, the reporting procedures required to ensure that the sponsors would know we were managing the facilities appropriately.

The zoning that we'd introduced as part of the overall plan had a useful offshoot, as potential sponsorship areas were already demarcated. We allocated an amount per room or area that we would attempt to raise through sponsorship. The obvious starting point was the four group rooms as they were separate, manageable spaces. Each room is four metres square and has glass walls on two sides and two solid walls. Selected companies were offered the chance to brand a room. One of the walls could be painted a solid corporate colour; a plasma screen would be positioned on the opposite wall and could be used for corporate images when not in use by the students; and the two glass walls could have images put on them representing some of the work of the company. In addition, the furniture would be upgraded and chairs could be upholstered in a corporate colour to match or contrast with the painted wall.

Pleasingly, three companies responded with interest to this proposal, all of whom had strong links with the school of engineering and were able to see the potential for encouraging graduate recruitment. Meetings were held and tours of the building site were given to the prospective sponsors. It was encouraging to see how quickly the potential sponsors became engaged with the project and our team – including myself, the architect and the representative from the development and alumni relations division – soon became adept at fielding questions and providing information about the project. This personal approach paid dividends and all three companies signed up to sponsor a room for five years. Indeed one company also chose to sponsor our new IT room as well as a group room. The general study area also gained some funds, as well as some attractive artwork from a major civil-engineering company. In addition, an educational trust agreed to provide funding over a four-year period for our journals lounge. We even gained sponsorship from surprising quarters, such as an alumnus of the university (now residing in Australia) who sponsored our silent-study area.

The official launch of the new Trevithick Library was held at the end of March 2009. All the sponsors attended and Carol Vorderman, an honorary fellow of the university, officially opened the

new facility. Seeing the reaction of our sponsors on the night it was clear that they thought their investment was worthwhile, even in the present financial climate. Our budget for furniture and equipment was more than doubled through sponsorship. This would not have been possible without our colleagues in the development and alumni relations division as their contacts and wealth of knowledge of how and who to approach led to sponsorship from charitable trusts, corporate bodies and an alumnus. That's quite some little black book.



Carol Vorderman, Janet Peters (Cardiff University Librarian, centre), Professor Malcolm Jones (Pro VC for health and estates) with representatives from the Wolfson Foundation, Corus, Mott MacDonald, Renishaw and Arup at the opening of the new Trevithick Library



The Renishaw group-discussion room: one of the three sponsored rooms

University of Newcastle: Robinson library project

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PART 1: YOURSPACE AND THE LEARNING LOUNGE, JULY–OCTOBER 2007

Background for the project

The rationale for the development of these new learning spaces was a desire to make a direct contribution to enhancing the student learning experience by providing highly attractive venues for IT-enabled collaborative learning.

Within the library, there was an awareness of a need to develop a learning environment more suited to group study and other changes in learning modes. Feedback from users had regularly highlighted the need for more group-study space and confirmed the library as a venue of choice for learning because of the unique combination of its attractive environment, substantial print content and extensive access to IT facilities.

YourSpace and the learning lounge

The two new spaces provided slightly different environments, with YourSpace designed primarily for group work utilising IT and the learning lounge offering a more informal internet-café ambience. Together they provide a total of 140 reader spaces.



YourSpace comprises:

- IT workspaces with PCs configured for use by small groups of various sizes
- clusters and paired workspaces for use with portable equipment
- presentation equipment and display screens for testing and modifying presentations
- movable study tables and chairs, plus sofas with low tables for casual study use
- height-adjustable workstations for wheelchair-users.

The learning lounge development has furniture designed for casual study and additional PCs for café-style use.

Both of these projects were carried out in spaces that were redecorated and re-carpeted in a style designed to suit their use and with new energy-efficient lighting. Characteristics of the facilities are IT provision for both fixed-location and wireless use; provision of interactive equipment; flexibility and adaptability; full accessibility and attractive and comfortable environments where food and drink and group discussion are acceptable.



The principle behind the development of the new spaces was that of collaboration. The concept of collaborative learning provided the original rationale for the new spaces and for the planning and delivery of the project. It involved collaboration between the library, information systems and services and estates in the execution of the project. It has been a hugely successful project, in that both spaces have been very intensively used by students since opening in October 2007. The success of this project also influenced the provision of new study space for users when the entrance level of the Robinson Library was remodelled a year later, in summer 2008.

Cost

The project cost £270,000 and was jointly paid for by funding for teaching and learning infrastructure from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and a grant from the Wolfson Foundation.

PART 2: REMODELLING OF THE ENTRANCE LEVEL, JULY–SEPTEMBER 2008

Background to the project

The adoption of self-service issue and return has grown steadily, with self-service issues comprising around 74% of all issues by 2008. As we had reached a plateau at this level, any further increase (which experience elsewhere suggested was perfectly feasible) could only happen if other changes were made. In addition, the shift towards self-services meant that the long issue desk, designed for many staffed service points, was no longer fit for purpose.

The location and design of the entry turnstiles and of the reception area close to the main door of the library proved awkward for both service and entry to the library. An analysis of traffic flows demonstrated that this could only be improved by a changed layout with clearer entry and exit routes.



The entrance area of the library was unwelcoming and almost gloomy. This was partly due to the gradual diminution of the quality of the lighting infrastructure and also the existing lighting wasn't up to meeting acceptable environmental standards.

The success of the YourSpace development had led to consideration of how this concept could be extended elsewhere in the library, since it had proved so popular in feedback from our users. The most obvious location for this was the area

adjacent to the main entrance, which was already used as a group-study area but which wasn't equipped to do so effectively.



What did the project include?

The main issues described above were addressed in the project, along with a number of specific design improvements, which included:

- a new reception counter with improved entry and exit traffic routes
- an expanded self-service circulation area, located next to the major traffic routes and provided with new equipment
- a smaller service counter with, like the self-service desk, a curved design that eases traffic movement round the area
- a remodelled group-study space, building on the example of YourSpace
- remodelling and refurbishing of the café area next to the main entrance
- extensive use of glazed screening to improve visibility whilst also providing security for the main entrance, staff working areas and the student texts collection
- replacement of the lighting throughout the original building (dating from 1982) with a new energy-efficient installation
- two new replacement lifts.

The major parts of the work were completed by September 2008.

Cost

The project cost a total of £393,000, and was jointly funded by library bequest funding, HEFCE capital programme funding, an estates furniture grant, the Robinson Library budget and HEFCE's Salix energy management project.

Sheffield Hallam University: learning-centred space design

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2008 Sheffield Hallam University opened a new social and informal learning space in the Adsetts learning centre. The space, complete with catering outlet, is spread across two floors and aims to complement existing facilities elsewhere within the building and across-campus. Here we take a closer look at the learning pedagogy underpinning the space, features incorporated into the environment and the outline evaluation and management strategies, and explore ongoing research relating to the continued redevelopment of Sheffield Hallam learning centres.

RATIONALE BEHIND THE SPACE

In the current climate, a number of factors have increased awareness of the importance of learning spaces. For example, changing approaches to learning and teaching mean that students are increasingly expected – and expecting – to learn actively and to participate in group work. Traditional classroom and library design can, however, sometimes constrain opportunities for students to engage with work of this nature on campus. These constraints can arise from explicit rules about permitted behaviours, but our buildings can also send implicit messages about values and expectations through their configuration. For example, a traditional classroom, set up with fixed tables and chairs facing a teaching wall, will send strong indications about the activities it supports; likewise a library with individual study desks suggests to students that they are there to study alone. To address these notions of the 'built pedagogy'¹ and create learning centre spaces that would align with the institution's expressed pedagogical assertions, Sheffield Hallam adopted human-centred design guidelines which 'begin by considering the needs of the students and educa-

tors, making it possible for space to support the transformation of learning'.² The space described here was developed as part of a larger project to redevelop the institution's learning centres, and is the result of a close working relationship between staff in learning and academic services and in the learning and teaching institute.

OVERALL DESIGN

The space is designed to offer students and staff a comfortable and welcoming environment that supports approaches to learning which are informal and social, and that encourages users to take personal responsibility for the area. The layout was designed in partnership with experts from Herman Miller (<http://www.hermanmiller.co.uk>) and the TSK Group (<http://www.tskgroup.co.uk>), so we were able to combine a thorough understanding of learning and teaching at Sheffield Hallam with a wealth of expertise and best practice from other organisations. In addition, both Herman Miller and TSK have excellent track records in sustainability, with strong environmental commitments and forward-looking policies, which we feel make a positive statement to all users and visitors. For example, the Mirra operator chair (used in this space) was first produced in 2003, is made of 42% recycled material and is 96% recyclable. All the furniture in this new space comes with a twelve-year warranty; however, we expect it to be many more years before we need to consider recycling it!



Ergonomic operator chair and desk

SCREENS

Within the area we were keen to use screens to enhance the sense of space and offer semi-private areas for working whilst still allowing plenty of natural light to flood the space. Screening is used to break up the space into a series of connected but distinct zones, helping stimulate curiosity about what lies beyond. This technique has also been used to create a series of pods for groups of

varying sizes. Used carefully, screens have been shown to heighten users' awareness of others and to encourage them to be more considerate in their own behaviour. Whiteboards have also been attached to some of the screens to further facilitate collaborative working.



Screens used to offer a semi-private environment in an open-plan area

FURNITURE

The different zones and seating options within this space are designed to accommodate a range of activities and working styles. Tub chairs and low sofas, for example, promote a laid-back, domestic feel to encourage relaxation and high stools and tables are more suited to quick, ad hoc conversations, while lightweight chairs suggest that areas can be quickly modified to suit changing needs. Eye-catching pieces such as the triangular 'coconut' chairs and brightly coloured pebble-like seats throughout the area have been included to inject a sense of fun and encourage users to find ways of sitting that suit them.



Triangular 'coconut'-style chairs

To enforce the notion of the space being student-owned, we also offer space for learners to display their work, using either hanging wall frames, large digital screens or display cabinets.

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

Whilst technology has an important role to play within the curriculum, fixed devices have been kept to a minimum. With ample provision of power-enabled desks, and a laptop loan scheme operating within the learning centre, users will be able to work flexibly in a location that suits their needs.

Feedback from students has also consistently highlighted the need for dedicated spaces where groups can get together to practice team or individual presentations. With this in mind, we included in the space two group rooms, each equipped with a PC, large-screen monitor, projector and screen.

EVALUATION

Since the space opened we have actively sought feedback through a number of channels, including ad hoc feedback via e-mail, visitors' books located in the space, discussions with users and in-depth observations. We are still in the process of building a comprehensive picture of usage, but the difference between the two new levels is quite noticeable, with the floors apparently complementing each other well. For example, typically the lower floor, which houses the catering outlet, generally appears more bustling, with a real sense of movement and short bursts of activity. This particular space is often highlighted by students as 'an area really needed to make studying less boring'.



The lower-level space, including the catering outlet

In comparison, on the mezzanine level, students tend to undertake more extended periods of work, with conversations seeming somewhat more

hushed and with the buzz from the lower floor providing a backdrop for activity. Both areas are well used by groups and individuals alike, and our impression is that the co-location of differently sized yet discrete spaces supports fluidity of activity and a sense of community, with many learners frequently commenting that the space is 'bright and refreshing'.

Students are also taking advantage of the abundance of electricity points, with laptop use across the area appearing high at all times of the day. It's quite common to see students integrating a range of resources, for example using the fixed PCs in conjunction with laptops, books and paper spread out across their tables.

It is worth noting that the space is also used by staff, working alone or in groups or simply taking a break from their work. Having staff and students using the space alongside one another is perceived as a positive service development, with anecdotal feedback from both parties suggesting a cultural shift in attitudes and behaviours.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEARNING CENTRES

Sheffield Hallam is committed to continuing to ensure that their learning centres meet the needs of users. To address this, a robust research programme has been introduced, with the aim of better understanding users' learning activities, behaviours and attitudes. The research strategy involved non-participant observational sweeps over a four-month period to identify learning patterns, relating to how, where and what. Qualitative data were also collected via research events which comprised co-ordinate and photographic mapping; for example, learners were asked to draw on a map where they had been in the learning centre and to tell us why they used particular spaces for learning, or to take a photograph of their favourite space or thing and explain the rationale.

Whilst we are still in the process of analysing the data, early results indicate that we are continuing to successfully align our learning spaces with Sheffield Hallam University's approach to learning, teaching and assessment. Learners have been forthcoming with feedback and if we continue to hear comments like 'We have got a new space in our library and it's fantastic', we believe we are taking a step in the right direction.

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Reworking the University of Warwick Library

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In 2004 the University of Warwick Library opened a new facility, the 'learning grid', an innovative student-focused centre. This is located in a separate building from the main library. The learning grid was a test-bed to explore a number of themes relating to different configurations of learning space, coupled with the availability of learning technology, student ownership of their learning environment, a customised and rich service model and the impact these would have on teaching and learning within the institution.

The immediate popularity of the learning grid – together with student comments such as 'Why can't the main library be more like the learning grid?' – was a strong message to the university that attention needed to be paid to the main university library, the first building constructed on the university campus in the 1960s. A separate extension (linked by a bridge to the main building) was opened in the 1990s, but there had been no significant change to the original building since it opened – the walls had been painted and carpets had been replaced but for the most part the original desks were still in the same places.

In 2006 funding was obtained from the university to enable remodelling of two of the library's five public floors. Additional funding was awarded by the Wolfson Foundation through its CURL/RLUK (Research Libraries UK) libraries programme to support further developments (specifically for researchers) on a third floor.



The traditional library

MJP Architects had worked closely with the library in implementing the learning grid concept, and the understanding they had gained of our strategic thinking made them key partners in delivering this project, which would result in a total reconfiguration of around 40% of the overall library space. The value of such a relationship is immense in translating vision into picture and requirements into design.

It was determined that the 'new' entrance floor and second floor would support different modes of individual, social and collaborative working, with the upper floors retained for individual quiet-study learning. Planning for the remodelling was informed by the success of the learning grid and based around the idea of 'the library as third place': establishing an environment that would be between the poles of formal learning and 'at home'. The immediate impression on entering the library would be of a vibrant, welcoming and purposeful space, with the vista quickly opening out to a mix of technology-enabled, fixed and reconfigurable study areas supporting collaborative learning. The next floor up, also remodelled, would be similar but with sufficient difference in layout to cater for individual preferences. An important aspect of the remodelling would be to reduce the impact of library-staff presence, enabling the introduction of a different service model and emphasising ownership of the space by users.



The remodelled library

As always, the building work and disruption seemed never-ending, but the two floors were opened by January 2008, and the additional work on the third floor was completed in September. The transformation is astonishing:

- A dark lobby and depressing lecture theatre are now a welcoming entrance area with a stunning reading lounge and dedicated café.
- The monolithic issue desk that created a barrier between staff and users has disappeared, with the space occupied by soft seating and current-newspaper stands, self-issue points and an automated book-return unit in a glass surround, to involve users in the activity that supports their use of the library.
- Staff deal with queries and non-standard transactions at standalone service pods, sitting by the customer for a more personal approach.
- 200 new study spaces in a range of layouts, with access to multimedia resources, support independent and group working; a new steel and glass feature staircase connects the two remodelled floors; bright colours and light wooden panelling encourage creativity and sharing and provide sharp differentiation from the more formal upper floors.
- There is a 40-PC training room.
- User-operated compact mobile shelving houses relocated stock (together with a remote store, this has ensured there is no stock loss).
- The IT services help desk has been relocated to inside the library itself, resulting in a new 100-seat lecture theatre and two PC suites on the ground floor of the library building, each with 85 computers available for teaching purposes and 24-hour open-access use.



Technology-rich student spaces

Much of this redevelopment work was learner-focused; however, two new facilities – the 'teaching grid' and the 'research exchange' – have been

introduced to provide targeted support for other stakeholder groups. The teaching grid provides accessible, collaborative support for university staff involved in teaching or training practice, together with an experimental teaching space to encourage exploration of their teaching styles. The Research Exchange – funded by the Wolfson Foundation – is a neutral and shared space dedicated to staff and research students, the first such in the university and intended to stimulate collaborative and interdisciplinary activity.



The Wolfson Research Exchange

'Phase 1' of the library's rethinking has positioned library space firmly and deliberately in support of two key elements of the university's strategy: 'to produce a high-quality Warwick student experience of distinction' and 'to double the number of research students across the University by 2014'.

The outcomes of all this work have been very positive, but the up side is also the down side ... footfall is up by well over 50% against a comparable period before the work began and the 'student barometer' rating increased by over 20% this year, but we look at the numbers coming in and wonder how many more we can cope with (though what's to complain about?!).

Has it been worthwhile? Well, the final comment should be from one of our users: 'There is a real buzz in the library – it really makes me want to come here to work. It's so much more than just a library.'

tlc@bedford: the library social learning space at Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL)



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The Royal Holloway University of London library is on three sites, all within close walking distance of each other: there are the Founder's Library, situated in the magnificent Founder's building, designed by W.H. Crossland, inspired by the Château of Chambord and opened by Queen Victoria in 1886; the more functional three-storey Bedford Library, opened in 1993; and the Music Library, located in Wetton's Terrace on the other side of the A30.

In total, the library has some 600,000 volumes of bookstock and 460 metres of archives; it subscribes to approximately 17,000 electronic journals and serials, lends nearly 800,000 items per annum and has an annual footfall in excess of 700,000, all served by 45.5 FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) staff.

TLC@BEDFORD

In his internal Royal Holloway report of January 2008, Les Watson, interim director of information services, identified as his first recommendation:

'A pilot development of a new 21st century social learning "learning café" style space ... undertaken ... with the aim of completion for the start of the autumn term [2008/09] ... Likely costs for such a development are £800k to £1.8k ... Likely timescales are 8 months to 18 months.'¹

This recommendation had emerged partially from desk research but predominantly from a review based on 45 meetings with individuals and with groups of students and staff of RHUL. A key

theme emerging from the review was the widely acknowledged lack of a social learning space and of a will to develop such a space.

The consultation included the setting up of a Facebook group called 'Love your library'. Students were invited to join and to comment on their likes and dislikes in relation to the existing library space. This generated significant interest and had an impact on the planning process, leading for instance to a scaling down of the original plan for a café element. The Facebook site (www.rhul.ac.uk/loveyourlibrary) remains operational.

The consultation led to the identification of the Bedford Library as the best location for the new space, due to its combination of extended opening hours, availability of staff support and learning resources – both online and in paper – and its popularity at the heart of the campus.

In a separate internal document, Les Watson proposed:

'that circa 150 additional seats will be created. The space will have wired and wireless networking, provision of some catering facilities, and a range of seating to accommodate different group configurations. The space will make use of colour and graphics to express a theme which is being developed by the appointed designers in consultation with the University. The space will also provide access to power and network facilities to enable users to bring and use their own laptops and other devices. The aim is to develop a high quality space that provides facilities for conversational and group learning that is of high quality. The Library will remain open during the development of the space and the aim is to complete the project for the start of the Autumn term [2008/09], but it is acknowledged that this is a very tight timescale'.²

WHAT IS A SOCIAL LEARNING SPACE?

Much has been written on social learning spaces but there is no catch-all definition of the term. However, a basic premise is neatly summarised by John Seely Brown: 'all learning starts with conversation'.³

Other ingredients have been defined by Geoffrey T. Freeman:

'As an extension of the classroom, library space needs to embody new pedagogies, including collaborative and interactive modalities. Significantly,

the library must serve as the principal building on campus where one can truly experience and benefit from the centrality of an institution's intellectual community.

In this interactive learning environment, it is important to accommodate the sound of learning – lively group discussions or intense conversations over coffee – while controlling the impact of acoustics on surrounding space.⁴

To be effective, social learning spaces must reflect the changing behaviours of their users, in this case the students and researchers of RHUL. They are no different from the three students – from King's College London, Sussex University and Cambridge University – whose case studies were provided in the December 2008 Guardian supplement on 'the digital student'. As they said, each has a lot of IT equipment:

'I have a phone, a laptop, a USB stick, a portable hard drive and a video camera for presentations and the like.'

'I have a mobile, a laptop, an iPod, and a digital camera. I use my laptop to read journal articles, to check emails, to collect data, and to check what I need to prepare for my classes.'

'I have a mobile, a desktop at home, a small laptop for taking notes, and an iPod to listen to in the library.'⁵

SO WHAT HAVE WE GOT AT RHUL?

We have tlc@bedford, a deliberately ambiguous name chosen by the library staff ('tender loving care', 'The Learning Centre', etc., etc.), which is the result of a complete makeover of level 2 of the Bedford Library.

Thanks to the combined efforts of designers Nomad (www.nomad-rdc.com) and interior fit-out and refurbishment contractors Vivid Interiors (www.vividinteriors.com), under the leadership of the interim director of information services, Les Watson (www.leswatson.com) and with the support and efforts of RHUL's library, IT and facilities management staff over a hectic summer, Royal Holloway (www.rhul.ac.uk) now has an exciting, innovative and flexible library space for learning.

Project-managed by Ridge (www.ridge.co.uk), the space provides books, digital resources, IT facilities and group study areas in a fresh, contemporary environment. The space has more than

200 seats organised to provide a variety of study areas, 45 thin client pc workstations, a refreshment area, equipment loan facilities, self-service book borrowing, the short loan collection and photocopying, printing and binding services. A one-stop-shop point has been included, at which students can receive assistance with their information and IT needs.



To quote – slightly out of context – Laura Swaffield’s reference to BBC TV’s *Politics Show South* (26 October 2008): ‘You no longer have to worry about stern-faced librarians with severe haircuts shushing you if you speak above a whisper.’⁶ ‘Shush’ has moved seamlessly to ‘sushi’, as noise, mobile phones, eating and drinking are permitted. Just look at the librarians and the students who feature in the busy space in the ‘Welcome’ video film made by ‘Here Comes the Boss’ (www.herecomestheboss.com), just a few weeks after opening.⁷

tlc@bedford (www.rhul.ac.uk/information-services/tlc) complements the more traditional and silent study space provided on levels 1 and 3 of the Bedford Library and in Founder’s Library and the Music Library. Its focus is on facilitating group and project work. It provides a range of group-study environments, from open plan to private, enabling small and large groups to work together. It encourages team working, presentation practice, problem solving and brainstorming, all possible over a coffee and some edamame beans.

A Japanese theme has been adopted as part of the catering offering. This links to the ‘Japanese Tea House’ which forms the centrepiece of the design and can be described as a semi-private and multi-purpose structure (along the same lines as the ‘igloos’ at the Saltire Centre (www.saltire.co.uk)). The Tea House has a specific Royal Holloway association. It was inspired by the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity of the Royal Holloway campus, coupled with an early idea of

Les Watson and the designers to focus the learning space around the house of the architect of the nineteenth-century Founder’s building. This early candidate (later rejected) for the location of the social learning space is a wooden structure that houses student services, next to the college shop.

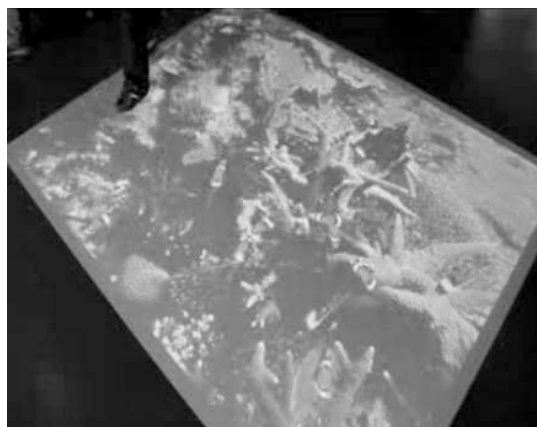
The tlc@bedford project budget was set at £1m but this sum needed to be increased, rising to a total cost of approximately £1.5 million by the end of the project. The decision was made to proceed with the project in February 2008 and the deadline for completion and handover to the college (that is, Royal Holloway) was Monday 22 September, the first day of the 2008/09 session. Partial handover was achieved by the deadline and the library, which had remained open and operational throughout the summer, was able, on that day, to open its new and bright glass-fronted doors to students – who immediately set about use of the space, its facilities and services. Full handover and full operation were achieved on 13 October 2008.

So WHAT’S NEW?

The space is new and it is modern. But Royal Holloway libraries are no strangers to innovation. The December 1908 issue of the *Bedford College magazine* [Royal Holloway grew out of the Victorian colleges Bedford College and Royal Holloway College] reported the following development:

‘Beyond the Science Library ... is the new “Modern Languages Library” ... Here too is the latest and largest addition to the College treasures – the tiger shot and presented by Mrs. Mayne. Its open countenance and cheerful smile offer a friendly greeting to readers, and may possibly account for the crowded condition of the Modern Languages Library.’⁸

The tiger has long gone. Today coi carp and friendly turtles provide the welcome, swimming and darting away as students step through the interactive pond at the front entrance.



To introduce a personal note, I write this after a quick walk round the floor on a Thursday afternoon in the penultimate week of the autumn term 2008/09, eight weeks after the space became fully operational. On my tour, I counted some 140 students working away, many of them in groups, some in very close proximity, literally leaning over each other and comfortable in each other's presence, some of them using the self-service issue and return kiosks, a dozen grouped on the pinch stools in the Tea House, three or four in line for coffee, others using photocopiers, printers, looking for books or working in isolation in some of the occasional seats, of various designs, arranged adjacent to staff offices. There was a real buzz about the space.

WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK?

As one biomedical sciences student has stated, 'It's good that you can get food here, especially during the 24-hour exam period. Also, it is now more social in the library, which is good. It looks great – definitely a big improvement.'⁹

A computer sciences student is happy too: 'The design is great as there are areas where groups can actually study. The quiet areas are well placed. I think it's great that the College has invested in the library, while the café is also a good investment.'¹⁰

There needs to be realism, however. The new space has not addressed all concerns about the library, its resources and services. In an article called 'Bedford renovation – would you like some sushi with that?', Michael Laing is mystified by 'an interactive pond in the library'; 'semi-transparent curtains to mark boundaries on the Wagamama style tables'; and 'security scanners in the middle of the entrance doors'.¹¹

But the RHUL library staff like very much the image of the student at the end of the 'Welcome to the library' film who quite simply, straightforwardly – and without duress – says 'We love the library.'¹²

OVERALL CONTEXT

These changes have not taken place in isolation at Royal Holloway. They are part of a strategy of continuous improvement of library services at the college. As well as investment in physical space, there has been an increased injection of funding for reading-list materials and additional electronic resources, linked to the necessary protection to cover the higher than average annual inflation

costs of this type of material. Over the summer of 2008 other developments included a significant increase in numbers of reading lists made available online (now up to 560); more digitised past examination papers; and self-service library issue and return kiosks, increased from 5 to 8 and now available in both the Bedford and Founder's libraries.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Apart from ensuring that all the snags are dealt with and signed off, the immediate priorities are to define and document the lessons learnt from the project (and there are several in terms of project management) and to evaluate the new space, its services and use – in particular the ways in which it supports and facilitates methods of learning. Work is in progress to identify the criteria (quantitative and qualitative) to measure the success of the learning space.

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- 10 Quoted *ibid.*, p 8
- 11 *The Founder* (10 November 2008), p 8
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A drop in the ocean



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Apologies for the rather cheesy title to this piece, but it seemed a vaguely appropriate (if somewhat self-deprecating!) way to convey my modest role within a world-class research institution. The Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory (POL) is based in Liverpool and specialises in:

- global sea-level science and geodetic oceanography
- wind-wave dynamics and sediment transport processes
- physics of estuarine, coastal and shelf sea circulation
- marine technology and operational oceanography.

POL is a wholly owned research centre of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC); other such centres include the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), the British Geological Survey (BGS) and the British Antarctic Survey (BAS).¹ POL, along with NERC's other sites, has its own dedicated library. The Oceanography Library is situated on the second floor of the Joseph Proudman Building;² it is modest in size and houses around 25,000 to 30,000 items (including uncatalogued archival material).

As well as serving the information needs of its 'indigenous population' of scientists, the Oceanography Library serves the students and staff of the University of Liverpool;³ indeed, the university's marine science collection is housed within POL. Moreover, the university's connection with POL does not end there: both institutions use the Innovative Millennium catalogue; POL scientists generally enjoy an honorary status within the university (frequently giving lectures and participating in seminars); and university staff also participate in meetings and committees at POL – such as the Oceanography Library user group (OLUG).⁴

I began work at POL in December 2006 as assistant librarian. Having come from a very different background,⁵ I was both pleased and daunted by the multiplicity and diversity of the tasks awaiting me in a research council library. In addition to the usual library work that I was familiar with – such as cataloguing, inquiry-handling and subscription-management – POL introduced me to the world of ERMS,⁶ NORA⁷ and RMS;⁸ as if this wasn't enough, I quickly had to become conversant with OPMs,⁹ PSREs¹⁰ and a myriad of other acronyms and quasi-acronyms!

Further challenges resulted from the fact that my academic background was in the humanities (specifically, philosophy). Oceanography, of course, has its own specialist journals and key publishers, which were largely unknown to me. Being 'chucked in at the deep end' (excuse the pun) with management of the journal subscriptions afforded the perfect opportunity to quickly become au fait with the fundamentals. Indeed, given the relatively manageable scale of POL's library operations, I quickly developed in numerous, hitherto uncharted areas – such as performing staff appraisals, participating in the recruitment process and attending NERC-wide meetings.

Amongst other things, becoming Head of Library in 2008 has enabled me to appreciate the value of consortial negotiation. As a participating member of the Research Council Libraries and Information Consortium (RESCOLINC), NERC (and therefore POL) enjoys a substantial discount with such heavyweight publishers as the Nature Publishing Group. NERC libraries have even successfully presented themselves as a consortium in obtaining favourable rates with Elsevier and its Science Direct packages. The library's fiscal pressures have also been alleviated by its contribution to NISC's (National Information Services Corporation)¹¹ Marine, Oceanographic and Freshwater Resources online database and CD-Rom – I upload quarterly updates of POL's holdings and we receive welcome royalty cheques.

However, I would not wish to give the impression that being a librarian at POL is all stress and financial circumspection! The organisation provides a number of interesting and surprising opportunities for all its staff (including information professionals) to take its science to the general public. For example, POL has annually held an ocean-awareness weekend at the Blue Planet Aquarium in Ellesmere Port; scientists (and non-scientists) staff stalls explaining their research and answering questions (all helpers also receive

a free family pass for the weekend). I personally had the genuine pleasure of helping to staff a POL area at last year's Tall Ships event in Liverpool; the event – which included numerous displays and interactive features – was a huge success and culminated in a presentation evening aboard the tall ship *Alexander von Humboldt*.

The future of libraries (whether they be research council, higher education or public and so on) is unclear; this is both in terms of potential economic constraints and the changing nature of information delivery. However, there are a number of areas that I anticipate POL's library services will enter. Self-issue/return (specifically utilising RFID technology) is a very real possibility for the future as users demand extended opening hours and library staff are required for other duties. User education, I suggest, will also play a more significant part in the Oceanography Library. Self-issue/return and user education may be viewed as old-hat by the higher education community, but they have been deemed superfluous at POL until fairly recently.¹² Finally, in light of NERC's strategic proclamations,¹³ it seems highly likely that there will be an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary research; this, to some extent, is mirrored in the publishing world,¹⁴ and it is certainly reflected on my bookshelves – my latest acquisition being the eleven-volume *Treatise on Geophysics* from Elsevier – the price of which certainly wasn't a drop in the ocean as far as my book budget was concerned.

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- 1 CEH and BGS have multiple sites across the UK – in locations such as Lancaster, Wallingford and Edinburgh; NERC also has collaborative centres, such as the National Oceanographic Centre Southampton (NOCS).
- 2 Joseph Proudman was the inaugural director of the Tidal Institute and Liverpool Observatory, taken over by the Natural Environment Research Council in 1965 to become part of the Institute of Oceanographic Sciences (IOS). In 1987 IOS was renamed the Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory, a fitting tribute to an inspirational scientist who combined observational studies with theoretical models to advance our understanding of ocean circulation and tides. Proudman's scientific methodology underpins much of the current work of the laboratory today.

- 3 Students and staff from other local further and higher education institutions can be catered for by arrangement.
- 4 The university is also very accommodating when it comes to POL staff attending relevant training events or sessions; similarly, POL provides induction sessions for undergraduates and postgraduates.
- 5 I had previously worked at Cambridge University Library for several years in various library-related roles. The UL – as it is known in Cambridge – is a wonderful institution, but its vastness (as a legal deposit library) inevitably engenders a high degree of compartmentalisation with regard to one's role within the organisation.
- 6 The Electronic Records Management System used by NERC has been created by the Australian company Objective. *Inter alia*, NERC expects this technology to ease its work burden whilst it is dealing with the implications of the Freedom of Information Act (2000).
- 7 NERC Open Research Archive is the organisational digital repository for NERC-funded, or part-funded, research output; the most typical deposit is post-print research papers – deposit is mandatory. See <http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/>.
- 8 Resource Management System, developed by *ChangePoint* – the software provides a framework in which tasks and functions can be appropriately assigned to the 'projects' encountered in one's work environment.
- 9 Output and performance measures – an annual statistics-collection exercise for central government to help the latter calculate future funding for research centres.
- 10 An annual survey of knowledge-transfer activity within the public sector research establishments – this seeks to ascertain the sources of funding for projects taking place within the research centres.
- 11 NISC, Inc. was relatively recently acquired by EBSCO Publishing.
- 12 Possible reasons for this include the high level of computer literacy of POL's scientists and the growing number of POL staff (including an increasing number of postgraduate students).
- 13 For example, see 'Next generation science for Planet Earth'; see <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/publications/strategicplan/documents/strategy07.pdf>.
- 14 See, for example, Nature Publishing Group's new journal *Nature climate change*.

The Donald Mason Library, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine



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Libraries have changed over the years and the library at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) is no exception. In 1920, the library was housed in what is now a recently refurbished lecture theatre and was subsequently relocated to a larger area. In the 1960s it was enlarged following the building of a new wing and more space was made available for periodicals.¹ LSTM was founded in 1898, the first of its kind in the world. Sir Ronald Ross, professor of tropical medicine at LSTM, became the first British winner of a Nobel prize for medicine when, in 1902, he was recognised for his discovery that malaria is carried by mosquitoes. Until the recent construction of a new, highly specialised centre for tropical and infectious diseases (CTID) building, the LSTM premises were mainly a pre-first-world-war building with additions built in 1966 and 1978. The LSTM library emerged from Ronald Ross's own collection of books and a purpose-built library was included in the pre-first-world-war building. Physical expansion took place in the 1960s and a library committee was established in 1972. The library was eponymously renamed the 'Donald Mason Library' in 1997 after a late LSTM chairman who had a particular interest in the library. For many years now, the DML has worked very closely with the University of Liverpool library and is included in the University's Millennium

library management system. Support is also given by the University of Liverpool library via journal provision and management, an inter-library loan scheme, the considerably greater opening hours and computer facilities available at the major libraries on campus and professional liaison with colleagues there. However, there has always been a commitment to an independent library and IT facility stemming from the notion that 'the School, as a whole, represent[ing] a model for the developing world rendered the maintenance of the library a necessity'.²

The challenges faced by the Donald Mason Library have been various but they probably mirror those of academic libraries everywhere: space management; adequate resourcing; responding to the challenges posed by new technologies and to internal organizational change. Within the last decade LSTM has entered one of the most significant periods of development and expansion in its history. During the 1980s and 1990s there were times when funding was severely constrained, but a period of change was heralded by the appointment of a new Director, Professor Janet Hemingway, in 2001, and subsequently some significant grants have been awarded, such as the \$50.7 million given to establish the Innovative Vector Control Consortium for research on malaria and dengue by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2005.

The new grants have brought new project teams to LSTM and there has been a significant growth in estate, notably with the creation of the new CTID building, which opened in 2008. Users demand more access to electronic resources and services like laptop loans, while also requiring a space that is less regimented and that allows for some group interaction. This has been a challenge in such a small space, and one that is ongoing. In 2004 the DML underwent a major refurbishment as part of a larger improvement of learning and teaching spaces funded by the Wolfson Foundation. By 2008, though, there were new demands leading to another rethink. The library archives and special collections had been surveyed following a grant from the Wellcome Trust in 2007 and this led to a reconsideration of the space needed to accommodate them and additionally to an important deposit from the Maegraith family, descendants of a past LSTM dean, Professor Brian Maegraith. It is envisaged that the part of the archives currently in the custodianship of the University of Liverpool will return to the management of LSTM, and funding is currently being sought to enable this, along with cataloguing of

the newly acquired Maegraith collection. The acquisition of Professor Maegraith's archives is another example of library co-operation since the Liverpool Medical Institution very kindly housed them until we were able to find a space to place them with LSTM. As a result, consideration is being given to the creation a new entrance to the library, following the relocation of the adjacent travel clinic, and to re-positioning of the library counter. However, this is contingent on funding. It should open up the space in the main body of the library and allow for an area to be converted to become the archive room. It will also bring the computing team closer to the library team and help cement the relationship between the two.

The student experience is another factor that has a great impact on the service. LSTM students are from as many as 90 countries and often have varied levels of IT experience and information skills. They may be on short three-month courses or on longer taught Masters, or with us for the duration of their PhDs. They may be demanding, but there is often tremendous appreciation shown to the small team of library staff for the assistance they have been given during their stay in Liverpool.

The assistance the library has been able to give extends far afield beyond Liverpool. In 2007 and 2008, two members of staff went to Saudi Arabia and Syria to advise on the setting up of libraries at King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences / National Guard Health Affairs and the Faculty of Public Health and Health Informatics, Riyadh, and at the Centre for Strategic Health Studies, Damascus, respectively. There were certainly challenges in this; the positioning of the library in a consultancy role was a new departure, as was understanding the cultural differences in these locations and the impact on the service in Liverpool when the consultant in question (Martin Chapman) formed part of the operational team back in Liverpool.

Sarah Lewis-Newton was appointed library manager towards the end of 2006 and has brought in other changes, such as merchandise sales and a book exchange scheme as well as the very well used 'Tsetse files' blog, acting as a current awareness service, as a link for students to other library blogs and useful websites and as a training tool. There have been changes to the internal furniture with more varieties of seating, some to encourage group working or socialising near to the popular book exchange scheme.

THE FUTURE?

Plans for the future involve the library staff as integral to a project to establish 'Eprints' as an institutional repository showcasing the LSTM's research output. This project is underway and it is hoped that the repository will go live later this year. The role of the library has so far been in recommending authority files, advising on bibliographic citation styles and liaising with other support staff such as those from the research office who will also be helping to monitor the repository contents. LSTM is small enough to allow for a cross-section of people to work together, as has happened on the 'Eprints' project. We have many of the elements of a much larger higher education institution, but in microcosm, and working with senior academics, support staff and computing experts is one of the ways we change our colleagues' attitudes to what the library can do for them.

There are other exciting challenges for the Donald Mason Library. We are looking forward to developing stronger links with local, national and international organisations, such as the Liverpool Medical Institution and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, through project work and collaboration, particularly in respect of our archive and historical collection, which we expect to be a wonderful opportunity to showcase the unique resources in historical tropical medicine that are invaluable to researchers internationally.

Space is a major consideration for the Donald Mason Library, just as with all library services, and despite the planned expansion, with an ever-increasing stock of journals and the geographic placement of our staff, students and alumni, a move to electronic-only provision is not only inevitable but sensible. The increase of electronic resources and the encouragement and support of the library staff and service has led to a demand for an alumni service to help support students once they return to their home countries, many without the wealth of resources they encountered whilst studying. Negotiation with providers of resources such as Global Health has begun in order to provide this valuable support.

A recently completed survey circulated around LSTM students not only indicates their respect and regard for the library and its staff – with 91.7% of respondents reporting having used the Donald Mason Library and 68.2% regarding the library staff's helpfulness as very good – but

also points the way to future developments to be considered, including longer opening hours (with 55% of respondents wanting later opening). The survey also indicated how valuable our links are with the University of Liverpool library service, with 54.2% and 20.8% of the surveyed students having used the Harold Cohen and Sydney Jones libraries, respectively.

One hundred and eleven years on from when it first opened, the library at LSTM may be unrecognisable from the one created from the collection donated by Ronald Ross, but it is still here, renewing itself and growing with the institution, spreading its influence internationally just as the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine has done.

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Brunel University Library support for PhD without residence students based in Bahrain

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PHD WITHOUT RESIDENCE

Brunel University runs several degree programmes in partnership with overseas universities. One of these is with Ahlia University, a private university in Bahrain which is less than ten years old. Students work towards a 'PhD without residence' from Brunel but their primary location is in Bahrain. They have two supervisors, one based at each university. The supervisors are allocated from the Brunel Business School (BBS) and the School of Information Systems, Computing and Mathematics (SISCM), the two schools within which the degree is integrated.

The development of the PhD without residence means that students can get their degree from a western university when other responsibilities mean that it would be difficult for them to move abroad for years at a time. Although the PhD candidates are officially based at Ahlia, the nature of a PhD, being research-focused, means that they do not have to be at the university all the time. Many of the students live in nearby countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Much of the contact the students have with staff at Brunel is virtual, via e-mail, but two times a year a program of training and events, with attendance by Brunel academics, is organised. One of these events occurs in the autumn, soon after the intake of a new group of students. An aspect of this is face-to-face meetings between a visiting Brunel academic, the Ahlia-based supervisor and the student to discuss how the research is developing. Another reason for this event is training in

research methods. A number of training sessions are run by Brunel academics, but this is also where library-related information skills training is relevant.

INFORMATION SKILLS TRAINING

One of the key advantages of studying for the PhD without residence is that, as Brunel University students, the PhD candidates have access to a wide range of electronic journals and databases and other online subscriptions. Although most of the students are familiar with reading journal articles when they are researching, the majority of them have not developed in-depth literature-searching techniques prior to their PhD studies. Overcoming issues with logins and access to the resources is also something that many students have difficulty with.

At Brunel University we offer information skills training for students at all levels, including PhD students. When the PhD without residence programme was being set up, the importance of providing an equal opportunity for information skills training was highlighted. A discussion took place about whether this training could be delivered virtually and it was concluded that the training needed to be delivered in person. An agreement is now in place such that, with the autumn intake of new students, one of the subject liaison librarians for either BBS or SISCAM will travel to Bahrain to provide the necessary training. To provide in-depth subject expertise for students from both schools, the librarians alternate year on year.

Due to staff changes, I, as the BBS librarian, have travelled to Bahrain for the last two years, though it is planned that the new SISCAM librarian will provide the training in November 2009. This has been an interesting and challenging experience. One of my first responsibilities on taking up my post in spring 2007 was to follow on from initial work done by the SISCAM librarian to write a proposal which would agree to the need for a librarian to provide information skills training. Prior to this, the SISCAM librarian had trained the first intake of students, but no official agreement had been put in place. As a considerable amount of time is often taken in persuading academics of the need for students to receive information skills training, an official agreement was felt to be important. Additionally, during 2007, transfer of academic staff from SISCAM to BBS meant that more academics and students affiliated with the PhD without residence were based within BBS.

THE FIRST VISIT

The SISCAM librarian travelled to Bahrain when the first intake of students started in 2006. This was partly a fact-finding occasion, but it also involved giving training to the small group of new students, at this time all within SISCAM. She discovered that, although there is a library at Ahlia University, the staffing was not immediately available to provide the information skills training needed by PhD students.

THE SECOND VISIT

November 2007 was the first occasion when a group of staff from Brunel University travelled to Bahrain to meet with a large intake of new students. It was the first time I was involved in the visit so I was not completely sure what to expect. Everyone was very welcoming and the experience was generally positive. A considerable amount of my time with the students was spent on giving out login details and ensuring that everyone knew how to log in. This was not always successful, resulting in some students having to wait until their passwords had been reset by computer centre staff in the UK before they could access the electronic resources.

I had planned small-group sessions with continuing students to discuss any problems they were having with the use of library resources and to introduce them to new resources. These did not go exactly to plan as people were not usually able to attend at the time allocated to them and the computers did not always work successfully. This meant that on some occasions I had no students and on others large interested groups attended a session which would ideally have been a small-group discussion. However, there were, at least, interested students so I felt there had been some value in running these sessions. Some students asked for extra training while I was there, for example on using RefWorks bibliographic management software. This meant finding access to a computer and planning the training. This extra planning and organisation was somewhat difficult with so many other events occurring, but it was good to provide training on something the students found useful.

I came away with a number of plans for the following year:

- Login problems should be resolved in advance.

- More time should be spent on practice in literature-search skills.
- I would ask the students in advance what training they would like to receive, so that I could provide training where it was needed and gain their interest.
- I would get reliable contact details and set up an effective procedure for providing support throughout the year.

THE THIRD VISIT

By November 2008, there were students at a number of different levels studying for the PhD without residence. The first student to start her PhD had completed her studies, so one evening involved a celebration event hosted by Ahlia University. It was wonderful to see how proud everyone was. There were also continuing students and a large new intake.

Providing training for the new intake of students was challenging. As a result of my experiences the year before, I had planned several training sessions on separate aspects of using library resources. At the request of the academic organising the PhD without residence, I also planned to give an introduction to other university services, such as our virtual learning environment and the university e-mail. It was hoped that this would make the Bahrain-based students feel more part of Brunel University as a whole, and that it would encourage them to make more use of the resources available to them.

A new system that gives all students automatic access to their login details was implemented at Brunel in autumn 2008 and I was told that all the students at Ahlia University would have their login details before I arrived. I had hoped that this would be an improvement on the previous year since it would avoid the need to spend much time discussing usernames and passwords. Unfortunately there was more confusion than there had been before because the students were all at different stages of registering with the university.

Much of the first training session, intended to be an introduction to university services and to accessing electronic journals and books, was spent trying to resolve the login issues. This meant that many of the students were uncertain about which username they should use for each university service. Consequently, the amount of time available for training on library-specific login issues, literature-searching and use of databases was shorter than expected.

The training that I ran for continuing students was on an ad hoc basis because organised sessions had not been ideal the previous year. This meant that not all students who could possibly have benefited attended, but those who did attend knew what they were looking for, so the training had a positive outcome. The main drawback was that there was not always a room available so we had several small-group sessions in the university library. My main concern was that a significant number of people who had been studying for their PhD for a year had not made much use of the resources available to them. This may have been partly due to work and other commitments and concentration on other research areas. Additional factors may have been the confusion over the steps involved in logging in and accessing resources, and the fact that the training occurred at the beginning of their studies, rather than a few months in, when the students would be more likely to know what they were looking for.

THE ORGANISATION OF TRAINING SESSIONS

That a librarian should be providing face-to-face training has been agreed, but the exact details of content, format and timing of the training sessions has not. Both occasions that I have travelled to Bahrain have been organised at fairly short notice. Timetabling the library-related sessions among all the other events is often challenging. Even when everything has been timetabled, it is usual not to expect everything to go to plan on arrival. People arrive late, or not at all; rooms are not booked, or do not have a working computer. Therefore, it is often necessary to change planned sessions at the last minute and to let go of the frustration that comes with realising that not everything planned will be possible. It is hoped that planning further in advance for the coming year will provide some improvement in organisation and will enable us to rectify some of the problems highlighted during each visit.

SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

As students understand the information imparted to them most when they actively need it, many of the problems that they have in making use of resources are to do with the fact that the training occurs at the beginning of their studies. There may be a need for a discussion about whether the librarian should visit Bahrain when the students receive training in the spring. However, at PhD level, students should have guidance on how to access the valuable resources available to them right from the beginning of their studies. Training

twice a year would take up time and money that is not currently available.

PhD students based in the UK are given the opportunity to have training in a group near the beginning of their studies. They can then ask for additional one-to-one or group support as required. For PhD students based abroad, this additional training must be delivered electronically. Currently students can contact one of the subject librarians by e-mail or phone. When you are in Bahrain it is easy to see all the areas in which the PhD students could benefit from regular support: over the virtual learning environment (both from librarians and from each other), through regular e-mail updates and perhaps through extra training sessions using video conferencing. However, the students based at Ahlia University are only a small proportion of the students each subject liaison librarian is responsible for. After returning to everyday work, other responsibilities take precedence until it is time to plan training for the next intake of new students.

Both subject liaison librarians involved in the PhD without residence receive e-mails throughout the year asking for support or advice. A possibility for providing further support is to investigate passing the responsibility of dealing with some issues to library staff at Ahlia University. A similar procedure has been put in place in a degree partnership between Brunel University and another institution. The difficulty with this is that the PhD without residence students are often not based in Bahrain and travel in for meetings with their supervisor, so the support would still be long-distance. Additionally, this would involve ensuring that Ahlia library staff were fully trained and able and willing to be involved. In any case, some queries would need passing on: basic access queries are interspersed with in-depth subject-related research enquiries and ongoing login problems. These login problems often involve authorised Brunel librarians communicating with computer centre staff to have passwords reset.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

From the librarian's point of view, providing support to PhD without residence students is a worthwhile experience. Spending several days with PhD students and academics means that you learn more about other aspects of the research process, something that there is not always time for on an everyday basis. The opportunity to work with academics also illustrates to them the importance of information skills training and can be useful

when you're asking for more contact time with other students. An understanding of the research process and discussion with academics help when designing lessons for other student groups. These positives generally outweigh the difficulties of working long hours while jetlagged, in addition to an already busy autumn term.

Bringing it all together: working in partnership across our university



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INTRODUCTION

Our university is a multi-sited institution with students studying in the UK and overseas in a wide variety of disciplines and modes. The Anglia Ruskin corporate plan 2009–2011 commits us, amongst other things, to gaining recognition for ‘successful innovation in the way in which services are provided’ and to ‘educating an equal number of students off-site and on-site’.¹

This article tells of two library projects within our university. The first is intended to offer library-skills support to on-site students in an innovative and flexible manner. The second is intended to offer support to our growing numbers of off-site learners. The two projects have been developed separately but have recently been brought together as we work to offer equivalent library support to all students across and beyond our sites. Both projects have involved library staff in working across sites and in forging new relationships with colleagues outside the library.

ACCESSIBLE AND FLEXIBLE

‘Lunchtime in the library’ began life as a programme of drop-in, informal, generic library-skills sessions offered in the library at lunchtimes.

Topics ranged from making sense of reading lists and using the digital library to help with Harvard referencing. The programme received wide support from academic staff and positive feedback from student participants. From its first beginnings at our Cambridge site library, ‘Lunchtime in the library’ grew and spread to our other major site at Chelmsford.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Meanwhile, conversations at Chelmsford had begun with colleagues in our student support services department. Staff there were struggling to meet demand from students for study-skills support and finding that one-to-one sessions could no longer meet that demand. A proposal was made to extend the ‘Lunchtime in the library’ programme beyond library skills to include general study skills such as essay-writing, academic reading and revision for exams. A joint programme of events began in academic year 2007/08 with shared publicity on the university library website.² This programme again proved popular and was welcomed by academic staff and the student union.

In spring 2008 the university library embarked on a senior-staff re-structure that would enhance our cross-site working capabilities. Two new sites had also joined our university – nurse-education sites at Fulbourn (Cambridge) and Peterborough. With these sites had come two new libraries with staff who were keen to join in the ‘Lunchtime in the library’ programme. Cross-site working therefore became an even greater imperative. Student support services in Cambridge had also become aware, from the Chelmsford experience, of the benefits of working within an advertised programme of events to meet the needs of greater numbers of students. They too expressed interest in joining the project. It was clear that a co-ordinator was needed to draw all the participants together and a faculty liaison librarian was asked to take on the task.

CHALLENGES

One challenge for the library was how to ensure that all four library sites were offering similar, equivalent library-skills sessions whilst still leaving flexibility in the programme for professional librarians to respond to individual students’ needs. A further challenge was to address the needs of our off-site users for comparable generic library-skills support. The objectives already referred to in the corporate plan meant that we

could expect our number of off-site learners to grow. We knew that we needed to develop our online support, hitherto consisting mainly of static guides and help sheets, and offer a more flexible and interactive approach.

AN ONLINE TUTORIAL

As far back as 2006, a working group had been formed to look at the possibility of developing an online information-skills tutorial. It began with a scoping exercise to look at what other university libraries were already doing, and in early 2007 a small group set about mapping out how some of the content in our existing guides, including material that had been put together for 'Lunchtime in the library' at Cambridge, could be adapted for online use.

We realised that in order to achieve our objective we would need expertise not necessarily available in the library, particularly in web design and in the broader context of online learning, and colleagues in 'Inspire', the university's learning and teaching unit, agreed to work with us. However, it rapidly became clear that the amounts of work and time that would be involved in devising our own tutorial were too great, bearing in mind existing workloads, and we decided to go back to our original scoping exercise and look for an institution which might be willing to let us use and adapt its existing material.

Towards the end of 2007 an approach was made to Queensland University of Technology in Australia for permission to use and adapt its tutorial 'Pilot: your information navigator'.³ We were aware that other institutions, including Leeds Metropolitan University, had already done so. QUT kindly gave us permission in the spirit of information commons and a basic project plan was drawn up.

Phase 1

It was decided that the project should consist of two phases, with the first to be completed by September 2008. This consisted principally of removing QUT-specific material and examples and replacing them with our own, while leaving the overall content and look of the tutorial unchanged. Due to this timescale, some elements present in the original had to be removed from phase 1 for technical reasons, including a general search facility and a quiz. The editorial work involved in adapting 'Pilot' was shared out among a team of six library staff based at three sites. This initially caused some workflow problems, particularly when members began making the agreed changes

to the tutorial using Adobe Contribute software. Cross-site working underlined the need for a clear structure with the faculty liaison librarian in charge of the project maintaining overall control and publishing the final version. Frequent meetings of the editorial group were held, both face to face and by videoconference, and a central log of problems and progress was maintained. A further three staff joined the project during the summer of 2008 to create some interactive elements for 'Pilot' using Adobe Captivate. This led to further challenges in trying to maintain overall consistency in style, but all staff appreciated the opportunity to work with colleagues across the sites and to learn new skills.

Prior to launch, other members of library staff not hitherto involved in the project worked through the tutorial to check for errors and 'Pilot' was ready slightly behind schedule on 6 October 2008.⁴ The tutorial has been available for use by students and staff for over six months and, although anecdotal evidence suggests that it has been well received and is being used, we have not yet succeeded in gathering proper evaluative feedback from users.

Phase 2

We are now turning our attention to phase 2 of the 'Pilot' project and discussing the way forward. As well as reinstating some elements such as a quiz (which will give us some of the feedback we need) and improving the navigation throughout, there are exciting possibilities of developing what is largely generic content into a range of subject areas. Other aspirations include improving interactivity and re-branding in Anglia Ruskin style.

MOVING FORWARD

To return to the challenges mentioned earlier in our article, 'Pilot' has helped us to move forward with on-site, cross-site and off-site library-skills support 24x7. From September 2008 we have been able to use 'Pilot' as a background framework for our 'Lunchtime in the library' sessions. Basing our lesson plans on parts of the online tutorial has helped us to achieve a degree of uniformity in sessions across our diverse library sites. Librarians with varying degrees of experience in teaching students have been able to use elements of 'Pilot' in the sessions, and to engage students in some of the activities within the tutorial. Not only that, students can also be encouraged to return to the tutorial in their own time after the session, and re-read and re-do various sections. In our referencing

sessions particularly we have found 'Pilot' to be a useful additional teaching tool.

For our off-site users we feel that we are now developing a resource which offers them equivalent and comparable library-skills support to their on-site colleagues. Further subject-specific support materials within 'Pilot' will enhance the tutorial in the future. To achieve these improvements we will work with colleagues across our library and university again to draw in the skills and ideas needed to create a truly interactive resource.

CONCLUSION

As we reflect on these two projects and their progress so far, we can identify benefits beyond the obvious ones of increased, flexible support for our users. Both projects have required library staff to work together across sites to achieve objectives. This has been an important building block in the process of drawing four diverse sites into one university library service. Beyond the library the projects have involved us in joint working with a variety of colleagues around our university and outside. These contacts broaden our horizons and enable us to better understand the challenges faced by others in our university and in the sector. We know too that we cannot promote our library services in isolation but only in partnership with others. Our university library will play a key role in bringing people and services together for the benefit of all our students and staff.

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Collaborating on collections – a structured approach



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The Bodleian Law Library, University of Oxford (BLL), the Squire Law Library, University of Cambridge and the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Library, University of London (IALS) each have wonderful law collections in their libraries, and for many years have replicated major parts of their collections. All were involved in the original Foreign Law Guide (FLAG)¹ project in which UK law libraries initiated a collaborative approach to sharing information about their collections. As members of the Foreign Law Research (FLARE) consortium, which also includes the British Library and the School of Oriental and African Studies, the librarians have worked with others to try to bring further cooperation to their collection-building. The first major area of content being tackled by FLARE is the collections of foreign gazettes held by libraries in the UK.² This project plans to bring together the partial runs held in various libraries, and to create a single, complete run for various jurisdictions, which will be housed at the BL's Boston Spa facility, and available to all.³

At the same time as the FLARE partners were looking at the big picture, librarians David Wills, Jules Winterton and Ruth Bird decided to focus on the duplication among our three libraries in law reports from several jurisdictions. The impetus for this comes from several directions. Much of the duplicated material is available in full-text databases to which we each subscribe. Lack of adequate space for ongoing growth in collections affects us all. And economic constraints, from both reducing budget allocations and adverse fluctuating currency values, have added to the pressure to do more with less. These matters all led to a conversation about collaborating more systematically on our paper purchases in the future.

We established the following guidelines:

- We should aim not to cancel any series that is unique to the United Kingdom.
- We would each keep some titles of series such as the National Reporter Series, but not all.
- We would only cancel paper runs of local series that were available in our own institution via the major databases.
- Our collaboration would be limited to series of law reports, and possibly to legislation.
- Where our researchers wanted a paper copy of a case that we no longer held in paper, we would collaborate among ourselves to provide it.
- Duplication would continue where we needed to do so for more heavily used materials, to support the research and teaching needs of our faculties.

It is already the case that academic researchers who need to consult a cancelled series more fully are allowed reciprocal visiting rights at the other libraries.

We decided to approach this on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis. The first jurisdiction we tackled was the United States. There were several reasons to start here:

- Many law libraries in the US have been divesting themselves of their runs of the National Reporter series from West and relying on the electronic access via the Westlaw or Lexis databases.
- The physical growth of these collections is a space challenge for all of us. Multiple large volumes arrive every year, and moving collections around to allow for growth is time-consuming.

- Use of paper has declined markedly in the past five or more years, as more and more researchers have relied on desktop access to the cases they needed. This was confirmed when volumes were examined after two or three years on the shelf and often did not appear to have been opened in that time.

We worked from an agreed list of titles, and from that we decided there are some titles we all need to retain for the next few years. However there were several that we felt we could propose to our respective library committees for cancellation from 2008 onwards.

At the end of the deliberations, we came up with the following list:

<i>Title</i>	<i>IALS</i>	<i>BLL</i>	<i>Squire</i>
West's Supreme Court Reporter		Retain	
Supreme Court Reports			
Lawyers' Edn	Retain		
American Maritime Cases	Retain		Retain
Corpus Juris Secundum			Retain
Federal Reporter	Retain	Retain	Retain
Federal Supplement	Retain	Retain	Retain
California Reporter	Retain	Retain	Retain
New York Reporter	Retain	Retain	Retain
Federal Rules Decisions	Retain		
Atlantic Reporter			Retain
North Western Reporter			Retain
North Eastern Reporter	Retain	Retain	
Pacific Reporter		Retain	
South Eastern Reporter			Retain
Southern Reporter	Retain		
South Western Reporter		Retain	

Our library committees were supportive of the decision, and we have all made the relevant cancellations. We were conservative in our approach, but we are all very keen to make decisions which bring our researchers along with us, rather than alienating them.

The next jurisdiction to come under scrutiny was Canada. We have undertaken a similar process, and found that many series actually replicated some of the core Canadian reporter series. We also thought long and hard about the Canadian Abridgment, which is a very costly and space-hungry series. In the end, we decided that this title will continue to be held by IALS and Oxford and will be reviewed again at Cambridge. Ironically, the cost of purchasing a full, up-to-date Canadian Abridgment on paper every three years has been less than the cost in money and time of

subscribing! Canada is another jurisdiction that is well represented on Westlaw and Lexis, and Lexis' Quicklaw is an additional online resource we can offer our researchers. The next country to be reviewed will be Australia.

We are taking a measured approach to this process because we need to have agreement from our faculties, and because there is no urgency for any of us in this process. What is more important for us – and, we believe, for our colleagues throughout the United Kingdom – is that we make these decisions keeping in mind the issue of retaining an accessible and current paper collection for the foreseeable future, but in a distributed form which has been thought through and agreed.

REFERENCES

- 1 FLAG is the internet gateway to the holdings of foreign, international and comparative law in UK universities and national libraries; see <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/flag/flag.htm>
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New core text service at the University of Kent

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In October 2008, at the start of the new academic year, students at the University of Kent were presented with a new way of accessing and using key course materials for which there would probably be a high demand.

Prior to that academic year, course texts could be found in either a closed-access short-loan collection or on the main library shelves. Loan periods for the short-loan collection were mainly overnight, for return the next morning by 10 am. Loan periods for undergraduates in the main collection were either four weeks or one week. There was comparatively little movement between loan categories.

The new way of accessing and using key materials was named the Core Text Collection (CTC). It is located on the entry floor of the Templeman Library in an area with its own RFID security system. The collection consists mainly of books but there is also a large collection of video material in both vhs and dvd format, and a new and well-appreciated laptop loan service.

The collection is arranged in the same way as the main collection (Library of Congress) and there are ample OPAC screens available for students to check the availability of material. Shelving is well spaced so that during periods of high demand there is plenty of room to browse. Students are encouraged to use self-issue and return machines (3M). There is also a loans counter where students can take queries about loans and any items that the self-issue and return machines have difficulty in handling.

The Templeman Library has used tattle-tape security for nearly 20 years to protect its stock. One of the issues that help-desk staff were used to

dealing with was the missing books that had not been issued. Shelving staff knew of many hiding places within the library where students used to place materials so that others could not locate them. These tended to be high-demand items that were either very expensive or out of print and that were required for completing assessments.

All the CTC material is protected with RFID tags. Material cannot be removed from the CTC location without being issued and the RFID tags being deactivated. This effectively gives better control over high-demand material because it must be with a named borrower if it is not within the CTC. The use of a digital library assistant scanner enables staff to locate misfiled stock quickly.

All CTC's printed material has a special yellow Core Text Collection spine label, and additionally items that are loanable for a period of less than one week have their spines marked with coloured tape. The colours enable students to see at a glance the loan periods available for the material they need.

FROM SLC TO CTC – THE PROJECT

Approval for the change was given at the end of 2007 and the initial planning took place over the next few months. In May a project group was formed by the Head of Library Services, with staff from lending services and a representative from both academic liaison and research services (ALRS) and user services. The project group met on a regular basis (slightly less than weekly) until the project was completed. The Head of Library Services had prepared a project plan and each task was discussed as appropriate; members of the group were able to input comments based on their different viewpoints. The project plan was invaluable in keeping the project on course. The regular meetings and the discussions on the progress of each task kept all the tasks within view and within timelines.

RISK-MANAGEMENT

Not all staff were enthusiastic about the project and the project team used the objections that were raised as part of the risk-management process. The project was also highly susceptible to equipment and building supply delays. These areas were given generous timeline allocations to ensure that the project was completed on time.

SELECTION OF MATERIAL FOR THE CTC

There was evidence that students had avoided using the short-loan collection. Many felt that the loan periods and the early return time, with heavy fines and the inability to browse, were disincentives. The collection was relatively small and students by preference borrowed quite heavily from the main collection. Little use had been made of the usage data that was available from the library management system to inform loan periods.

Lending services experienced difficulty in maintaining acceptable re-shelving criteria and ALRS staff fielded complaints from users who were unable to find material that had been returned but not re-shelved.

A decision was made to include a wide range of material in the new collection. In addition to the short-loan collection material, all copies of one-week loan (OWL) material that had been borrowed since September 2006 were to be included. These criteria ensured that course materials for courses that only ran in alternate years were included. The CTC at Kent would potentially be far larger than many similar collections in other academic libraries. The new collection would total 90,000 items.

By this time (summer 2008), exams were under way and most student texts were being returned. A sub-project was set up to 'de-OWL' items not required for CTC. Once this was completed, the RFID equipment arrived and the remaining OWLs could be RFIDed. A mix of lending services staff and students were employed to do this work. All new stock was also supplied with RFID tags.

In some subjects it was felt that the selection criteria for CTC were too broad, and liaison librarians were able, if they wished, to withdraw materials to the main collection. A full review of the collection is planned and it is widely anticipated that many items will be withdrawn from the area through lack of use.

NEW LOAN CATEGORIES

Loan categories had not been changed for many years. This was an opportunity to introduce changes. There were system limitations but, mindful of the objections from students to very short loan periods, we decided to introduce just one addition – a three-day loan – and modified our previous overnight loan to a rolling 24-hour loan.

BUILDING WORKS

Much of the project plan worked around the necessary changes to the building that had to take place. The budget was very tight and the project group had to approve all changes to planned expenditure. The area where the CTC was to be located had previously been used for periodicals. The old short-loan collection area would house most of the current periodical material that had previously been located in the new CTC area. Back runs of periodicals were relocated to a remote store and the basement stores. As more staff resources were to be devoted to servicing the CTC, a decision was also taken to demolish the issue desk in the entrance and open out the area.

SELF-ISSUE AND RETURN

The Templeman Library had invested in 3M equipment but there was a feeling that it was underused. To speed up the changeover and to release lending-services staff for other, higher-priority tasks, a decision was taken to cease staffing multiple service desks for issuing and returning books.

This decision proved almost immediately to be correct, the figures for self-issues going up from 52% to 80% and for self-returns from 67% to 85% within the first month. There were queues at the machines and user feedback requesting more machines.

RFID ISSUES

Feedback from early implementers of such systems in academic libraries led us to decide to continue with tattle-tape as a backup to RFID. RFID gates are currently installed only at the entrance/exit to the CTC. All new stock is RFID-tagged and all CTC stock has been RFIDed.

Staff reported many false alarms and user difficulties with the self-check machines. 3M have been most helpful in working with us to resolve these issues. It is important to ensure that new library users are shown how to use self-check and that the machines are set to issue receipts only when the RFID tag has been successfully deactivated. As we have chosen to use both tattle-tape and RFID tags, we must ensure that tattle-tapes and RFID tags are positioned according to the manufacturers' instructions. False alarms will occur when tattle-tapes and RFID tags overlap. Good practice ensures that staff are available

both to answer questions and to assist users who may have missed out on training.

LAPTOP LOANS

As part of a number of service improvements in 2008/2009, a laptop loan service was set up during the autumn.¹ This has proved very popular with students, and the distinctive blue-and-white Kent covers can be seen all round the library – particularly in the café and in the group working areas.

COMMUNICATION

This is always difficult to get right. For library staff there were e-mails soliciting opinions and all project documentation was made available on our 'Sharepoint' site. All staff were encouraged to look at the documentation and comment if they wished.

Information services has a regular newsletter that carried details of the service improvements and other changes for library users and the Templeman Library website² carries details of all services, including the CTC.³ Inevitably some users were very surprised when they entered the Templeman Library to find that the imposing loans desk had disappeared and so had many of the books from the main-collection shelves.

STAFF AND USER REACTIONS

Libraries tend to attract staff who prefer stability and dislike change. Many staff felt that the changes were happening too quickly and would have preferred a longer time-frame and more time to become accustomed to new practices. Other staff enjoyed the challenge of becoming involved in a new project that aimed to substantially change the student experience. They worked hard to ensure that work streams within the project were completed on time. The most difficult feature of the new CTC has been the great extent to which the library collections have been split, and this caused concern to both information services staff and academics. It was noted that this seems to have been accepted more readily in other academic institutions, where separate undergraduate libraries seem to have been set up. In reality, after initial confusion most users seem to have accepted the split. It is far easier to assess the availability of core material when it is separated out in this way.

All our stage 1 (year 1) undergraduate users knew nothing different, but student users have been very positive and the collection is experiencing very heavy use. It is very useful to be able to see the availability of all copies and to make a choice about loan periods. The way in which the collection is managed enables staff to assess the use of items that might previously have been used but not loaned.

In subjects where students often hide material and the material can only be made available in print format, material that was previously confined on open shelves has been moved into CTC so that its usage and movement can be tracked. This helps us to evaluate whether it has a small number of heavy users or is required more widely.

There are no reader spaces in CTC; readers are encouraged to borrow material and take it out of CTC. Some postgraduate and teaching staff find this inconvenient as there is now a wider range of material restricted in this way than before.

Video material is kept confined to CTC at the request of the user departments, and loans are not normally allowed for students. Viewing stations have been provided in CTC and this has caused problems for students who need to view this material and who are used to being able to watch it in a room where the lighting can be dimmed, which is not possible in the CTC. Students have also requested a quieter area to view the material.

Liaison librarians have encouraged user feedback where a book appears to have been given too short or too long a loan category. It is easy to investigate loan patterns and amend loan categories if appropriate at the time of need. Waiting for formal reviews would not be responsive enough to demand in these subject areas.

The Templeman Library has for a number of years had difficulty in ensuring that newly returned books were re-shelved sufficiently promptly when items were in high demand. Peak return times coincided with vacation periods and the re-shelving task seemed overwhelming for a number of reasons. From the inception of CTC a new standard has been agreed for re-shelving of CTC materials: a maximum of 24 hours from return time, with the main collection having a 48-hour period. The speed with which lending services have been able to return material to shelves is much appreciated by students. This is a result of the short distance books now travel to their return

point on the shelf, plus the ability of staff to identify and re-shelve the material in most demand.

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Open access education sources

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In recent years, working at the University of Strathclyde's Jordanhill [Education] campus, I have been lucky enough to be involved in two European Union-funded projects. The first, masterminded by my academic colleagues at Jordanhill, was aimed at establishing a community education course in Kazakhstan, and the second (a Portuguese-led project in which Strathclyde was a very junior partner) aimed to assist with developing higher education (HE) infrastructure in East Timor. Both provided unforgettable experiences – two highlights: walking one Saturday morning along the coast out of Dili to the enormous statue of Cristo Rei above Cape Fatucama, and the view on my first dawn in Almaty of the snow-capped Tien Shan mountains towering behind the city. From a work point of view, the course of events did not always proceed as planned or envisaged, but hopefully a positive legacy endures in both cases.

The first project included the provision of suitable English-language books and journals, but it seemed unlikely that paid subscriptions could be sustained beyond the life of the project. Yet the proposed course had a significant research element. For the Timorese project, library acquisitions have been entirely dependent on donations (with very mixed results) and there is no immediate likelihood of change.

At the same time, I have been uneasy that in the UK we often find ourselves teaching the use of subscription-based electronic resources which mostly cease to be available to our former students at the point when they arrive in the workplace.

I therefore decided to construct a website for education which would collect together open-access databases, leading to freely available

high-quality full-text articles and documents (for example, Free ERIC; UK Educational Evidence Portal; Open J-Gate; World Data on Education) – a site that might be useful both for users in the UK not currently enrolled in HE and to students and researchers in the developing and transition countries. Having no particular IT flair, I set about identifying a neutral Web 2.0 service which could provide a framework I could simply populate with my own data: using a source with no academic affiliation I saw as giving me complete control over content, whilst also avoiding any suggestion of a Western institution patronising a less fortunate partner.

The solution I came up with was to create a page on Squidoo, a service used by an astonishing variety of enthusiasts peddling hobbies from ancient Greece through paper-folding to Monty Python – some strange bedfellows, then (including Library Elf(!)), and no control over the advertising, but – to my mind – providing a clear and attractive layout for minimal effort. A particular attraction is the ease with which links (with explanatory notes) can be listed within individual sections of the site; the system also gives useful usage statistics, and it's easy for users to provide feedback. Mine is a very straightforward implementation with no frills and minimal graphic material (to be precise, just a miniscule picture of me).

If you have contacts in my target groups – or if you think Squidoo would be useful for your own purposes – see what you think at www.squidoo.com/researchinformation. Any ideas for improvements to the content would be most gratefully received. CILIP's Education Librarians Group's 'Resource guides' numbers 1 and 5 cover some of the same ground, but the slant is rather different; however, the search hints on my Squidoo page may (expanded) shortly form the basis for a further ELG guide.

Implementing an ETD policy in WIT Libraries



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INTRODUCTION

Waterford Institute of Technology is a university-level education institute in the southeast of Ireland. There are over 10,000 students, and 1,000 staff members. Of these, almost 200 students are engaged in postgraduate by research studies. The Institute is served by two libraries: the main Luke Wadding Library and a branch library on the institute's College Street campus.

ETDs are theses and dissertations produced, stored, archived and accessed in electronic format. They are typically comprised of text-based electronic files, possibly supplemented with images, audio and other multimedia file formats.

The benefits of providing access to ETDs are well documented,¹ and include:

- greater accessibility, including 24x7 remote access
- quicker availability of current research
- searchability
- multi-formatting, including multimedia
- cost-effectiveness: storage, circulation and interlibrary loans
- increasing the students' awareness of e-technology usage and e-publishing
- access to a greater audience
- enhancement and promotion of the research profile of the institute, and its library.

In conjunction with the institute's academic council, the library established an ETD policy to address the demand for the provision of research theses and dissertations by WIT students. The academic council is a representative group within the institute, whose main responsibility is to establish

and maintain procedures for the assessment and validation of courses and awards.

In December 2006, the library drafted and presented to the academic council its policy for acquiring, storing and maintaining the theses of all research-based PhD and Masters theses. The initial phase was to only include theses submitted for full requirement of the award of Masters or PhD degree. This policy was approved and added to the Institute's *Research strategies, guidelines and procedures handbook*. The library began accepting theses from students submitting from September 2007.

FORMING AN ETHESIS POLICY: CONSIDERATIONS

From the outset, the library-coordinated institutional repository was considered the ideal host for storing and facilitating access to the ETDs submitted. This aligns with best practice elsewhere, and the presence of the fully functioning repository acted as a catalyst for the introduction of an ETD policy. Such a digital archive, provided as open-source software by ePrints,² serves its purpose very well. It allows for easy linking with the library catalogue and facilitates embargoes and other user-defined options, the importance of which will be discussed later.

The most appropriate standard format for the thesis in electronic format was given careful consideration. That the ETD would not replace the traditional hard-bound thesis was crucial. Indeed, the library continues to catalogue and provide access to the printed, bound copy of all theses. To this end, a file format that represents the exact formatting and layout of the printed volume was deemed most appropriate. The Adobe portable document format (PDF) was considered the most suitable file format for this purpose. While this does go against the call from some to break away from linear, 'e-book equivalents',³ the traditional print thesis acts as the backbone for the ETD, rather than the ETD acting as a stand-alone publication. The repository plus the ETD does, however, have the advantage of allowing us to supplement the main text item with multi-formatted support items, such as image, sound, movie and other multimedia-file types.

The submission of the thesis in electronic format is mandated by the postgraduate guidelines of the institute. The decision to seek mandatory submission of ETDs was taken to ensure that the library was able to provide viable and comprehensive access to the body of postgraduate research.

Research suggests that voluntary submission of theses in electronic format will result in a much lower up-take than a mandated policy.⁴

The student is also asked to complete a deposit agreement form granting permission to provide access to the document to the wider worldwide research community. This agreement also seeks confirmation from the author that the ETD contains no copyright-restricted materials, and advises students of their own intellectual property rights (IPR). The issue of copyright and IPR remains one of the biggest concerns for staff and students when adopting an ETD policy, and the deposit-agreement form between the student and the library acts as a crucial part of the ETD policy.⁵ The deposit-agreement form also requires the signature of the research supervisor. This dual-signature process (by request of the academic council at WIT) has also been adopted elsewhere.⁶

OPEN V RESTRICTED ACCESS

Institutional repositories and ETDs often go hand-in-hand with the open-access initiative. In fact, ETDs have gained momentum because they provide access to a wealth of material previously considered to be very high in quality but restricted, hidden and inaccessible. Despite this, some have experienced resistance from students and academia in the move to make theses available to the worldwide research community. Because academics are often concerned about the impact open access will have on their future publication opportunities,⁷ measures are needed to address the issues raised by students and staff on the issue of open access if we are to operate a successful ETD policy.

While some publishers have stated that the provision of an open-access thesis will not hinder any possible future publication opportunities, there are the noted few who hold a different policy. In his article on ETDs and open access, Lowry suggests adding a pre-determined embargo which restricts access to the full text of an thesis for an agreed timeframe as a resolution to this important issue.⁸ Indeed, in WIT students have traditionally had options to embargo access to their hardbound thesis due to extenuating circumstances, such as the inclusion of sensitive data

for example. The option to place an embargo on access, by agreement with the library, has been extended to students submitting ETDs. The default access policy for all theses, however, is for immediate open access. When a student chooses to put an embargo in place, the abstract of the item is still available to all on open access.

WORKFLOW

Students submit their files to make up their ETD by e-mail to a dedicated proxy mail address, or by disc or other data-storage device. The submission of the electronic thesis is aligned with the submission of the final, corrected, hardbound thesis and the library alerts the registrar's office when a student has fulfilled the requirements of the electronic thesis-submission process.

All electronic-thesis files are added to the repository by dedicated library staff. As the current intake of ETDs is less than 50 per academic year, the library felt it was manageable to administer the uploading process centrally. This also saves the need to train students in the process of adding items to the repository. Future developments of the ETD project might warrant a change to this aspect of the policy. Outside of this, the library maintains authoritative control over subject and keyword fields, with our current approach.

All ETDs held on the digital repository are automatically assigned a permanent URL. This URL is ideal for adding into the 856 MARC record field for the printed volume. This process provides a connection between the bibliographic record for the hardcopy version and the ETD. Users searching the library catalogue for a thesis can navigate directly to the electronic full text of a thesis from its bibliographic record without needing to separately search the institutional repository, which is located at another web address (see Figure 1).

Author	Davy, Steven		
Title	Harnessing Information Models and Ontologies for Policy Conflict Analysis / [Steven Davy]		
Publication Info.	Waterford Institute of Technology, 2008		
Click on the following to: connect to eteses			
	Location	Call No.	Status
	Luke Wadding Library IN HOUSE	PhDThesis	LIB USE ONLY
Reviews: NEW!	add a review; No reviews		
Bookmark:	http://witcat.wit.ie/record=b1104807		
Description	217p.		
Series	PhD Thesis No.51		
Subject	Information Models		

Figure 1. The catalogue record contains a URL link to the ETD on the institutional repository.

In most cases, the library receives the thesis in electronic format a few months in advance of the hardbound volume. The ETD is uploaded to the repository without delay. This also allows us to create a catalogue bibliographic record for the title in a more timely fashion, without having to wait for the hard copy. The URL is added to the record from the outset, and the item record is then updated when the hardcopy volume is received and processed. This system allows us to provide electronic access to the research while the bound version makes its way into the library and onto the shelves. The turnaround time involved in providing access to the ethesis is therefore much quicker.

LEARNING BY DOING – OUR EXPERIENCES

Quite a significant amount of time is spent liaising with students who are about to submit their thesis in electronic format. Working with the student, advising and ensuring that their file formats are suitable for inclusion to the archive, is an important aspect of the workflow. It is vital that students do not find themselves almost at the stage of completion only to realise that they also need to string together multiple files to make up an ETD. The fact that we set up a dedicated webpage outlining all the requirements of the submission process, providing the necessary documentation (including a set of frequently asked questions) and specifying a contact point for the student proved to be essential in putting the ETD policy into place.

The transparency of ETDs became obvious very quickly. With all items from the repository harvested to search engines on the web, including Google, requests from researchers and scholars worldwide are frequently received for access to theses that have embargoes. As the library is the central contact point for all such access requests, each request is acted upon on its merits. The author is advised of the request and offered the opportunity to revise his/her embargo. In some cases, frequent calls for access will bring about a change of access permissions by request of the author. Contact with the ethesis author becomes more difficult over time, however, as students leave the institute. In the event that the library cannot advise the author of a request for access to his or her thesis, the embargoes are respected for their entire duration.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The integration of theses to the library's collection has been very successful to date. Restricting the policy to postgraduate theses by pure research means that there is still a significant number of current dissertations submitted to the library that are available in hardcopy format only. The inclusion of taught Masters research, and indeed undergraduate dissertations, under the umbrella of the ETD policy is the next logical step for the project. Adaptations to the policy might be needed, however, to place the onus back on the student to create, submit and upload the ETD to the archive. This will also undoubtedly create a need for a fully fledged training programme to advise and aid students in the ETD process.

Digital-preservation issues are also worth considering. There is no doubt that hardcopy paper-based items appear to stand the test of time over electronic-file types. Considering the options, to adapt XML (extensible markup language), or some other archival method, into the ETD policy might be worthwhile. While the PDF format serves its function very well at present, changing technologies and compatibility with file formats could become an issue in the medium to longer term. As Yiotis points out, however, XML is not without its own disadvantages, and implementing the markup language will require significant resources and training.⁹ The need for a viable electronic archival standard is very apparent.

SUMMARY

This article describes the implementation of a policy in WIT for the acquisition, storage and provision of postgraduate electronic theses. Issues discussed include mandatory submission, ETD formats and access policies. This article also outlines the workflow involved in adding an ETD to the library's collection. Expanding the policy and issues over digital preservation are also discussed.

For more information on WIT libraries' ETD policy, please visit <http://library.wit.ie/Research-Support/electronictheses/> or e-mail ethesis@wit.ie.

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Developing the Digital Research Repository at the University of St Andrews



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INTRODUCTION

The move to develop this new service was primarily driven by St Andrews University Library's planning and policy. This clearly identified a need for improved service provision to the local, national and international research community by providing digital delivery mechanisms. The university's strategic planning with regard to making research outputs available to a wider audience was also a major driver to the development. The deposit and delivery of theses in electronic format was identified as the primary service aim of the University of St Andrews Digital Research Repository development.

Closely allied to this is the development of a pilot service to enable the deposit of full-text published research outputs from the university's academics. The drivers here are to develop the Digital Research Repository in parallel with the university's research publications database and information system. The aims are to establish good communication and practice in the centralised and coordinated development of both databases and to embed the deposit, storage and dissemination of research-profile data and publications into centralised workflows.

THE DIGITAL RESEARCH REPOSITORY

Background

The University of St Andrews Digital Research Repository¹ is the successor to the St Andrews eprints service, which was established as a test project under the JISC-funded HAIRST (Harvest-

ing Institutional Resources in Scotland) project.² The eprints service is due to be decommissioned in 2008/2009 and relevant content will migrate to the Digital Research Repository. The Digital Research Repository service began in late 2006 and up until now has been primarily focused upon the deposit and delivery of full-text electronic theses. An additional pilot service is currently in place to demonstrate the new functionality, which allows the full text of research papers to be submitted to the repository via the Research Expertise Database,³ the university's publications database, which was intensively used during the latest research assessment exercise.

Technical information

The Digital Research Repository uses DSpace software.⁴ DSpace is one of the primary open-source solutions for accessing, managing and preserving scholarly works. There is a strong DSpace community commitment to development, with regular new software releases, and DSpace is becoming more formalised as a community and an organization. DSpace supports the Open Archives Initiative's Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) v2.0 as a data-provider, which exposes data in local repositories to a world-wide audience through standard search engines. Our installation of DSpace is managed on our behalf by the Scottish Digital Library Consortium (SDLC).⁵ Hardware and technical and development expertise are provided by the SDLC as part of our contract with them. Administration of the system is carried out locally by repository staff based in the university library.

Structure and metadata

The content structure for the Digital Research Repository mirrors the university's school and departmental structure and also that of the research centres and institutes. This allows content to be placed into the relevant thesis or research collection for each school and research centre. Content can be mapped across into relevant collections if a researcher's primary affiliation is with both a school and a research centre. Each community and collection in the DRR links out to the relevant institutional web pages and can be branded with school and departmental logos, text and so on. Related research centres and institutes are listed and linked to from each school collection page. The repository offers standard database search features and the metadata is created and stored in Dublin Core format. PDF file format is encouraged for both thesis and research output deposit. Permanent URLs are provided for all full-text deposits.

ELECTRONIC THESIS CONTENT AND WORKFLOW

The deposit of theses in electronic format was mandated by the university from the academic session 2006/7. There are now almost 250 theses available. This policy change was made in the context of national and international developments to facilitate access to theses, and many other individual academic institutions have now adopted a similar policy. Postgraduate students deliver one hard copy and one CD copy of their final completed thesis to the university's academic management and support office. Once they are receipted and all the relevant administrative paperwork has been completed, the copies are passed on to repository staff in the library to complete the deposit process. Postgraduates are invited to register on the repository to provide metadata, including the abstract, and to grant the necessary licences to complete the deposit process.

Policy issues

Policy issues that have been addressed during the development of the service are: restriction/embargo framework, updating of the Postgraduate Code of Practice, deposit and end-user licences, author copyright statements and third-party copyright, file formats and conversion of data to PDF. The major stakeholders in this process and the issues that had to be resolved are described in more detail in a poster presented to the ETD (Electronic Theses and Dissertations) conference held in Aberdeen in June 2008.⁶

Support, training and publicity

The University's Gradskills programme is a primary delivery platform to train and inform postgraduate students.⁷ Courses on 'How to deposit your electronic thesis' are held each semester and provide support for students on the actual deposit process and the preparations they need to make prior to deposit. Extra training is scheduled for the start of the session 2008/9 with the introduction of specific short courses on electronic theses and copyright which will be held in individual schools. These will be joint presentations by the repository manager and the University's copyright officer. Further support is provided by the comprehensive information, factsheets, relevant documents and guidelines provided on the library's thesis web pages,⁸ with links to the relevant pages on the university's copyright site.⁹

Retrospective conversion and digitization of theses

Local arrangements are now also in place for handling requests for the digitisation of pre-current

St Andrews theses, and workflows have been developed to deal with these requests. Full details of procedures and contact details are provided for users on the library's thesis web pages. For each request, the author of the thesis is asked for permission to digitise it and to make it available in the repository. We handle specific requests and in addition we are choosing to digitise the most heavily consulted older material. We are also subscribing to the EThOS (Electronic Theses Online Service) project¹⁰ which is a national initiative:

'to deliver a fully operational, easily scaleable and financially viable prototype UK online electronic theses service ... to enable students, researchers and in fact anyone else with an interest in post graduate research theses material, to search and access, from the desktop, the full text, in secure format ...'.

St Andrews has already contributed about 40 of our most heavily used theses for digitisation as part of the project. Content will be delivered by the EThOS site which is scheduled for full launch in early 2009, with initial kick-start thesis content from UK institutions of around 20,000 full-text theses. Digitised copies will also be returned back to the local institution for delivery through the local repository.

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS: PUBLISHED RESEARCH OUTPUTS

The full text of published and peer-reviewed research outputs can now be deposited into the Digital Research Repository via the Research Expertise Database (the university's publications database). This is still a pilot service and feedback is being sought from the academic community. Once a publication's bibliographical details are deposited in the Research Expertise Database the interface allows the upload of the full text and the abstract of the publication. The depositor is asked to identify the version of the full text (i.e. publisher's PDF or author's final version) in order to provide information that can assist repository administrators with the copyright clearance of the publication. Open access to the full text of publications in institutional repositories is very much governed by individual publishers' policies. The SHERPA service,¹¹ supported by JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee)¹² and RSP (Repositories Support Programme),¹³ provides crucial services to assist with copyright clearance. The ROMEIO database, which lists publishers' copyright policies with regard to self-archiving, provides a summary of permissions that are normally given as part of each publisher's copyright

transfer agreement.¹⁴ Repository staff will check each submission against the ROMEIO database and contact depositors if there are queries about their deposit. SHERPA also provides another useful service, JULIET,¹⁵ which lists the research funders' open access policies and a summary of policies given by research funders as part of their grant awards.

A more detailed description of the aims of this pilot project and a description of the workflows can be found in the poster presentation I made to the 2008 Open Repositories Conference.¹⁶

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The electronic theses service has been successfully implemented and has transformed the previous delivery method of print copies of theses – stored in closed access in library stacks – to free online delivery in an open-access institutional repository. The success of the current service is very dependent on key partnerships which have been established between relevant agencies within the institution. Communication and establishment of workflows between the library and the academic management and support office are crucial, as are the partnerships between repository staff, copyright staff and supervisors, to provide support and training to postgraduate students. There have also been significant training and reskilling issues for university staff working closely with the service, and many opportunities for contact with other relevant projects and external support agencies. The process has been one of constant re-evaluation of institutional and user needs. Relevant institutional policies have been developed and the framework put in place to embed the process in institutional practice. This has resulted in the provision of a high-quality service.

We seek to encourage the reuse of Digital Research Repository data. For example, lists of current theses for specific schools in the university can now be linked to and can provide instant lists for the schools' web pages, with access to the full text. Links to the full text of research publications are retained in the Research Expertise Database and are used in publication lists, which can also be reused on the schools' web pages. The biology and modern languages staff pages are good examples of this practice.

The pilot project for published research outputs is still ongoing. This too has demonstrated a real need for key partnerships and effective communication between stakeholders. Strong links have

now been developed between the library, the business improvements unit and the university's research office. The aims of this project are still very centred on data reuse, dataflow and integration and the repurposing of data. Efficiency in gathering, updating and preserving the university's research information and staff publications is a primary goal. Acquiring the full text of published research outputs and making them available for open access is another focus. A more significant driver is the current emphasis on research assessment and the need for academic institutions to prepare effectively to support the next research assessment exercise, the Research Excellence Framework (REF).¹⁷ Many current initiatives are highlighting the need for CRIS (Current Research Information Systems)-type systems¹⁸ to be put into place at institutional and national levels. The future role of the Digital Research Repository will be to support, and to be interoperable with, any such system developments that may take place within the institution.

Another recent strand of national development has been a growing interest in the development of policies and services to support research datasets and the archival preservation of this material. The UKRDS (UK Research Data Service) project¹⁹ will also impact on the development of the Digital Research Repository and the services it may provide in the future. Defining and redefining a content policy for the repository is an ongoing task which is influenced by both external and internal factors. Considerations for future content might include datasets, digital objects, content from digitisation projects and in-house journals.

The development of the University of St Andrews Digital Research Repository has already made significant changes in the scholarly communication process for all St Andrews research outputs, and current emphasis on the use, dissemination and preservation of these outputs indicates that its contribution will continue to be relevant. (Contact me, at the e-mail address above, for more information.)

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eResearch: the institutional repository experience at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh



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On 10 October 2004, the Scottish Declaration on Open Access was adopted by 22 Scottish higher education institutions, including Queen Margaret University.¹ The main implication of this was that research output could be made accessible to all, and not just to those who can afford to subscribe to academic journal publications. The primary argument supporting this shift is that whilst a lot of public money funds research, the results of the research are not then usually made freely available. Indeed, some research-funding bodies, including JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) and the Wellcome Trust, are now also mandating open access when awarding research funding. In response to the signing of the declaration, information and library services staff at QMU began to look at the implementation of a research repository that could openly display the research output of QMU digitally. As a result ePrints repository software, which was developed at the University of Southampton, was installed first in 2005, and since January 2007 more than 450 articles have been added to the repository. The repository was given the name 'eResearch'.

However, the existence of the repository has not been sufficient in itself to promote it internally to academic and research staff and to encourage them to deposit their work within it. The advocacy of eResearch within QMU has effectively been under way since January 2007, and increasingly so since a mandate was passed by the university's research committee in February

2008 that all research output should be deposited in eResearch. The purposes of this article are to discuss the policies adopted for the materials included in the repository itself, to explore the approaches taken to promote the repository, both internally and externally – outside Queen Margaret University – and to attempt to evaluate just how successful these have been.

eResearch exists primarily to keep the research output of Queen Margaret University in one central repository and to make it accessible to all. It is available externally of the institution, with access via QMU's own webpages (<http://www.qmu.ac.uk>), through OpenDOAR (<http://www.opendoar.org/>), OAIster (<http://www.oaister.org/>) and Intute (<http://www.intute.ac.uk/irs/>), and searching Google will also bring up results from eResearch. The policy for what should be deposited in eResearch is an all-inclusive one, and covers both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed work. The policy was designed using the OpenDOAR policies tool² and is available from the eResearch website at <http://eresearch.qmu.ac.uk/policies.html>.

The ideal situation would be for all articles to be fully open access, with the author's final pre-publication (also known as post-print) draft accessible to all. However, with the current publishing system, which is mainly subscription-based, copyright restrictions often mean that open-access deposit is not possible in institutional repositories. In response to this, some universities have decided only to deposit articles where they can include the full-text document. However, we have taken a different approach at Queen Margaret University, where the decision was taken to include all research output. This has meant that, due to many publishers' copyright restrictions and also to the fact that many authors have not kept their postprint once their work has been published, it has often not been possible to display full papers in eResearch. In such cases, we have only been able to put in a metadata entry for the work, with a link to the author's e-mail and to the relevant journal, to lead the user to the work. However, a 'request e-print' button, which has been developed as part of the EPrints 3.1 software, has recently been added. This allows the user to request a copy of the work directly from the author, where the work is not open-access. Authors can then decide whether or not they wish to send on the article. The SHERPA/RoMEO site is particularly useful for establishing publishers' copyright policies,³ but where the site does not have a listing we then have to contact the pub-

lisher directly with a record of the response stored. Journal articles form the bulk of the content of the repository, but book chapters, grey literature, posters and conference presentations are also included. The material included is not always peer-reviewed, although again other institutional repositories have taken this route.

The first advocacy of eResearch was that done by the director of information services at QMU, Fraser Muir. As well as instigating the implementation of a repository, he then set about promoting it to academic staff that he had contact with, and regularly put it as an agenda item at research committee meetings. Through the research committee, a mandate for all QMU researchers to deposit their work in eResearch was passed in February 2008. However, although the mandate was publicised internally at the time of its inception, its profile is still somewhat low, with staff either having missed the message or, more likely, simply ignoring it! There are of course arguments that having a mandate can also increase negative feeling towards repositories, for example it may be resented as yet another addition to academics' already busy workload.

Some staff have immediately seen the benefits of having a repository, whilst others have been confused or downright negative. Within library services, eResearch has come under the remit of the technical services team, with a systems/server administrator from the educational resource centre also looking after the systems requirements of the site. A post of research support librarian was created in 2007, with the advocacy of eResearch included in the job description. The post was taken up in September 2008 by myself, and since that point there have been further attempts to increase the profile of the repository within QMU. The advocacy of the repository is an ongoing, 'drip-feed' process with regular updates being posted in intranet bulletins to all staff. A lunch-time training session on the repository was also recently given to all library, IT and educational resource centre staff, and it helped to broaden understanding of what the repository is for within the whole of information services. Librarians who regularly liaise with researchers and academics are also responsible for highlighting the benefits of depositing the results of their research within the repository. Meetings with individual members of staff have brought mixed results in terms of collecting material for depositing in eResearch, but have highlighted the common reasons for resistance. These include:

- 1 the perceived time and inconvenience that depositing their work would involve
- 2 concerns regarding publishers' copyright issues
- 3 the perception that eResearch will not be looked at externally
- 4 suspicion of open access – what are the implications for publishing their work?

Our advocacy policy counters these arguments with the following:

Why should I use eResearch?

There are advantages to researchers in depositing material in eResearch:

- increased visibility of their research output, leading to increased citations and better communication between researchers
- secure, long-term storage
- outward linking to other sites, for example the author's personal home page, links to cited references
- the facilitation of the creation of bibliographies or publication lists for CVs.

The institution also benefits from the collection of all research material in one site, as eResearch will become a showcase for research at QMU. It makes the discovery of research material easier by making it readily visible to prospective business collaborators, academics or students.

At Queen Margaret University, we have also taken the decision to deposit our researchers' work for them, rather than asking them to do this themselves. It was felt that removing this extra workload and handing over the work to library staff would both encourage our researchers to deposit their work more readily and also ensure that the correct metadata fields were being completed, to maintain consistency in the repository. The option does still exist for authors to deposit their own work, but we have only had a few researchers who have preferred to do this themselves. In such cases, library staff have checked the entries to ensure that the metadata is accurate and consistent with the rest of the repository.

Other strategies to elevate the profile of the repository have included my attending events aimed at increasing research activity within the university, such as a 'writing for publication' workshop organised by QMU's centre for academic practice. This has provided the opportunity to meet with

researchers who are preparing to publish, to raise their awareness of eResearch and of how to negotiate with publishers over copyright to enable us to put the final draft pre-print into the repository. We have a form that we ask researchers to send to publishers with their paper that requests this – researchers simply have to access the form from the QMU staff intranet, sign it and submit it with their work. Obviously we cannot expect researchers to stop publication of their work if the publisher refuses!

There is still a lot of work to be done with our researchers in terms of increasing their awareness of open-access publishing. As an institution, we also need to start building into funding plans provisions for our research to be made open access. A report on this very topic has recently been published by the Research Information Network and Universities UK⁴ and this has been passed on to senior research staff at QMU in an attempt to bring open access higher up on the university's research agenda.

Currently we are also trying to encourage as many departments as possible to put links to eResearch in their webpages, in the hope that this will again raise the profile of eResearch internally and externally. Following the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) results, we are now also discussing with researchers how the repository may have an impact on the new Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment exercise when it comes in. So far we know that a pilot study has already been undertaken involving 22 UK higher education institutions, and that bibliometrics extracted from institutional repositories were used in the pilot.

To further publicise eResearch, the front page has also recently been re-designed, with links to external sites including OpenDOAR, OAIster and SHERPA/RoMEO (see Fig. 1). A lunch was held to demonstrate the new design and to gauge reaction from staff. Unfortunately not as many staff attended as we would have liked, but those who did appear to be positive about the site, and surprised at how little time it would take to simply send us a list of their work. Finally, the best result was that a good number of those who did attend then sent their citation lists and encouraged colleagues within their departments to do the same.

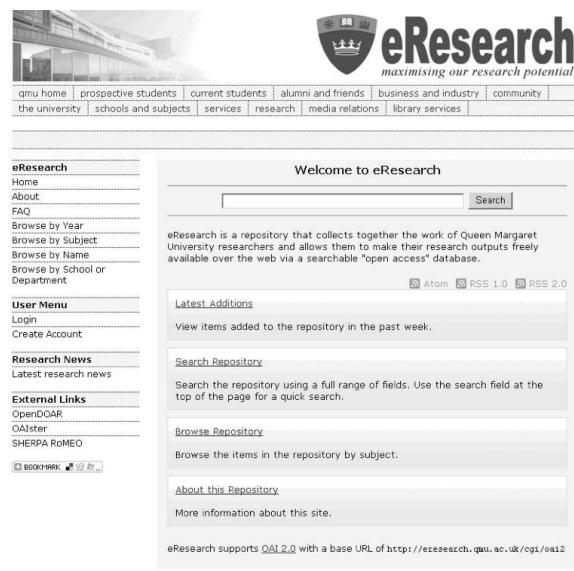


Fig. 1: The eResearch Website

The idea of an institutional repository has not instantly captured the imaginations and hearts of the majority of the research staff at Queen Margaret University, although it should be said that a small but significant number have supported the concept from the outset and have been very positive and supportive throughout. The main barriers seem to be a lack of understanding about what a repository is for and how it can be of any benefit to the researchers themselves, a perception that a lot of work is involved and concerns regarding publishers' copyright and the move to open access. It appears that the most effective method to keep raising the profile of eResearch will be to continue talking to as many researchers as possible, repetitively where necessary, until the message permeates throughout the university! One way in which we have recently started to further improve this is to publicise more statistics, which we are generating through Google Analytics; these can be used to demonstrate information such as just how often the website is being accessed internationally, and which papers are especially popular.

In addition to eResearch, Queen Margaret University also has a further two repositories: eTheses and eData. eTheses is a collection of PhD theses and selected MSc dissertations, and is fully open access. We have obtained copyright permissions from students where we have contact details, and are operating a take-down policy for instances where we have not been able to locate former students, should they later object to the inclusion of their work in eTheses. eData is a repository for research data, where researchers can keep large amounts of data safely in one place and share data with other researchers. It is still very much in its

piloting stage, and policies regarding the accessibility of deposited data are still under discussion.

CONCLUSIONS

Outwith QMU, it is important that people working within the open-access and repositories communities continue to communicate, sharing and comparing practices. There is no 'one size fits all' model for repositories that can be fitted to all institutions, which makes hearing about the practices of other establishments all the more interesting. The JISC repositories mailing list is particularly useful for keeping up to date with the latest developments, and more events for people working with repositories are coming to the fore. The Repositories Support Project⁵ has recently held a number of events around the country.

Within Queen Margaret University, and elsewhere, the movement towards open-access publishing, and the need for repositories from which that stems, is slowly gathering momentum and awareness. Certainly at QMU, with eResearch the two main tasks would appear to be to continue:

- 1 raising the profile of open-access publishing within the institution, so that we are compliant with the Scottish Declaration on Open Access
- 2 entrenching the depositing of work in eResearch as part of the route-to-publication process for researchers.

Our progress may be slow and steady, but we now have a backlog of papers waiting to be deposited in eResearch. Obviously this now raises questions of staff development within library services, but it is also a positive indication that our researchers are beginning to get the repository message.

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- 5 See <http://www.rsp.ac.uk/>.

Web 2.0 moves 2.0 quickly 2.0 wait: setting up a library Facebook presence at the University of Warwick



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LIBRARY 2.0

A range of Web 2.0 services is now being delivered by libraries. The Bodleian law library's Meebo box allows users to converse with librarians over the web in real time;¹ University College Dublin libraries have been in the virtual world of Second Life since 2007;² and the British Library has a range of blogs to support users.³

There are thousands of other examples, and if you would like to get involved in the discussion and ideas sharing around them do visit Library 2.0 on Ning or a similar professional network.⁴

THE WARWICK APPROACH

In 2007 senior management at the University of Warwick library decided to open the doors to Web 2.0 and invited academic support liaison staff to get stuck in. No project proposals, no interim reports, no long-winded committee-based approvals needed. Just do it!
So we did.

My contribution to this adventure was to set up the Facebook page, a multimedia social networking presence for the library. It was quick and easy to do and it was obvious, just from observing our students in the library, that Facebook was being used by our target audience.

PROJECT PLANNING – THERE WASN'T ANY!

Of course there were things that had to be considered. Briefly:

- Did we want fans to be able to post on the wall? Considering not only the potential for unwanted/unmediated comments to appear, but also the question of who would be responsible for fielding any feedback or enquiries received (and the fact that we have procedures in place already for this type of communication): no. Decision made.
- Did we want to upload photos? With the remodelling of the building in progress, and the fantastic changes happening on the floors: yes. Done.

But there wasn't much more.

Once the Page was created a few colleagues had a quick look at it and a few changes were made. And then it was live within a matter of days. It looked something like Figure 1.



Figure 1. The University of Warwick library's first Facebook page

FANS

The fan base grew quite quickly with relatively little advertising. A note was posted on the library home page and a slide was added to the plasma screen in our main foyer. Over time it was also mentioned on our blogs, in staff–student liaison committee meetings, at student induction sessions etc. About 50 new fans are now adding themselves each month, and as of 23 April 2009 we had 1,084.⁵

But who are our fans? And are we reaching our intended audience?

23,880 current members of Facebook have joined the Warwick network, indicating that, in some way, they consider themselves related to the university – if they are members of the university, they are members of the library. Not all Warwick Facebook users will have joined the Warwick network, and not all Warwick network members will be current staff or students, but we do have a reasonable indication from the numbers on the network that our library users *are* on Facebook and that Facebook is a good place for us to communicate with them.

Furthermore, we can see from the library-page statistics that there is an approximately equal male/female ratio of fans, and that the majority of them (56%) are in the 18–24 age range,

the same age range as a large proportion of our students.

We are also well aware that a small proportion of our fans are curious librarians from other organisations – but that's okay, because we are watching their pages too!

SPEAKING OF CURIOUS LIBRARIANS ...

It wasn't long before I started to receive enquiries about the 'project' from other libraries. I am still taking them now, and am still struck by the amount of preparation that some libraries require from staff before a Facebook page can be launched. Library staff were (and some still are) engaged in sending out questionnaires, collating feedback, writing project proposals and sending plans to managers for approval (for example) before they go ahead. I was fortunately spared this level of scrutiny and would suggest that other libraries with similar aims should cut down as far as possible on the amount of staff time invested in preparing to do something so simple.

Of course there are important considerations for managers but Web 2.0 moves fast – blink (or write another project report) and you could miss it.

CONSIDERATIONS

In the early days of library involvement, debates sprang up all over Library Land about a few key issues. I had a lot of enquiries from other libraries about how Warwick was addressing these issues.

The popular ones, and my responses to them, were:

1 *Should we encroach on student social space?*

Yes!

Pages have always been opt-in, and we are not encroaching: we are offering our services in a place students already visit. They don't have to use them. Just to be sure, we asked the Warwick students union, who agreed we should have a presence and even posted links to our page and uploaded some of our materials to their Facebook pages!

2 *What about the terms and conditions?*

It is important that we are aware of what Facebook might do with any content we post, and discussions about this have recently been fuelled further by the changes Facebook tried to implement in February this year. (See the list of suggested reading at the end of this article.)

3 *What about students who don't want to sign up for Facebook? Are we giving preferential treatment to students who use Facebook?*

Well, that's fine if they don't want to engage with us here. Warwick does not offer anything via Facebook that students cannot access without using Facebook. No dilemma.

A TEAM EFFORT

Although I did start the Facebook page and am posting on it, sending out occasional updates and fielding enquiries and so on relating to it, I am by no means the only person who has worked on Warwick's Facebook presence.

As well as creating pages for organisations to use, Facebook also allows anybody to create any kind of application they want. While some have created applications that allow members to throw pies at each other, or to create colourful circles to show how all of their friends are related to each other, librarians started building applications to search OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogues). One of those librarians, at Ryerson University library, posted the basic code used to build their Facebook OPAC application on an LMS (Library Management System) discussion board, where our LMS co-ordinator picked it up. It took our systems specialist less than half a day to build, test

and launch the catalogue application (see Figure 2), which now has 724 users.



Figure 2. Warwick's Facebook catalogue application

It wasn't long after this that our e-resources librarian found a way to make our e-journals search work within Facebook, so we added that to the page too (see Figure 3).

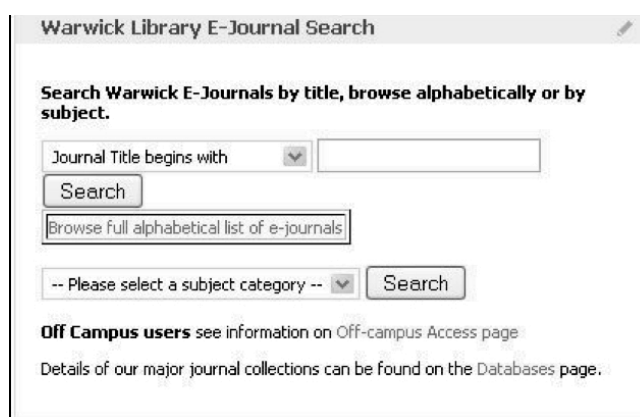


Figure 3. Warwick's Facebook e-journal search application

Other contributors to Warwick's Facebook presence include our politics and international studies librarian, who has started to experiment with Facebook as a way of fielding subject-specific enquiries; a librarian at Wolverhampton University learning centres who provided us with the basic code from which our library links box was created; and one of our teaching grid advisors who I spent a fun afternoon with trying to get our blogs to feed to Facebook pages after the recent interface changes.

I am now in the process of asking the British Library how they did some of their Facebook stuff – if you don't ask, you don't get!

RECENT CHANGES ...

There have been two big issues with Facebook over recent months that do need to be considered

by anyone setting up or managing a page at the moment.

1 Terms of use

In February 2009 Facebook changed its terms of use. The terms of use currently available on the Facebook site⁶ have since been amended in response to member demand. And it would seem, from reading the Facebook blog postings about this,⁷ that the situation is still under review. So what was all the fuss about?

Well, Facebook changed its terms to state that:

*'The following sections will survive any termination of your use of the Facebook Service: Prohibited Conduct, User Content, Your Privacy Practices, Gift Credits, Ownership; Proprietary Rights, Licenses, Submissions, User Disputes; Complaints, Indemnity, General Disclaimers, Limitation on Liability, Termination and Changes to the Facebook Service, Arbitration, Governing Law; Venue and Jurisdiction and Other.'*⁸

Members were concerned that Facebook would potentially be able to do anything they wanted with user content, even after members had deleted their Facebook accounts.⁹

While the decision was quickly reversed in response to pressure from members,¹⁰ it did highlight the possibility that Facebook could change its terms of use and there could be knock-on effects for businesses and individuals alike – it's a case of watch-this-space.

THE INTERFACE

Since March 2009 'pages' are now called 'public profiles'¹¹ and they function much like the personal profiles that individuals have. The main issue I have had with this is that fans visiting the public profile are now presented with the wall (see Figure 4), and the rest of our content is hidden away in tabs behind it. What this means is that any photos, videos, links or applications you have added to your public profile are not immediately visible to your fans. It also means that unless you post content to your wall your public profile will appear to be inactive when fans first land there. In order to get around this we have fed our library blogs through Yahoo Pipes and into Facebook Notes, which will then feed the content onto our wall. (Instructions on how to do this can be seen on my blog.¹²)

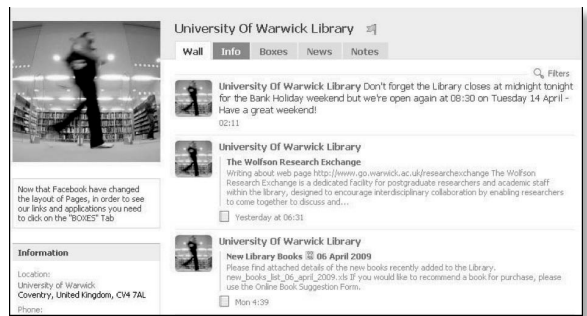


Figure 4. The University of Warwick library Facebook wall

The 'Boxes' tab you can see above the wall is where our photos, applications and links are held (see Figure 5), and is ideally where I would like our fans to be directed to when they visit the public profile, but sadly there is not an option in the settings to do this. I have been in contact with Facebook and hope this will be possible later on.



Figure 5. The University of Warwick library Facebook boxes

THE FUTURE

Facebook has made significant changes to various aspects of its service several times since our page was launched. It is bound to make more over time. If we are going to continue to use it as a communication tool, we need to keep up with the changes it makes and respond to them quickly. Staff man-

aging public profiles need to have the freedom to adapt them as soon as changes happen. They also need to have the power to quickly remove content from their organisation's public profile, or to delete it, should this be deemed necessary at any time.

Of course it's not just changes at Facebook that will shape our decisions about how much effort we commit to maintaining and developing our public profiles there. How long will Facebook be popular with our target audience? The members of our target audience change all the time: the 18–21-year-old undergraduate today is using Facebook, but what are the current 15–18 year olds using? Anyone under the age of 13 isn't allowed a Facebook account – what are the 12-year-olds using? And when they get to be 18 and go to university, will they migrate to Facebook or will they stick with what they know ... or will there be a whole new set of options open to them that we have never imagined?

Web technology moves fast and we need to keep up. Facebook alone is not going to be enough to keep in touch with our digital-native users. Other current Web 2.0 developments running at Warwick library include: an iGoogle catalogue search widget; using delicious.com to direct students to subject-specific resources; use of wikis to build reading lists in collaboration with students and departmental staff; and instant messaging tools as a potential enquiry service – and this month we launched our Twitter service.

Minimal planning, no project proposals, no rubber-stamping – Web 2.0 moves quickly and so should we.

For additional information on the issues surrounding the Facebook terms of use please see also:

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Learning 2.0 @ LJM U: a staff development programme for learning and information services staff



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BACKGROUND

At Liverpool John Moores University, learning and information services (LIS) operates as a converged computing and library service and currently offers several channels of support through computing desks, Information desks and roving services. These services are predominantly staffed by information assistants and computing assistants, whose roles are rapidly merging. At the same time our students are inevitably making more and more use of technology-enhanced learning to support their studies. This also includes an uptake of many Web 2.0 platforms by students both recreationally and as part of their studies.

The screenshot shows the 'learning 2.0 @ LJMU' website. The main heading is 'learning 2.0 @ LJMU' with the university logo. Below it, there's a date range 'April 17, 2009 - April 24, 2009'. A post titled 'Facebook and privacy settings' is displayed, dated 'Thu, Mar 19, 2009'. The post content discusses Facebook privacy settings and provides a list of instructions for users to manage their privacy.

RATIONALE

It was decided that LIS staff needed to develop skills in using new technologies so that they are continually able to support the student experience, and in particular the ways in which students are learning.

In looking at ways of achieving this, we were pointed in the direction of McMaster University in Canada, and the work that their emerging technologies group had been doing on a programme called Learning 2.0 @Mac.

The McMaster model covered much of the information that LIS needed to cover and was used as a model for the core content, although delivery of the programme needed to be addressed differently.

'Learning 2.0 @LJMU' was therefore developed around the end of 2008 with the key aim of ensuring that LIS staff develop familiarity with some of the key Web 2.0 applications and will be able to apply this knowledge to LIS services through the innovative use of new and emerging technologies.

The programme needed to provide all LIS staff with a set of relevant skills and competencies allowing for them to support students in their application of technology-enhanced learning and to explore how technology can also enhance and develop support services.

OBJECTIVES

- to enable *all* LIS staff to become familiar with new technologies and the ways in which students are using them for learning
- to enable all staff to develop skills and competencies in Web 2.0 tools so that they may proactively develop LIS services
- to enable LIS staff to demonstrate innovation in effectively using appropriate Web 2.0 tools in their work.

APPROACH

Learning 2.0 @LJMU was developed as a hands-on, interactive learning programme that provides an opportunity to explore Web 2.0 tools and the impact these tools are having on teaching and learning. The development and delivery of the programme has been a collaborative venture between a small team of three LIS staff and two members of the learning technology unit. As one of the objectives of the programme was to famil-



iarise LIS staff with current technology-enhanced learning practice within the university it made sense to deliver the Web 2.0 content through the institutional virtual learning environment (VLE), so that LIS staff could make use of the technology in the same way that a student would be expected to interact with it. The development team then set about putting together a 12-week programme based loosely on the McMaster model but delivered within the Blackboard VLE, making use of the e-portfolio as a means by which staff could collate evidence of having participated in the programme. The blog tool and online discussion tool within Blackboard were used as means of capturing such evidence. Having mastered Blackboard, staff participants were then systematically introduced to various aspects of Web 2.0 and asked to perform set activities and to make use of an online reflective diary within their e-portfolio.

LEARNING GROUPS

The 140 staff participating in the programme were divided into 'learning groups' so that they felt part of a small community and had colleagues with who they could work and share their learning experiences. Each group was assigned a 'group leader', a member of staff who had some technical expertise and could also demonstrate leadership and motivational skills. The group leaders were made up of a mixture of information and computing assistants and subject officers. Their role was really to ensure that the members of their learning groups were following the programme and to assist technically if the tasks proved challenging for particular members

of staff. The 'learning group' and 'group leader' approach proved really successful in that it gave individuals a sense of belonging and support during the programme and allowed for a really useful staff-development opportunity for those taking on the role of 'group leader'.

DELIVERING THE PROGRAMME

The programme took place between January and April 2009 and all 140 LIS staff took part. Staff were divided into their 'learning groups' and were required to complete and submit an e-portfolio at the end of the programme to demonstrate their progress, knowledge and understanding. The first two weeks were dedicated to face-to-face hands-on workshops which introduced staff to Blackboard and to the e-portfolio tool. After this the content was delivered wholly online, with content being made available each week.

PROGRAMME CONTENT

The idea behind Learning 2.0 @LJMU was to give staff an opportunity to become familiar with some of the technologies that student are currently using to engage with their learning, and also in their recreation time. Therefore the following elements made up the content of the 12-week course. Prior to the first workshop, all staff were asked to complete a 'Web 2.0' skills test and a short reflection on 'what Web 2.0 means to them and how they envisage Web 2.0 being used within their job roles'.

Week 1 – Introduction to Blackboard and e-portfolio. This workshop was delivered in a face-to-face environment so that staff could take part in a hands-on workshop in which they were introduced to the Blackboard VLE and some of its basic functionality. Similarly, staff were asked to set up an e-portfolio and to include some information about themselves and to upload a digital photograph of themselves into their personal profiles. Other tasks in the workshop included uploading the two documents they had been asked to complete prior to attending the workshop. These activities enabled staff to get a basic understanding of Blackboard, from a student perspective.

Week 2 – Blackboard communication tools. This was a second face-to-face workshop, during which staff were able to consolidate upon the basic Blackboard skills that they had learnt the previous week. They were introduced to the Blackboard discussion tool, as this would provide

the means by which staff could provide evidence of their learning during the programme.



Week 3 – Overview of Web 2.0. The first fully 'online' unit provided a brief overview to Web 2.0 so that staff could become aware of the scope of Web 2.0 and some of the common concepts behind it. The unit also presented an opportunity to set out the format of the online units: a brief explanation and definition; an introductory video clip; text and associated websites; activities.

Week 4 – Blogs. Staff were now in the habit of accessing Blackboard on a weekly basis in order to access their units and activities. The tasks for 'Blogs' involved looking at a selection of pre-determined blogs, including two that had been produced by LIS staff for work purposes. All staff were then asked to commence a blog within Blackboard, using Blackboard's own blogging tool. Each unit also invited staff to make an entry into their online reflective diaries where they were asked to record their thoughts on the Web 2.0 tool that they had just discovered.



Week 5 – RSS feeds. This unit was largely information- and discovery-based, allowing staff to see the kind of information available via RSS feeds, and to think about them within the context of the library and the services they deliver.

Week 5 was followed by a blank week 6, allowing staff to catch up on the activities that they had been set. Group leaders used the opportunity to assess exactly where their team members were up to with their learning and to organise and provide support where necessary.

Week 7 – Wikis. Similar to the content for the 'Blogs' unit, 'Wikis' invited staff to discover and investigate a series of predetermined wikis, and to contemplate their use within a library and information context. All staff were then asked to contribute to their group's Blackboard wiki (another tool within the Blackboard suite) and also to look at and contribute to an external wiki, organised by the Learning 2.0 development team.



Week 8 – Tagging and social bookmarking. The purpose of this unit was to introduce the concept of tagging as a means of indexing web-based information and to allow staff to see how practical tools such as del.ici.ous can be applied within an academic environment.

Week 9 – Photo and video sharing. This unit introduced staff to Flickr and YouTube. Staff were already very familiar with YouTube, as content from YouTube had been included as part of the tutorial element in each of the preceding units.

Week 10 – Social networking. This was possibly the most controversial unit in that staff were asked to join Facebook as part of the activity, as well as looking at some more publicly accessible social networking sites. The activity involved discovering how other library sites had made use of social networking as a marketing and community-oriented tool.

Weeks 11–12 – Final group task and e-portfolio submission. At the end of the programme, the groups were asked to prepare an online presentation using a Web 2.0 medium of their choice, the purpose of which was to present an understanding of their knowledge of Web 2.0 and how it can be applied within a library and information and student support environment.

INCENTIVES

Participation in the programme was incentivised through the awarding of prizes for 'best group project' as part of the final task and 'best team players' at the conclusion of the programme. Funding for the prizes was provided by Ex Libris, the service's library management system supplier. This sponsorship allowed for a slightly different approach towards the delivery of the programme content and the commitment and enthusiasm shown by all those participating. At the time of writing the final projects have been completed and e-portfolios submitted, and they are in the process of being assessed.

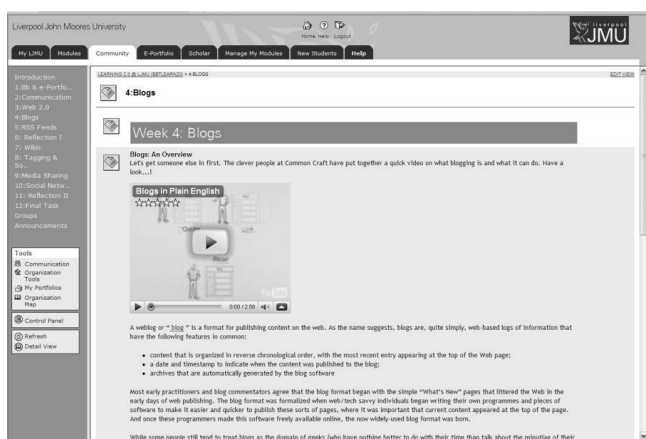
FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

An overall evaluation of the programme was conducted through the circulation of an online questionnaire to all those who have participated. Initial feedback suggests that staff found the programme useful and informative and a very useful staff development tool, relevant to their daily work. Many suggestions were put forward as to how the programme may be improved, including an increased time period in which to complete the programme. Also, drawing upon experience from similar Learning 2.0 programmes,¹ there may be alternative web-based platforms through which to deliver the programme, as an alternative to Blackboard.

At the beginning of the programme all staff completed a brief audit ascertaining their level of understanding of technology-enhanced learning at LJMU and of Web 2.0 applications. With so many staff taking part in the programme, and some of those being directly involved in frontline

IT support, there were obviously varying levels of understanding and competence within these fields. However, overwhelmingly, all those who declared no knowledge or competence as part of the initial audit demonstrated a massive increase upon completion of the same audit at the end of the programme.

A final channel for evaluation has been regular meetings with the group leaders, who have helped to advise and shape the progression of the programme, in response to the support needs of their group participants. The input of the group leaders has been fundamental to the success and further development of Learning 2.0 @LJMU.



WHAT NEXT?

We are now at the end of the first rollout of Learning 2.0 @LJMU. The evaluation and feedback from the LIS staff will contribute to further development of the programme for future cohorts of staff from other university departments. The university's staff development centre is keen to adopt the programme and have it accredited by SEDA,² and this will provide a further opportunity for LIS staff who have already completed the programme.

For more details see the other article by Leo Appleton in this issue of SCONUL Focus.

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Library away days – home wins or own goals?



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Love them or loathe them, away days have become an integral part of the library calendar. Last summer the University of Lincoln held an away day event comprised of a morning addressing matters that arose from a staff survey and then the launch of a learning landscapes agenda – essentially a game of two halves. Away days can form a crucial part of employee engagement if used wisely – any organisation's plan in using away days is to boost morale and ultimately productivity. At their worst, away days can be embarrassing and can reinforce a negative opinion of the organisation; at best, they can transform organisational performance and inject fresh enthusiasm into a project or team. The first-ever study of the effectiveness of away days, by the Chartered Institute of Management and the Advanced Institute for Management Research, concluded, according to Nick Pandya, that 'four in 10 managers on such corporate outings believe that the rendezvous they attended had either no impact or a negative impact on a range of measurable business outcomes'.¹ Away days often fall short of expectations, and even of their basic objectives, because of a lack of preparation and because of resistance from those involved.² Without doubt the notion of an away day can induce feelings of despair, particularly when they are traditionally associated with go-karting or paint-balling – activities that are not suitable for everyone. Games can easily be perceived as artificial exercises that annoy employees and may elicit their most unpleasant characteristics.³ So, how can organisers create an away day which contributes towards organisational learning, inspires motivation and is rewarding for all participants ... without turning it into a pantomime?

As team development is essentially about inclusion, Peter Fleming has argued for the importance

in team building of removing barriers via free-flowing conversation.⁴ While clustered around team-building activities, each employee should feel equally valued – at least for the day. In working together to solve problems, staff ought to feel empowered through meaningful engagement. Stimulating discussion around important matters, in a safe, welcoming environment where employees are comfortable in expressing their opinions, without fear of retribution, naturally creates a productive environment where trust can be generated.

An effective away day is the hallmark of a forward-thinking organisation, according to Julia Vowler, 'At Bucknall Austin, which was shortlisted for the construction, agriculture and mining Best Places to Work Award, funding is set aside for team events, and an open atmosphere is encouraged in meetings.'⁵ Dan Collins, founder of team-building motivational activities and event-organiser Fresh Tracks, advises that an away day has to start with clear objectives.⁶ Location and venue, refreshments, adequate facilities, ambience and ease of access are important factors that build towards a successful day. Candour, relaxation, a change of scene, avoiding an overcrowded programme and giving plenty of notice are other good tips. As well as providing plenty of feedback about the day, acting upon the recommendations and formulating an implementation plan is vital so that participants acquire a sense of ownership. Being away from the normal working environment helps people to view key questions from the outside, and hopefully achieve greater objectivity. Firstly, organisers need to identify the reason why the away day is necessary; although it seems obvious, this rationale helps to focus activities. A staff survey at the University of Lincoln identified three areas in the library that required attention:

- 1 Improving communication
- 2 Improving your Personal Development Review
- 3 Improving career development.

The morning of our away day was based upon the innovative concept of the World Café, which claims to be a 'conversational process based on a set of integrated design principles that reveal a deeper living network pattern through which we co-evolve our collective future'.⁷ Such forums host constantly evolving conversations around important questions, as a means to share purpose and achieve common aims, where conversations 'link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new

insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, or community'.⁸

To address the three issues arising from our staff survey, three groups were asked to debate each issue for twenty minutes before turning to the next topic, to identify a list of possible solutions: an arrangement that created lively discussion and worthwhile debate. Our library away day was successful because there was sufficient time to debate each topic, and it was effectively managed by the chairs of each group so that everyone had a chance to speak. If other World-Café-inspired away days were organised with the same democratic ethos then I'm confident the library would continue to score home wins, rather than own goals.

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- 3 Wren, A. 'Team-building: more than just another work jolly?', *The Independent, The World of Work*, 26 May 2005, p 5
- 4 See Fleming, 'Metaphors'
- 5 J. Vowler, 'Away days promote teamworking', *Computer Weekly*, 17 May 2005, p 28
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- 8 Ibid.

An away day with a difference: developing new ways of working at the University of East London



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INTRODUCTION: WOW

At the University of East London, library and learning services (LLS) is committed to enhancing the student experience and also to encouraging the staff development that underpins any service improvement. One important means of achieving this is to encourage our staff at all levels to reflect upon their 'ways of working', to critically evaluate current procedures and to suggest new approaches.

The concept of new 'ways of working' (WOW) emerged during UEL's move from its old Barking home to an expanded Docklands campus in 2006. To assist the process of creating a new library and of integrating staff from two different sites, a WOW group was set up, consisting of a mixture of staff from all grades. The purpose of the group was to look at the operational differences between

the two libraries and to reconcile them, sometimes by devising new procedures. Thus change was used as an opportunity to review and improve our services.

The group proved to be popular and several interesting ideas emerged and were implemented. Now in its third year, the new library has been a success with a 50% increase in usage. Although the WOW group itself was disbanded, the idea of new 'ways of working' has lived on. When we began planning a summer away day for all our staff, it quickly became apparent that this could be the concept around which we could structure the event.

LIBRARY AWAY DAYS

Traditionally, LLS staff away days have formed part of our university's annual strategic planning process. Sessions and workshops at these days are generally facilitated by senior managers and their content and structure are determined by the institution's pre-determined planning priorities. The days are a means of discussing targets and formulating action plans for the coming year and are designed to assist the library's management team in developing its annual service plan.

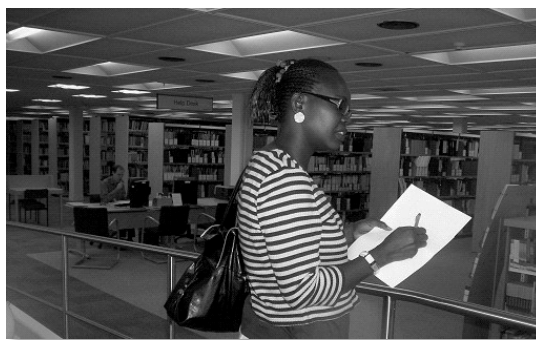
Although these days serve an essential function, evaluation of feedback forms after such events indicated the need for more involvement from all levels of staff. For this reason, it was decided to hold a second annual day with less prescribed content and a more inclusive programme: a staff development day.

ORGANISING GROUP

In keeping with the aim to broaden staff involvement, responsibility for organising the day was given to the authors of this article – the assistant campus library managers at our three library sites (Docklands, Stratford and Duncan House). We formed an organising group and together we planned and co-ordinated the day.

The three of us felt that the WOW concept would serve as a good basis for planning the day. We hit upon the idea of structuring it around a series of visits that library staff would make to other institutions. The visiting groups would be mixed (including, for example, subject librarians and shelvees) and their brief would be to look specifically for different working practices and come back with lots of new ideas. At the away day they would give brief presentations about their visits.

The day would therefore be about sharing best practice from other library services in order to generate discussion about how we do things at UEL and how we might improve our services.



It would take place in mid-September 2008. Most people would be back from their holidays by then and we liked the idea of everyone getting together before the start of the new academic year. This also meant that the visits could take place during the summer, a quiet time for the library when we could release staff without this having too great an impact upon service provision.

RISKY?

From the outset, our main concern was whether it was risky to structure the day around presentations by library staff, many of whom were not used to regularly speaking in front of large audiences. Might it become a bit shambolic?

We addressed this concern in the following ways:

- *Mixed groups.* Although we encouraged staff to suggest visits and form their own visiting groups, we made sure that each group (usually of 2–5 people) included at least one person who had some experience of giving presentations. This did not have to be in their current position. In fact, some of our library assistants had excellent presentational experience from previous jobs and outside activities (running art workshops, for example).
- *Guidelines and close liaison.* We circulated some guidelines for the visits. These included a description of their purpose, tips on how to plan them, information on where to claim travel expenses and advice about the presentations. We also divided responsibility for overseeing each visit among the three of us and made sure we liaised regularly with the visitors, particularly around the time of the visits and during the week leading up to the away day.
- *Digital photography.* We made sure that all the groups took a digital camera with them.

We felt that a series of photographs would form an ideal backdrop for the presentations, providing the groups with a readymade structure for their talks, acting as a memory prompt to speakers and helping to illustrate aspects of their visit to the audience.

- *Smaller audiences.* On the day, the presentations were given simultaneously in two rooms, partly for logistical and time reasons, but this meant that they took place in front of smaller audiences of 25–30 people as opposed to the whole staff of over 60.

VENUE AND PROGRAMME

With a limited budget, we set about finding a suitable and affordable location for our away day. The cheapest option would have been to book rooms within UEL but we felt it was important to get away from our workplace, particularly given the theme of the day. A colleague suggested the Geffrye Museum. The Geffrye is one of East London's best-kept secrets, a lovely museum of English domestic interiors set in surprisingly secluded grounds off Kingsland Road, E2. Their rates turned out to be very reasonable, the facilities impressive and the venue just about the right size for our staff.

Although we felt excited about both the venue and the visits, we were mindful of the fact that we had a whole day to fill and that the presentations would probably only take up the morning. Fortunately, our investigative visit to the Geffrye suggested a second part of the day's programme. The museum is situated in a culturally rich part of London, within walking distance of Hoxton's art galleries (Flowers East, White Cube) and other libraries (the Stuart Hall library at the Institute of International Visual Arts, Hackney Community College). Why not arrange a series of additional, brief visits to these places in the afternoon? The visits would be mainly for interest but staff would be asked to think about these places from a WOW perspective and report back verbally when they returned.

In addition to these visits, staff would also be offered the chance to stay at the Geffrye and participate in workshops where they would consider the ideas that had been generated by the morning presentations. All the visiting teams were asked to send us a summary of the WOWs they would be highlighting. The afternoon workshops would sift through these and pick out ones that they felt were potentially applicable at UEL. Workshop

participants would also get the chance to have a look at the Geffrye's collection.

Our main concern with this element of the programme was the weather. Heavy rain (not impossible in September, after a so-so summer) might make the local visits a less attractive prospect and ruin the second half of our day. Troubled by visions of bedraggled library staff traipsing through the streets of E2, we worked on a contingency plan of expanded workshops but in the event we got away with intermittent light drizzle.

HOW DID IT GO?

Library staff visited and gave presentations about ten very different libraries:

- Birkbeck College
- Cambridge University
- Cass Business School (City University)
- Idea Store, Whitechapel
- Jubilee Library, Brighton
- Kingston University
- Museum at Docklands
- Sheffield Hallam University
- University College London
- The Women's Library.

Confounding our earlier concerns, they all presented confidently, succinctly and with humour. The idea of using digital photographs in the presentations worked well, giving staff the opportunity to talk around interesting visuals rather than attempt lengthy descriptions, and this is a great example of how new technology can widen participation in events such as these. The speakers highlighted what was new and innovative in the libraries they had visited and also what worked less well. Reassuringly, many concluded that we offer a high standard of service ourselves. The audience (a number of whom would also be giving presentations) were supportive and asked lots of questions at the end of each talk.

The local visits in the afternoon were popular but a significant number of people also stayed behind to participate in the workshops. These were surprisingly lively. Although many of the WOWs were felt to be too expensive or not appropriate for our service, several were deemed worthy of further investigation. In particular ideas about making the library greener (inspired by the visit to Birkbeck College library) were popular. Other WOWs we liked included a reshelving area, lanyards for library staff, quick-use PCs and colour-coded signage. As a result of the popularity of

the green ideas, a library 'green group' was set up soon after the away day and some of the ideas about making the library more environmentally friendly have now been put into practice.

FEEDBACK

Rather than giving out paper evaluation forms, which in our experience are always filled in rather hurriedly, we used Google Documents to create an online evaluation form, a link to which was e-mailed to all staff. This generated a good response and the feedback was almost entirely positive, with a lot of enthusiasm for the day's democratic format.

FOLLOW-UP: THE WOW BLOG

We felt that it was very important that the ideas generated by the visits and discussed in the workshops were not simply forgotten once the day had ended. We therefore collected them on a website (actually a WordPress blog) and each WOW was tagged by theme. The resulting tag cloud enabled us to see at a glance which aspects of library service provision had attracted the greatest number of ideas.

Each idea was also allocated to an internal library group (e.g. our customer services group) which then formally considered the idea at their next meeting. In reality, many of the ideas were rejected as being impractical but a few did make the grade and have gone on to be implemented. After a decision had been made, the blog entry was amended so that library staff could see whether each idea had been accepted or rejected.

You can view our WOW blog and all the WOWs here at <http://waysofworking.wordpress.com/>

In fact, we feel the blog could become a standing 'ideas bank' for library staff and not simply be used in conjunction with away days. Staff could submit suggestions which would be tagged and forwarded to the relevant library group. In this way, a transparent channel for staff feedback would be created and more interesting and innovative ways of working might emerge.

CONCLUSION

Overall we feel we were successful in creating an away day with a difference. WOW provided us with a strong theme for the day and the visits and presentations allowed the participation of library staff of all levels. Staff were able to see good practice elsewhere, meet colleagues from other organisations and develop their presentation skills. We were also able to utilise both digital photography and web 2.0 in our efforts to create a more inclusive and interesting event.

Additionally, we succeeded in stimulating discussion about our library and concrete ideas emerged from the day that have since been put into practice, although the visits also reinforced our view that our own service is a good one which in many regards matches the best we have seen at other libraries. On a personal level, we acquired invaluable experience in organising events and working together as a small team.

That the day was popular was confirmed by some very positive feedback and it was deemed successful enough to be repeated again this year with the same format. However, we are mindful of the fact that what is fresh can quickly become formulaic and next year we will probably require new activities and a different approach. Perhaps a visit to another library will provide inspiration?

WOW
Ways of working: an ideas bank for UEL Library staff

Checking out several books at once
September 9, 2008 by waysofworking
They had a great issue/return system at Brighton. You could pile all the books on at once and they would all issue or discharge.
Tags: RFID, self-service
Posted in PENDING, Staff Development Day 09/08, Systems Team | No Comments »

Jute and cotton bags
September 9, 2008 by waysofworking
Ban plastic bags and sell jute and cotton bags.
Tags: green
Posted in Green Group, PENDING, Staff Development Day 09/08 | No Comments »

Tags
access blog busy times CCTV e-resources enquiries external users green IT new books outreach reservations RFID roving schools security self-service shelving signage space staff rotation student behaviour telephones timetable web 2.0

Categories

Peer groups for second-tier managers

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INTRODUCTION

This article gives a brief overview of the history, evolution and operation of the peer groups for second-tier managers, often referred to as the 'SCONUL deputies' groups'. Their benefits are analysed in relation to the roles and continuing professional development (CPD) needs of second-tier managers.

EVOLUTION OF THE GROUPS

The first group was formed in the early 1980s through the encouragement of the then chair of the SCONUL Board. It consisted of deputy librarians from what might now be called the 'old' universities. A few members from the 'new' universities joined the group in the mid-90s. It remained the only one of its kind until 2004 when, with a little help from a coordinator provided by the SCONUL Advisory Committee on Staffing (ACOS), two more groups were formed. Members were drawn from across the higher education sector, with 68 institutions having at least one member in a group. A further group was formed in 2005 and a fifth in 2006. In the early days of the groups, SCONUL provided administrative support in connection with contracts, invoices and preparation of packs and badges. This was withdrawn during the review of SCONUL activities in 2007 and following the demise of ACOS. The five groups all continue to meet, however, and have a total of 128 members from 91 institutions at the

time of writing. They are run by the members of the groups. Margaret continued to act as group coordinator until her retirement in 2008, when the role was taken over by Trevor. Trevor maintains the list of group members, provides information on the groups and allocates places; anyone wishing to join a group should contact Trevor in the first instance.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUPS

Membership is open to library deputies or senior management team members – in other words those at the level immediately below, and reporting to, the head/director of library services. (In a converged service this may, in some cases, be the third tier.) The groups are networks of peers and provide a confidential forum for brainstorming and discussion of ideas, developments and problems. For this reason, members are asked to attend a meeting every year if at all possible and to maintain regular e-mail contact with the rest of the group. Each group has about 25 members, so that everyone knows everyone else and the model of mutual trust, confidentiality and support can be maintained. It is for this reason that institutions are not allowed to send a different person each year or to change the person who comes without any reference to the group or to the groups' coordinator. The model also relies on the willingness of all members to take their turn at organising the annual meeting.

FORMAT OF GROUP ACTIVITIES

All five groups use the tried and tested format developed by the first one, with a few variations to suit members' needs. They meet once a year, usually starting on a Friday evening with dinner and ending at Sunday lunchtime. Some groups now meet in the week or from Thursday to Saturday, but the length of the meeting is the same. Meetings are held in June, September or November but each group meets at the same time each year. Some groups also have a brief, one-day mid-year meeting. Each has a closed e-mail list that enables frequent communication throughout the year as well.

The meetings are not conferences: that is, they do not consist of a programme of outside speakers. Sessions are led by group members. They are networking events which enable the discussion of issues of mutual concern and brainstorming. The main purpose is to trigger debate and share ideas and good practice. Sometimes a member will bring a problem and the group will brainstorm

approaches to it. Each session is around 40–45 minutes long, with input from the session leader accounting for no more than one-third of the time. Discussion is open and honest and members promise to maintain confidentiality because in this lies much of the value of the groups. A member has commented, 'I would say one of the most useful things is the Chatham House Rules – to be able to speak in freedom is a rare thing.' The only 'outside speakers' are former group members who have moved on to the post of head of service and are asked to return to talk about their new role. Plenty of time is allowed for informal discussion in small groups outside the scheduled programme. Some groups include an open-forum session, which enables all sorts of topics to be 'bounced around'. These may be taken up by small sub-sets during the meeting or pursued at another time.

BENEFITS

The groups bring together colleagues from across the higher education sector. They mix those from 'old' and 'new' universities and from large and small institutions; those with single campus and multi-campus contexts; those from teaching and research-led universities. They include staff with a library background and those who come from an IT or other learning-resource background, and they mix together colleagues whose specific portfolios vary enormously. Each group has a similarly 'rich mixture' of staff and all testify to the value of this.

At a stage in their career where staff require not courses but the development of critical thinking, decision-making and political skills and the need to learn from the experience and good practice of others, the groups provide a very appropriate solution. They enable individuals to build up powerful peer groups that can be relied upon for support, especially at times when reference to colleagues inside the same institution may not be appropriate or acceptable. They are a source of information and ideas for those whose chosen career is at second-tier level but they also provide the basis for a future support group for those whose ambitions take them to head-of-service posts. The institutions benefit from having senior colleagues who grow in confidence and are able to call on the expertise of others in managing the constant change all services face.

One member has summarised the value of the peer groups as follows: 'For me the key benefit is a group you can ask tricky questions of without

the worry it might get out to someone you might be embarrassed to see get it or ... where you need a quick cross-section of libraries. It saves hours of work avoiding reinvention of wheels and is always a good source of policy papers etc.' Many members testify to the value of the closed e-mail list maintained by each group as a source of information and support throughout the year. One welcomes 'the ability to e-mail colleagues in similar roles about problems or just to ask for advice in a confidential manner – without the worry that people will judge you for asking silly questions!' Another member says, 'The social side (as well as e-mailing) provides a supportive environment – being a second-tier manager can be very isolating.' She also testifies to another benefit: 'having the experience of presenting something to a group of peers – [you] can try things out before doing this within the home institution'.

CONCLUSION

We'd like to conclude by quoting one group member's story:

'To be perfectly honest, I attended the first meeting of the fourth group in November 2005 with a sense of apprehension and with no little hesitation. I was spending a lot of time on service development at "home" and although I recognised the potential for sharing ideas and experience, this I saw as a possible unwelcome distraction.

'However, at the risk of sounding glib, the journey down to Loughborough was the most negative I have been about this group. From the word go, I have encountered nothing but mutual support, genuine interest and helpfulness within a very engaging, friendly and relaxed atmosphere. A most important point to make is that it was and continues to be fun! It has reassured me, broadened and challenged my thinking, and without doubt, being relatively new in the role at the time, has given me greater confidence. It probably goes without saying that the group provides a very useful opportunity to step back and take stock whilst exploring sector-wide issues. So, fun and very useful!

'The mailing list is also an important component of the support network where I know I can get confidential advice, comments and encouragement very quickly. Oh, and occasional silliness and merriment. I genuinely look forward to meeting up every year with colleagues. I consider myself lucky. The only problem: the gatherings appear to be coming around far more quickly!'

Scanning, tailoring and promoting information literacy support – another string to the liaison librarian’s bow



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A shift in tertiary education is acknowledged and this article discusses the implications for librarians engaged in information literacy support. The article demonstrates why liaison librarians need to scan and tailor new varieties of information skills support to match the changes in education. The importance of promoting new varieties of support services is also discussed and various measures to promote these new support offerings are proposed.

THE SHIFT IN EDUCATION

It has struck me, as a liaison librarian working in an Irish university library, that in recent years universities have been shifting to meet the evolving needs of the student. On their website, the Irish Higher Education Authority (HEA) acknowledges that ‘expectations regarding the role of higher education and its contribution to society and the individual are changing’.¹ Driving forces are also ensuring a shift to higher education that is more ‘student-centred’. For example, university strategic documents are encouraging a change in emphasis from ‘teaching-centred’ to ‘student-centred learning’. In University College Dublin, the draft strategy for education 2008–2011 has embedded a ‘student-focused, life-long learning environment’ as an educational value and key principle.² The European Commission’s lifelong learning programme framework has also set out

‘digital competence’ and ‘learning to learn’ as key competencies that can contribute to ‘successful life in a knowledge society’,³ and these have direct implications for higher education.

Coupled with this, the information landscape in which students operate is changing with the advent of new technologies and, because of their age group, students are ‘typically the first to adopt new technologies’⁴ and adapt to them. Students skim and power-browse and favour intuitive and dynamic interfaces that give them a quick and exact answer. Schmidt maintains that the ‘users of today, particularly young people, are accessing and using information very differently’.⁵ In contrast, Rowlands, in his review of the Google Generation Project research, notes ‘considerable continuity in the use of information between generations’.⁶ Students today have had greater exposure to technology, but are not necessarily more information-literate, which presents librarians with the opportunity to develop and use a whole range of new approaches to information literacy support.

It is not just the students who are changing or adapting their behaviours – the shift in education also extends to academics. Higgs and McCarthy suggest that ‘there are changing roles for staff who teach’ and that ‘academic teachers now see themselves as facilitators of learning, rather than as transmitters of knowledge’.⁷ In addition, there is more collaborative learning: as Schmidt notes, the ‘disciplinary boundaries are blurring and faculties are working collaboratively’.⁸ Currently lecturers are also exploring, and finding, new ways to get students to learn and are championing new teaching and learning techniques to reach their students. Today, ‘problem based learning’, ‘clickr technology’, ‘digital storytelling’,⁹ ‘e-tivities’ and many other learning methods and technologies are now more commonplace and less of a novelty in universities. Fallon and Breen describe a ‘university culture in which flexible modes of delivery are being explored and utilised’¹⁰ and how this is ‘part of the context in which librarians and libraries now operate’.¹¹

This educational shift has implications for academic libraries and their liaison librarians, who provide information skills support in the higher education environment. This article seeks to explore the need to scan the educational environment and to tailor and promote new forms of information literacy support.

In light of the present shifting educational environment, liaison librarians need to ensure that information literacy is seamlessly connected to curricula. Liaison librarians can only achieve this with deliberate and regular scanning of the educational horizon. Scanning for emerging trends allows librarians to tap into what is changing and shifting in higher education so that they become more in sync with new waves of change. For the liaison librarian, monitoring such changes, whilst time-consuming, is a useful pursuit, as it can uncover valuable triggers for the development of new forms of information literacy. However, scanning can be quite an art, as we cannot predict the future perfectly. So how do we know what the emerging big ideas or trends are at any given time?

Liaison librarians are already equipped to scan the educational environment proficiently; we are very adept and skilled at helping others to extract salient information from the literature environment. We do this every day at reference and information desks. Why not use these skills to help ourselves in our own professional realm? We simply need to apply this skill to trend monitoring. Boon et al. outline several types of forecasting methods that can help to identify emerging trends. Some of the more interesting methods they describe include monitoring, or 'the process of scanning the environment and of organizing this information'.¹² They also discuss obtaining the 'opinion of experts' because 'the knowledge of a group of experts is superior to the knowledge of one person due to synergy effects'.¹³ Boon et al. also describe 'scenario construction' as another useful method of forecasting trends,¹⁴ which involves setting up a plausible range of scenarios for the future as follows: the most likely, most pessimistic and best-case projection in reference to changes in a given field.

Educational resources

Core educational journals are a good resource for identifying trends in order to gain a better understanding of what is shifting in the educational environment. *Learning and instruction*, *Active learning in higher education*, *The journal of curriculum studies*, *The Oxford review of education* and *Innovations in education and teaching international* are just a few. Generally, liaison librarians deal with specific subject areas, so it can be useful to browse education journals that focus on a particular discipline, such as *Medical education*, *The journal of con-*

tinuing education in nursing or *Journal of education for business*. Themes that emerge at educational conferences can also be informative. AISHE – the All Ireland Society for Higher Education – is a good one to consider as it is a professional society that 'promotes the professional recognition and enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education through a range of activities including seminars, conferences, publications, and provision of online community forums and services'.¹⁵

Networks can be another source of valuable insight: the Network of Education Developers in Ireland (EDIN) provides access to discussion and collective experience amongst higher education practitioners. EDUCAUSE is 'a non-profit association whose mission is to advance higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology'.¹⁶ EDUCAUSE has some useful horizon reports and it has a community sphere where individuals, groups and organizations from the higher education and IT community 'share information and advice on all aspects of the profession'.¹⁷ Educational and technological blogs and trend reports can also reveal information on new, emerging student generations in terms of their behaviours, attitudes, expectations and information literacy needs. Scanning these and other educational resources may deliver useful trend information that can be further explored with academics.

Scanning the work of major thinkers in education can also reveal the trends that are likely to dominate. Professor Dee Fink, an instructional consultant, summarises forms of teaching that teachers have been experimenting with and exploring, including 'role-playing, simulation, debate and case studies', 'writing to learn', 'small group learning', 'assessment as learning', 'problem-based learning' and 'service learning'.¹⁸

Library professional resources

Liaison librarians can also scan their own professional literature. 'Ulrich's periodical directory' lists a number of journals that focus on information literacy; a few examples are *Communications in information literacy*, *Journal of information literacy*, *Nordic journal of information literacy in higher education* and *Literacy research and instruction*. Signing up for table of contents alerts for information literacy journals, where possible, is an easy way to identify new themes in information literacy. Publications not strictly focused on information literacy can also be useful to consult. For example, *SCONUL Focus* brings together 'articles, reports

and news stories from practitioners in order to generate debate and promote good practice' in higher education and national libraries across the UK and Ireland.¹⁹ Noting themes at library conferences is another means to identify emerging trends. The Librarians' Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC) is a useful one to attend.

Societies, associations and consortia can also provide key information. The Consortium of National and University Libraries (CONUL) has a webpage on its advisory committee on information literacy and it also lists useful presentations from its information literacy seminar on its website.²⁰ The Library Association of Ireland (LAI) has an equivalent web page dedicated to its working group on information literacy.²¹ CILIP, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, has the CSG (Community Services Group) Information Literacy Group which provides a forum for debate and 'allows the exchange of knowledge in all aspects of Information Literacy'.²² Subgroups of the American Library Association (ALA), such as the Medical Library Association, also produce notes on roundtable discussion topics. The collation of themes and trends from these locations will deliver a good overview of changes.

TAILORING

Once we extract and understand the educational shifts, we can critically evaluate our existing information literacy in a new way, in order to examine whether it mirrors these academic shifts and changes adequately and, if not, to begin to design new and exciting forms of information literacy to fill the gaps. Schmidt advocates that 'traditional library services must change to accommodate new kinds of users and new kinds of use'.²³ Of course, such change requires an open and adaptive mindset on the part of the liaison librarian. It should never be a question of change just for the sake of change, either. Nor should it be a case of removing traditional information literacy where this provides the better support for the curriculum. Newly designed or tailored information literacy sessions should be appropriate, should involve collaboration with schools and colleagues and should align with library management's thinking and the university's strategy. It is important too that scanning and tailoring activities are carried out in a sustainable way, since higher education will continue to change into the future. In her article on the future of librarianship, Dodd concludes that 'the worlds of information and

higher education will continue to change and shift unpredictably'.²⁴

Some examples of tailored information literacy include the workshop, problem and fixed-resource approaches which cater to students of problem-based learning (PBL). PBL is considered to be learning-focused and offers a way of replicating problems at work and in life in the learning environment. In PBL modules, students are given an initiating trigger or problem in a tutorial and, through discussion, they identify their learning issues. The students then disperse to research these learning issues and then use the knowledge they learn to further their understanding of the trigger situation when they reconvene in the next tutorial. The table explains the processes involved in PBL and 'clinic' tailored sessions.

Tailored sessions	Process
Workshop approach	In the library session students 'work in their groups on the (PBL) problem. They report to the wider group on the value of information resources used. The librarian guides them through resources. Groups search for information again.' ²⁵ This is quite different from the traditional information skills approach because students focus on finding information for their current PBL problem and any information literacy outcomes they learn are transferable to subsequent PBL problems on their course.
Problem approach	'Students are presented with a trigger or problem with development of information literacy skills as the main learning outcome.' ²⁶ It differs from a traditional information literacy session in that the librarian designs a PBL trigger on an aspect of information literacy.
Fixed-resource approach	At the point of need, students request a 'class on a specific area they are struggling with', such as searching a particular database. ²⁷

'Clinic' approach	In the clinic, each student in the session describes his or her most significant information literacy difficulty to the librarian; the librarian records the main issue and it becomes a learning objective. The librarian then delivers pre-prepared demonstrations and exercises or games on these objectives to help the students overcome their difficulties.
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Of these tailored sessions, I have found the tailored 'clinic' session particularly effective as a follow-on session for fourth-year nursing and midwifery students in University College Dublin. After the initial session, these students often encounter additional information-seeking challenges that they do not know how to deal with. The 'clinic' session is designed to address these subsequent challenges. In the feedback forms about the 'clinic', the students commented positively on how the 'clinic' session was geared uniquely to them with comments like:

'She asked us what we would like to learn first so all of it was very useful.'

'I found it all relevant and useful.'

'It was good to be able to voice your own personal problems.'

'A very worthwhile class, would be beneficial to other years I think.'

'Very helpful, thank you!'

Tailoring offers great benefits for students. The 'clinic' session gives the students the choice to select what they want to learn about. Crow states that 'when people have some choice in a task, they buy into doing it'.²⁸ Tailoring may also address other concerns for students. In his book on creating significant learning experiences, Dee Fink outlines student concerns about education and the difficulty they experience in 'seeing the value or significance of what they are learning'.²⁹ He has also observed that students often feel 'fragmented' because 'their courses do not connect to each other'.³⁰ With tailoring, these connections become apparent to the student. Tailoring information literacy sessions makes sense to the students when they experience the reflection of their curriculum modules in the library sessions they attend. Tailoring also conveys joined-up thinking and the sense that libraries are in touch with the student experience.

Tailoring or packaging information skills sessions can be highly effective. Unfortunately, the examples of tailored information literacy cited above are not commonplace. Scanning and tailoring information literacy sessions has not reached the 'tipping point' in libraries and is for the most part patchy.³¹ Admittedly, it can sometimes be difficult for liaison librarians to get even the most basic information literacy sessions embedded with some schools.

Having acknowledged this, librarians should try to pursue tailoring more proactively, because evidence from other fields, such as marketing, suggests that tailoring or packaging with the user in mind can be quite an effective approach. In his article entitled 'Rethink, repackage, reconnect', Ted Mininni reflects that 'when a package and product work to deliver emotionally engaging experiences synergistically, consumers will continue to seek out the brand and the product over and over again. The connection that packaging provides helps to cement consumer loyalty'.³² Gladwell also maintains that 'there is a simple way to package information that, under the right circumstances, can make it irresistible'.³³

New kinds of information literacy sessions are beneficial for students and also make for a powerful string to the liaison librarian's bow; they add to the liaison librarian's experience record and learning and enhance his or her continuing professional development. Investigating and designing tailored new information literacy sessions may also prompt liaison librarians to engage in more evidence-based and reflective practice, which helps to develop best professional practice. Tailoring new information literacy sessions also adds variety and spurs creative thinking in the teaching aspect of the liaison librarian role.

The library itself stands to benefit from tailoring too. Rossiter makes the point that 'surprising customers with new and interesting services can make them come back, even just to see if something else new is happening'.³⁴ Any new niche that liaison librarians can explore and exploit that might draw former library users back into the library fold and reaffirm loyal library users' patronage is a worthwhile pursuit. In the current economic downturn, we need to focus on other added-value elements to highlight the centrality of the library to university life, beyond the purchase of new resources. Thinking more creatively about new tailored forms of information literacy will help us offer more to our users without emptying the library coffers.

THE NEED TO PROMOTE

However, any efforts to scan and identify shifts in education and develop new information literacy programmes will be in vain if we do not also raise awareness of what we have newly developed. It is imperative that we deliver the message that we are developing new information skills sessions through different communication channels, so that it is successfully received by academics and students. Schmidt contends that 'promoting the service is a vital component of service delivery'.³⁵ Our promotional messages should convey to our users how the new additional information literacy offerings are different from previous offerings. Furthermore, these messages should always be branded, to emphasise the library's role in their production. Apart from spreading these messages effectively, we should also be concerned with how memorable the content of the message is, or what Gladwell calls 'stickiness': the memorability of the message, and whether or not it can create change and 'spur someone into action'.³⁶

We also need to promote new information literacy sessions to convey that we are mirroring the shifts in education. Promoting new information literacy sessions will deliver a positive underlying message to our users that the library is on the cutting edge and is actively anticipating changes within the university. With more tailored information literacy we have a better chance of remaining a relevant resource in our users' mindsets.

Promotion can also be used to showcase how information literacy benefits the student. Information literacy contributes greatly to lifelong learning and helps to equip the student for the workplace. This is important in a context where more and more universities are recognising that the student experience should go beyond simple knowledge-acquisition skills. Graduates need to be more than subject experts. Treleaven and Voola note that 'for some time now, commissioned reports into higher education have highlighted that discipline-specific knowledge is not sufficient for graduate employability'.³⁷ If more varieties of tailored information literacy are available for the students at third level, students and their future workplaces will benefit.

The liaison librarian can promote new tailored information literacy services at different levels. Just a few ideas are listed below.

Promoting in practical terms

- Design a poster for display in the library to explain the kinds of support the library provides and display signs in information skills rooms and offices visited by academics or students, explaining how the library delivers support.
- Provide information on support models on liaison librarian library web pages.
- Highlight new tailored sessions at library induction sessions for new staff and include information on library support in packs for new academics.
- Create a podcast on varieties of library skills support that can sit on the library website.
- Disseminate clear messages about the short- and long-term benefits for students on pages of the library website that are known to have high visitation or on take-away book marks or guides at reference query desks.

Promoting at a personal level

- Raise information literacy as an agenda item through 'personal selling' at school committees, and meetings with schools and in one-on-one appointments with staff.³⁸
- Send refresher mail shots or e-mails to academics converting traditional lecture modules to new modules.
- Determine what the key teaching and learning issues are for the academics and then discuss ideas for a tailored information literacy session that might be able to address these issues.
- Find out who the early-adopter academics in the school are, in other words those who like to try the latest innovations. Collaborate with these innovators on a tailored session. If this is implemented successfully, other academics in the school may then follow suit.

Promoting at a strategic level

- Demonstrate how varieties of information literacy sessions align with the teaching and learning objectives and policies in the university and show how a tailored library session can deliver lifelong learning skills, create self-directed graduates and improve student competency in professional life.
- Report on the strong benefits they deliver to students and use positive comments from student feedback forms as persuasive testimonials.
- Publish successful tailoring cases in papers or posters at academic or educational conferences.

In conclusion, higher education is changing and the needs of students in the third-level environment are continually evolving. Being core to the academic community means providing relevant services that cater to this shift in education. Liaison librarians need to keep scanning emerging teaching and learning trends and to remain in tune with educational shifts by designing relevant learning sessions for students in the future. The tailored information literacy sessions should be a product of collaboration with schools, senior management and colleagues, should be beneficial to students and should reflect institutional aspirations. It is imperative that liaison librarians become experts at promoting any new information skills sessions they devise to their respective schools. To promote effectively, the liaison librarian needs to gain a better understanding of academics and students, their needs and motivations, and then act on these factors to highlight the benefits of information skills at practical, personal and strategic levels.

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Online information skills tutorials: Southampton Solent University reviews its approach



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BACKGROUND

At the start of 2007, the online information skills tutorials provided by Southampton Solent University's library were reviewed to evaluate their relevance regarding content, competencies covered and whether technology was being used effectively to enhance student engagement and accommodate different learning styles.

INFORM-e

Since 2002, the university has offered an online information skills package called INFORM-e. These tutorials were developed by one of the information librarians. They were based on a constructivist approach and a belief that subject-focused content would best engage students.¹ Therefore, the tutorials were developed around a number of key topics (see Figure 1).

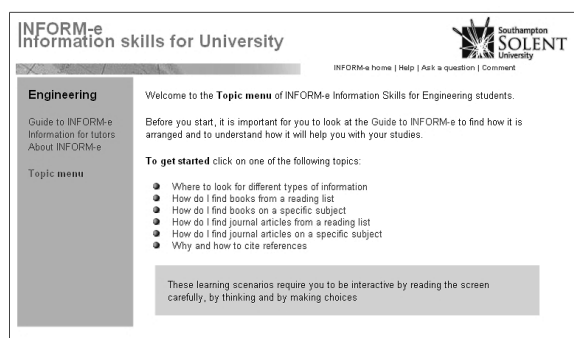


Figure 1. Example of an INFORM-e tutorial menu

The six tutorials were duplicated and customised with subject-specific examples for each main subject area, resulting in 125 tutorials. Maintaining them became a time-consuming exercise.

Initially, INFORM-e was well publicised to academics and students. Usage statistics suggested that tutorials that were embedded in induction activities received the most use, although the initial figures seemed reasonable across most subjects. However, concerns had been raised regarding the relevance of the tutorials for the range of course-delivery modes on offer, such as blended learning.

REVIEW

At the time of the review, the university was inviting bids for Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) projects. These had to be collaborative in nature across faculties and services, to support student learning and to relate to the university's strategic-development intentions. The review project met these criteria: several departments within the learning and information service (LIS) would collaborate on any new tutorials; improved delivery and content would enhance the students' learning experience; and, by utilising technology, the tutorials could help meet the university's requirement to develop flexible learning opportunities. A bid for funding was successful and a project team was established.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature was reviewed to identify the main issues affecting online information skills tutorials.

As several authors outline – for example Smith and Presser,² Mulherrin et al.,³ Donnelly et al.,⁴ Yi⁵ and Dewald⁶ – there is a consensus regarding the range of skills such tutorials should cover. These included core competencies in relation to searching, locating, evaluating and using information. Tutorials may also cover internet searching skills and accessing electronic resources,⁷ as well as understanding plagiarism and referencing.⁸

The need to support diverse student needs and learning styles through the delivery of online tutorials was identified. This can offer flexible learning options for students regardless of where, or how, they are studying.⁹

There is ambiguity as to whether online tutorials should cover generic skills or be subject-specific. Those advocating customisation argue that

subject- or assignment-tailored tutorials are most relevant to students.¹⁰ Others suggest that generic tutorials can be effective if properly designed and that students will still engage with them even if they're not subject-specific.¹¹ There are also arguments for making tutorials assessed.¹²

There is a clear need to consider pedagogic principles alongside technological developments when creating tutorials.¹³ Adhering to web-design guidelines was also advocated to ensure that tutorials are effective.¹⁴

Another area of consensus between commentators, including Smith and Presser,¹⁵ Zhang¹⁶ and Dewald,¹⁷ is that online tutorials are noted for their ability to facilitate active learning. Several activities that can foster interaction have been highlighted, such as quizzes.

The literature provided an overview of key issues. This was supplemented by a review of several tutorials created by other university libraries to generate practical ideas for approaches to navigation, layout and content.

STUDENT RESEARCH

Feedback from students on INFORM-e was sought to identify what they liked and disliked. Although only 50 students participated, many clear messages emerged. The feedback covered several main issues:

Relevance of the tutorials

- 76% of students who had received training from a librarian felt they would use INFORM-e in future.
- 86% of those who hadn't had training would use it in future.
- 82% would use INFORM-e to help with their next assignment. Those who would not gave several reasons:
 - they already possessed information skills
 - the tutorials were not easy to use or were dated
 - they would seek support from other sources.

Ease of use and navigation

- Some found that INFORM-e provided clear objectives and instructions and was easy to follow; others suggested it was 'initially confusing'.
- 98% found the tutorial content easy to understand although the comments were contradictory:

- 'Clear language used, clear instructions and easy to follow guide.'
- 'The language is clear, but NOT very easy to follow.'
- 90% felt the navigation was effective, though some suggested there were too many links to follow.
- General comments emphasised the need to improve navigation, layout and visual aids.

Effectiveness of activities

- Opinions on INFORM-e's activities were mixed:
 - 'They give you full, practical examples.'
 - '... provides information at right level of detail.'
 - 'It was a little too preschool.'

Features online tutorials should offer

- Videos to cater for visual learners were suggested (though some felt text was sufficient).
- Students had mixed opinions on the value of the activities:
 - 'If we have not learnt to digest simple information in text form without puzzles maybe a degree is beyond us.'
 - '... learn more when it's fun.'
- 48% wanted assessment.
- 74% felt tutorials should both cover general skills *and* be tailored to different courses.

A recurring and significant comment was that students were not aware of the tutorials and recommended that we promote them.

Students were also asked to rank various information skills in order of importance; this highlighted the skills to cover in the development of online tutorials:

- 1 finding quality information
- 2 referencing
- 3 using the library catalogue
- 4 evaluating information
- 5 using search engines
- 6 finding journal articles
- 7 identifying search terms
- 8 browsing the shelves.

Although differences in students' existing information-skills attainment may account for some of the variations in comments, the feedback had a tangible impact on our decision to create new tutorials rather than update and maintain INFORM-e. The Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) funding would therefore be utilised to develop new tutorials, making use of technological developments and offering support to a

range of students with varied learning styles and experiencing various modes of course delivery.

REDESIGN

A new set of tutorials covering information skills (or 'research skills', as 78% of students called them) was proposed. Early decisions included whether to develop the tutorials as another website or embed them in the VLE, making use of Moodle software. The VLE was chosen because it offered several advantages:

- Students were familiar with accessing it for course information and resources.
- The tutorials may be regarded as a university resource rather than a library initiative.
- Moodle was relatively straightforward to use.
- Student usage could be tracked and quizzes used for assessment.
- Lecturers could embed particular tutorials within teaching materials.

CONTENT

The new tutorials focussed on generic core competencies, influenced by the literature and student feedback, and were designed to be relevant to students across all courses, They covered:

- referencing
- devising effective searches
- identifying appropriate information sources
- evaluating sources
- effective internet searching.

This generic approach represented a move away from some theories underpinning INFORM-e; however, the proposal was to enable individual librarians to develop subject-specific tutorials for particular skills they felt should be covered, once the new tutorials were established. Devising the generic tutorials was the project group's first task. The next stage would be to create tutorials on general library resources, such as searching the catalogue and navigating the library's electronic resources.

Devising easy, logical navigation and simple content for the tutorials was a primary concern. Ideally, the tutorials would offer flexible navigation paths or the option to view selected, relevant sections as required. Careful structuring of the tutorials and the menu system achieved this aim. Optional activities were developed, while a quiz at the start and end of certain tutorials allowed students to assess improvements in their understanding upon completion of the tutorial.

A WIDER PROJECT

Shortly after the first tutorials had been developed, TQEF funding was awarded for a broader project investigating online support for general academic skills such as writing and presentation skills: FLAGS (flexible learning academic and graduate skills). As the new information skills tutorials complemented these wider aims, the library project was subsumed into FLAGS.

Staff from the e-development centre (eDC) and the learning technology unit (LTU) joined the project. The LTU's Moodle expertise was of great assistance, particularly in the development of quizzes and games, and eDC became involved in developing a range of videos and images to accompany the tutorials.

SUCCEED@SOLENT IS BORN

The need for a new, overarching name for the project was recognised – one that would create the right branding and image while enticing students to use the tutorials. A large proportion of the TQEF funds was assigned to marketing, so it had to be effective and to create a positive impression: succeed@solent was chosen as the branding for all tutorials.



Figure 2. The 'succeed@solent' homepage [accessed 10 March 2009]

Each subsection of tutorials had its own identity. The new information skills tutorials were rebranded as 'succeed@research'. Within each section, individual tutorials were prefixed with 'How to' – for example, 'How to succeed@referencing'.

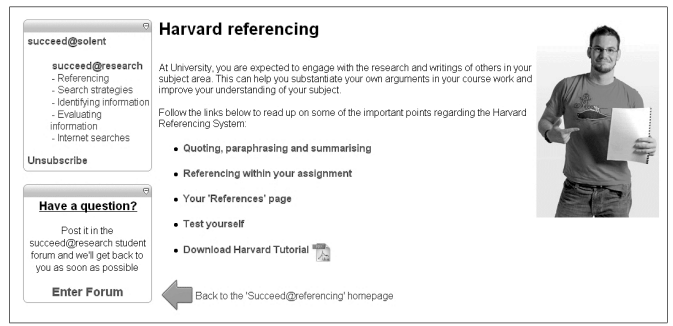


Figure 3. The 'How to succeed@referencing' tutorial page [accessed 10 March 2009]

succeed@solent was ready to go live with pilot tutorials for the start of the 2008 academic year.

PROMOTION

Student feedback had highlighted the importance of ongoing promotion, so various approaches were adopted:

- The VLE provides a direct link to succeed@solent to all students when they log in.
- Posters, flyers, news items and a large advertisement on the university portal have been utilised.
- Librarians actively promote succeed@research to students during face-to-face information skills training.
- The library portal carries a direct link to succeed@research.
- A promotion week was held to raise awareness.

Several academics have positively engaged with succeed@solent. Some have incorporated quizzes into lectures; others have requested access for students prior to enrolment as a means of enhancing their basic skills before they start university. This clearly indicates that there was a need for such tutorials, providing support across the range of skills students require for their studies.

The effectiveness of the promotion will be measured by a review of usage statistics in the summer of 2009; current figures suggest that approximately 1,800 students are enrolled on succeed@research, six months after going live.

REVIEW

After the success of the student research for the INFORM-e review, a similar event was held to gather feedback on succeed@solent. This feedback highlighted a few areas to refine but, overall, it indicated that the tutorials are meeting the real needs of students.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that new developments in technology and the delivery of higher education to increasingly diverse student populations will demand an ongoing evaluation of how online information skills tutorials are delivered. Our review of INFORM-e identified underlying principles of web design and essential content that should be adhered to, while highlighting that technology and user needs and expectations move on. Therefore, it is evident that succeed@solent will require ongoing monitoring to ensure it is relevant and effective – or it will need to face a redesign itself in a few years.

For more details on the succeed@solent project please contact Steve Rose, deputy university librarian (learning resources and academic skills), Southampton Solent University (e-mail: steve.rose@solent.ac.uk; tel: 02380 319342).

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Information literacy on the move



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INTRODUCTION

My brief was to develop a more formal information literacy (IL) programme for our higher education students at Middlesbrough College (MC): some elements were to be in place in September 2008 and the rest by January 2009, when we would receive a second cohort of students. Previously we have tried to give every student, regardless of course level, an online induction (at differentiated levels) to the learning resources centre (LRC), with more in-depth sessions on topics such as referencing, internet use, use of Blackboard, specific databases and so on being encouraged and done on an ad hoc basis at the request of the lecturers.

Until last summer Middlesbrough College was based on four campuses; there was variation in content and delivery; and the only 24x7 access to IL topics provided was through basic articles included on our wiki. Many of the part-time students on the higher education courses could only attend odd sessions and not the complete range we offered. The need for more IL training was further reiterated at a staff-development session that my colleague and I attended in March 2008, at our local university, the University of Teeside, with whom we run our higher education courses. Now we have moved into a purpose-built single site and we needed a more formal (and therefore consistent) programme, accessible through Blackboard, allowing all students to work at their own pace in their own time.

WHAT DO OTHERS DO?

To research the topic, my plan was to read around the subject on familiar and trusted websites (in order to gain a better feel for the subject), to learn what was expected from an IL programme and

to pick up on references to expand my research further. I also decided to e-mail a professional discussion list I belong to, to find out:

- What do other colleges and universities do?
- What information do they cover and in what depth?
- How successful are they?

A third strand was to ask the lecturers at MC to say what they would like to see on the programme. To get their views I conducted a brief questionnaire using SurveyMonkey that ran for a month in June 2008.

From the responses I received from people on the discussion list, I was able to see various examples of what was available and compare them, not only against each other and my own ideas of what I thought should be included but also against SCONUL's seven pillars, my assumption being that these would have been the criteria used to base many of the other IL programmes around.

FINDINGS

My findings from this exercise were as follows.

Most online tutorials are timed at between 20 and 60 minutes, with some of the longer ones broken down into timed sections.

Most cover the following 'pillars':

- recognise a need for information
- construct strategies for locating information
- locate and access information
- compare and evaluate information obtained from different sources
- organise, apply and communicate information to others in ways appropriate.

There are varying degrees of animation and interaction on the modules and they usually include some level of formative or self-assessment. Nobody mentioned the success rates of the tutorials.

From the SurveyMonkey questionnaire, it was determined that the main reason for not booking any IL sessions was lack of time and that more interactivity would improve sessions.¹

WHAT WE DECIDED TO DO

From my findings it was decided that a series of short tutorials should be made, covering LRC ori-

entation, how to use the online catalogue and how to access the most popular databases, with more complex issues such as referencing to be covered at a later stage.

Due to the move, the LRC was restructured and was merged with the e-learning team. This was a blessing as it meant we had instant access to expert help in the form of e-learning manager Fiona Jennings, who is one of our biggest advocates and a very enthusiastic team member. Now that we had Fiona on board, we started to discuss what form the tutorials would take.

Originally we had thought about an audio tour and a virtual tour of the LRC. However, after discussing this at length it was decided that we would end up duplicating work and instead decided to do a vodcast. This was going to be our priority tutorial, as it could be used to orientate users during induction. Sadly, by the time we had everything physically in place we had ran out of time to do it. After a manic first term in our new LRC, it has been put on hold until this summer because we will be reorganising and I did not want to waste staff time.

We have now turned our attention to the online catalogue and the databases, in an attempt to provide something that will be useful to the users for the remainder of this academic year. The idea of screencasts was something that caught my imagination, having read a recent article about them. I took my idea to Fiona to see if we already had the technology available to produce them. She pointed me in the direction of ActivStudio, the software we use with our interactive whiteboards, and Audacity, a free open-source audio editor and recorder package. Again, as with our vodcast, Fiona is hugely supportive and eager to try something new.

Over the past few weeks we have spent time practising. This has involved trying to perfect a smooth technique of moving through the images we want to capture at a pace that is not too fast to take in but not so slow that the users will lose interest, preparing and recording a script in tandem with the images. We are now in a position to record them properly.

It is intended that we should start off by doing screencasts of how to use the online catalogue, to access Athens and to use DawsonEra (the e-books system), as all will tie into the promotion drive we are getting ready for our e-books. If this is success-

ful, we will roll it out to other appropriate areas of our IL programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From my experience of this project I would advise anyone undertaking a similar programme to:

- include animation or moving images for visual impact
- try to include interaction and/or some kind of self-assessment to reinforce learning
- do it in bite-size chunks, so that it is easy for students to dip in and out as their needs dictate and also so that it holds their interest
- consult with your e-learning experts to see what resources you already have to produce the tutorials with
- avoid trying to do it when you are moving into a new building! The time element is always going to be a big issue for any project and in this case we just managed to open with all our basic services in place, let alone new projects!

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The University of the West of England (UWE) Library, based at the Frenchay campus, has had, for several years, self-issue machines available to users and 24-hour opening. These developments were implemented to enhance the service to our users by responding to demands from students to have library access throughout the evening and night. To enable 24-hour opening we needed to provide as many facilities as possible to users during the period when the library is staffed by university security officers only, and so we have been keen to develop a self-service culture. Ideally we would like to enable students, and academic staff, to self-issue, place a hold, look up items on the library catalogue, renew and search electronic resources. This is where roving comes into its own, although, as we show below, it needs to be done the right way to engage library staff and really help users.

REASONS TO ROVE

There had been a feeling for some time that roving would be an improvement to our service; indeed, roving had been attempted at UWE several times in the past. At one point a librarian based at the enquiry desk would march off with a 'Can I help you?' clipboard, but this petered out because they didn't seem to find any demand for this service, yet at the same our collection assistants consistently report that they are approached by students while they are shelving. There's nothing like having a book in your hand to mark you out as

one of the librarians in student eyes, and perhaps the clipboard was too scary!

More recently staff working as part of the service-desk team were encouraged to 'rove the queue' and invite students out of the queue to use the self-service machines. Unfortunately technical issues, coupled with students not always knowing their PIN, quickly led to staff feeling very silly and unwilling to subject themselves or the students to this activity.

PLANNING

When we decided to reintroduce roving we knew a different approach would be needed. Following attendance on CILIP's 'roving with a purpose' course, visits were made to universities where staff were roving successfully. We decided quite quickly that we would ask library assistants and senior library assistants to rove; our professionally qualified staff tended to have less flexibility and would be more difficult to rota due to faculty commitments and many meetings. We also felt that it should be a voluntary activity initially; a few enthusiastic rovers would be much more likely to convince reluctant rovers than trying to make everyone participate. Armed with lots of new ideas we set about introducing the idea to staff.

The first step was to have a no-pressure question-and-answer session. An e-mail was sent to all library assistants and senior library assistants inviting them to come to an informal coffee-time meeting where they could learn more about a new way of helping students. Describing roving in this way and making the meeting informal was really important in setting the tone for what we wanted to achieve: a group of willing and enthusiastic rovers.

PREPARATIONS

After the meeting 23 out of 37 library assistants and senior library assistants signed up to attend the training. Like the meeting, this was kept very informal and was done in smaller groups. We weren't really sure what the rovers would be asked about so we wanted to start with basic directional help and then we planned to build in more training as the term went on, depending on what the rovers felt they needed.

We started the training sessions by asking each participant what they most feared being asked. Overwhelmingly the staff were worried about

Pharos (our printing system) and memory sticks, so we went through the whole process of crediting an account, sending documents to print and printing them at a print release station. Similarly we looked at memory sticks and talked through some basic troubleshooting. All our library assistants and senior library assistants have had library catalogue training and had been introduced to the library portal: UWEelibrary. We emphasised that if a rover doesn't know how to help, it is fine to take a student to the enquiry desk but that they should take the student and hand over the enquiry. Quite often rovers will stay to hear the answer too.

After the training each rover received a folder full of 'how-to' guides and notes, plus campus and library maps. Rovers can customise these and are welcome to take them roving with them if they like. We also have a master copy at the reception desk.

We decided not to mark rovers out in any way except insisting that they wear their staff ID badge on a blue lariat, which is distinct from the red worn by other UWE staff. We also considered using walkie-talkies to contact rovers but felt this would bring too much noise pollution on quiet floors. This is something we might investigate further in the future as we still feel that being able to contact the rovers would be helpful.

ROVING

We began roving on 29 September 2008. This was great because the new students had all arrived and needed lots of beginners' help so the rovers didn't feel too worried that the students would know more than they did. From the beginning the rovers were coming back from their shifts with really positive comments: 'I love roving', said one senior library assistant. It was the first time a lot of these staff had experienced the little job-well-done glow librarians are used to feeling all the time when they do enquiry-desk duties.

We held a couple of feedback sessions to find out how things were going and whether more training is needed, but the basic level of training seems to have been sufficient. The most common type of question is about locating items on the shelves. It's continued to do quite well; we've adjusted the rota so that rovers start at the same time as service-desk shifts to make them feel more a part of the desk team. There have also been times when rovers report that the floors are very quiet and there isn't a lot to do: staff find this a bit uncom-

fortable when they have plenty of work at their desks, so we've responded to this by allowing rovers to return to their offices for a while at quiet periods, but more work could be done in devising a checklist of activities like tidying workspaces, putting books on bay-end trolleys, tidying trolley parks and checking information-spinners.

Interestingly we have had increased queues at the service desk because students come to ask a question and the staff know the answer and are confident about answering so they no longer want to send students to the enquiry desk. Other staff have reported an increase in the number of questions they are getting while they are walking between offices. We take both of these as positive indicators that staff are feeling comfortable helping students and want to help, and that students are getting used to the idea that if they approach someone they will get some support. The number of queries at the enquiry desk has not been affected so we feel rovers are probably helping students who would not have asked and would have continued to struggle.

THE FUTURE

We are implementing RFID this summer (2009) and removing our service desk completely. This will accompany a shake-up of our services, how we offer them and the staffing model we use. Roving will be a key part of this and we will use the summer to refresh training and add in some optional modules on laptops and the law collection. Plus we will be training the library assistants who haven't been involved in roving so far, as they are now interested in joining in. We need to do some more work on investigating the use of pagers so that we can contact rovers to come to the desk and take someone to locate a book, for example, and we intend to come up with a list of tasks that rovers could be doing when things are a little quiet.

Our top tips for getting your staff roving:

- 1 Find the right model for your staff. We approached roving in a casual, low-pressure way because we felt this would work best at UWE – ask yourself what would work for your library.
- 2 Empower your staff. By addressing people's fears in the training our staff felt much more capable of helping students. One of the most positive aspects of roving is empowering library staff to help users with a number of

queries, giving them the opportunity to feel they can spend time with a user at the same time as developing themselves.

- 3 Get your timing right. Starting at the beginning of term means rovers are likely to encounter basic enquiries first, which helps to build their confidence.
- 4 Be flexible. It might not be perfect right away – we've adjusted things a bit as we've gone along.
- 5 Try it! Although we had always believed in roving we needed to find the right model before it worked. Don't be disheartened if you do have to try a few different approaches. We have now found an approach that works for us and it is a success.

REFERENCE

- 1 Collections assistants: these are a team of five staff who work four-hour shifts each day. They do shelving and help with returned material at the service desk, as well as a variety of other tasks.

ASSISTing you online: creating positive student experiences at the University of Wolverhampton



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The University of Wolverhampton launched ASSIST, its virtual reference service, in November 2006. Since then, learning centre staff have provided online interactive help with over 3,500 enquiries. The impact of the service is currently being evaluated as part of the university's commitment to 'creating positive student experiences'.

VIRTUAL REFERENCE

The term 'virtual reference' can be used for any electronically mediated enquiry service but now more often refers to synchronous chat. Such services developed from the emerging call centres of the late 1990s, and have been offered by increasing numbers of academic and public libraries in the United States and elsewhere over the last ten years. British public libraries have co-operated in operating the 'Enquire' service since 2005. In 2002, some UK universities participated in a project with OCLC (the Online Computer Library Center) to trial their QuestionPoint software for running an asynchronous e-mail-based service,¹ but few went on to use the online chat facility. By 2006, only a handful of UK academic institutions had experimented with virtual reference, and the University of Wolverhampton was therefore one of the first to give its students the opportunity to chat online to a librarian. Using QuestionPoint and staffed by librarians and assistants, ASSIST now operates for sixty hours per week during term time. (See Figure 1.)

WHY CHAT?

Virtual reference provides our students with an alternative means of contact, seeking to make learning and information services (LIS) more accessible and approachable. Students can contact us from wherever they are – at home, at work and even on holiday – as long as they have an internet connection. ASSIST is open late into the evening, after our learning centre helpdesks have closed.

When we started the service, we had particular groups of students in mind who might benefit, those:

- living at a distance from university
- balancing work and study
- with caring responsibilities
- with disabilities
- with hearing or other communication difficulties
- on placement, such as nursing or teaching.

We were also aware that some students might be intimidated by the library environment and reluctant to ask questions at the enquiry desks. Virtual reference would provide anonymity, an informal environment and a risk-free way to seek help. In addition, we felt that online chat would blend with our other electronic services, providing a coherent virtual experience for students and helping to promote our electronic resources.

We have used a variety of methods for promoting the service, including posters, leaflets, logobugs and pens, but we realise that the most important way to reach our target groups is to create a strong web presence and to have simple access into the service. Last year OCLC introduced a 'Qwidget' (see Figure 2), which could be placed on any web page to provide a quicker and easier way in to chat. This has been very successful and has increased usage of ASSIST. We are hoping to raise the ASSIST profile still further in a current project to redesign the LIS website. Learning centre staff have been enthusiastic advocates of the service, not just to students but also to academic staff. As well as telling their students about the service, many lecturers have used it themselves and found it a convenient way of accessing help at home or at their desks.

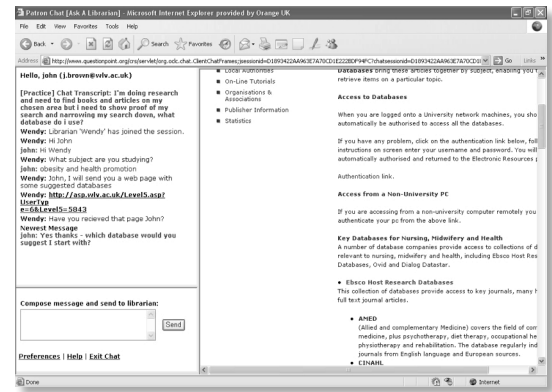


Figure 1. The user's view of an ASSIST chat

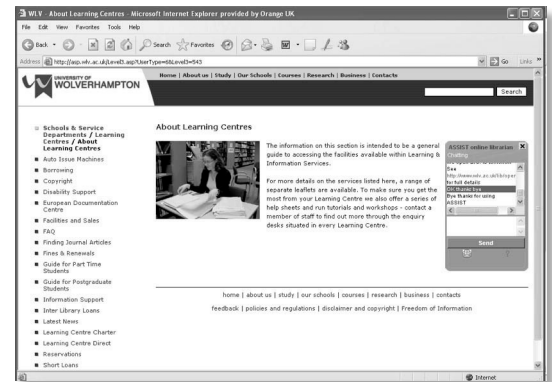


Figure 2. The 'Qwidget' (far right): an alternative way to chat

EVALUATION

A key concern throughout the two-year development phase of ASSIST, and also now that it is embedded, is about how we assess whether we are doing a good job. What criteria are appropriate for judging the success of the service? How can we tell if we are reaching the people we set out to help?

QuestionPoint provides three facilities to help with evaluation of the service:

- transcripts of all completed chats available online
- an exit survey, to get a quick response from our patrons at the end of their chats
- a range of statistical information.

Monitoring of chat transcripts was an important way of assessing the quality of the service in the early months, and allowed us to identify effective techniques and to advise against unhelpful practices. This was controversial, as librarians were not used to their enquiry work being closely inspected. However, as time has gone on, we have seen the positive benefits of using transcripts to share knowledge and good practice, and to assist

collaboration in helping students. Some librarians were also alarmed by the exit survey, which sent an e-mail to the librarian with immediate feedback from the student, but once we realised that this was almost always positive, and often included an appreciative personal comment, a QuestionPoint e-mail became the affirmative high point of the day!

We have made some use of the extensive statistics provided by QuestionPoint. However, we have avoided setting quantitative targets for the service, and have preferred to focus on achieving a steady increase in usage. This is sometimes difficult to judge because of fluctuation in demand during the academic year, as can be seen in Figure 3, but the general pattern is one of year-on-year growth. It is important to continue to promote the service to new students, to improve its visibility on the university website and to keep up our high service standards, to ensure that growth is maintained.

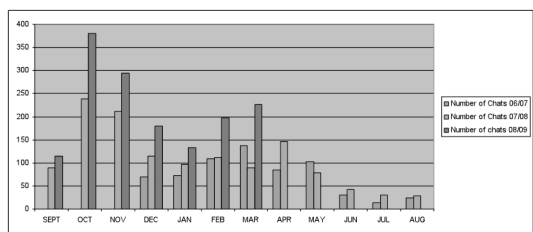


Figure 3. Numbers of ASSIST chats per month, December 2006 – April 2009

I conducted a more extensive evaluation of the service in 2007, as part of an MSc project.² This involved a detailed analysis of chat transcripts, a follow-up survey of ASSIST users, an LIS staff questionnaire and interviews with librarians, with the aim of comparing results from the different methods and arriving at a strategy for continuing evaluation of the service. The work of Marie Radford in the United States was inspirational here,³ and she has since worked with Lynn Silipigni Connaway on the international 'Seeking synchronicity' study on evaluating virtual reference services.⁴ It was clear that ASSIST users had a very positive view, and particularly valued the ease, speed and convenience of the service and the friendly response of librarians. Librarians themselves were more cautious about the impact of ASSIST, generally feeling that online chat was necessarily inferior to face-to-face enquiry. The analysis of transcripts suggested that there was room for improvement in chat technique and in the quality of answers, but comparison with the user survey pointed to the fact that the chat experience was valued on a more subtle interpersonal

level, and that this could compensate for technical shortcomings. There was evidence of a 'wow' factor: students were impressed simply by the fact that we offered such a service. Did this point to a concern that, once online chat became taken for granted, quality issues would come more to the fore? While the study provided real grounds for confidence in the value of the ASSIST service to students, clearly we could not rest on our laurels and should continue to seek improvement. Recommendations from the evaluation project included regular user surveys, a continuing programme of analysis of sample chats and further research, with student input, into good chat technique. Unfortunately, with the termination of the project phase and the lack of further funding, we have been unable to carry out formal chat analysis, and now do little more than a quick check for any obvious problems. As yet, it has not been possible to carry out more research. This would be an area where collaboration with other universities could be helpful, to produce guidelines for etiquette and technique suited to the UK higher education environment. A useful beginning has been made in pooling UK virtual reference experience and expertise in academic institutions by the 'virtual enquiry project' conducted by Edinburgh Napier University and Carnegie College, Dunfermline.⁵

We have conducted two further user surveys, in the spring of 2008 and 2009. These have been a very valuable way of measuring user satisfaction, and of gaining an understanding of students' perceptions of ASSIST.

ASSIST SURVEY 2009

This year's survey covered chats during the period 1 February to 21 March. There were 413 chats altogether:

- 115 conducted using the Qwidget (no e-mail address captured)
- 298 remaining, with 199 distinct e-mail addresses
- 4 undeliverable e-mail addresses
- 195 students surveyed.

The survey was conducted electronically using Surveyor software. Students were sent an e-mail asking them to participate and providing a link to the survey. As an incentive, we offered a prize draw for a voucher from a well-known bookshop to those students who provided an e-mail address. The survey was otherwise anonymous.

Although reminders were sent, and the deadline extended, the response rate was disappointing, with only 73 complete replies received (37%). In previous years, we had achieved a 50% rate. This might reflect the reduced time available to me this year to monitor the progress of the survey, and also the difficulties of timing the survey so that students were able to complete it before the Easter break. It may also be a sign that the 'wow' factor is reducing: ASSIST is now a part of our regular service and generates less comment.

I am also aware that more than a quarter of our chats were conducted using the Qwidget, and we have no way of contacting those students. The Qwidget provides a quicker and easier way to chat, but is potentially inferior in several ways:

- The librarian does not usually know the user's name, so cannot use it in chat (rule number one of friendly chat etiquette!).
- Web pages cannot be 'pushed' – web links do not automatically display in the user's browser.
- We do not usually obtain an e-mail address, so the user does not receive a transcript and we cannot follow-up with further information.
- The chat appears in a small box and can be difficult to read.

Without student feedback, it is impossible to know if these factors are significant or whether users accept the limitations as a trade-off against convenience. Chat transcript analysis would provide a way of comparing Qwidget chats with others, and ensuring that the service provided is of a similar quality. This might point to a need for additional training for librarians in specific techniques for Qwidget chat.

POSITIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCE?

While exercising due caution about the limited response to the survey, can we draw any conclusions from the results? The questionnaire was based on those used in previous years, but with a stronger focus on the way students experience our services. What contribution does ASSIST make to creating a positive student experience, of learning and information services in particular and of the wider university learning environment in general?

As in previous years, the survey provided assurance that we are providing a high-quality service:

- 86% rated the service excellent.

- 97% said they received accurate information and advice.
- 46% received more information and advice than they expected.
- 100% said the chat software was easy to use.
- 100% considered that the librarian was friendly and helpful – 85% said 'very'.

There was space in the questionnaire for optional comments, and I was pleased with the number of respondents who chose to add these, giving insights into the experience of chat from the students' point of view:

'I got the feeling like she had all the time in the world to help me out.'

'She was extremely helpful, chatty and informal, which made me feel comfortable, at ease and free to ask for as much help as I felt necessary.'

'Efficient, but I felt she could have gone into a little more detail with regard to my query.'

'Remained professional even when I proclaimed my love for her when she'd sorted my problem :)'

'Understood my query well (even though I was rambling on a bit).'

One of the new sets of questions for this year was intended to gauge the less immediate effects of ASSIST on student attitudes and behaviour, and brought quite remarkable results. Respondents could answer 'less', 'no effect' or 'more' to each of six descriptions, and many chose the positive option:

- 90% are more likely to use ASSIST again – confirmation of user satisfaction.
- 45% are more likely to ask a librarian for help – presumably now that they know how friendly and helpful we are!
- 19% are more likely to visit the learning centre (and only 4% less likely) – despite librarians' fears that ASSIST would encourage students to stay away.
- 58% are more likely to use electronic resources – reflecting one of the initial objectives of the service.
- 53% are more confident using learning centre services – a positive knock-on effect for LIS as a whole.
- 42% are more confident with studying – ultimately the most pleasing result of all.

Returning to the objectives for the service with which we began the virtual reference project three years ago, does the survey provide evidence that we are reaching those we hoped to help? Of the students who responded to the survey, 91% said that they visited one of the university campuses at least once a week, and 87% said they visited the learning centres (libraries) regularly. While these are large percentages, it is worth noting that 13% of ASSIST users do not use the learning centre on a regular basis, and that one in ten of our users will not be on campus in the course of a week. These students may have had minimal contact with LIS before using ASSIST. In addition to this, there is evidence that we are helping those for whom time is short, and ASSIST provides a much more convenient way of getting help when and where they need it. Two-thirds of our users are at home when they chat to us, while 14% are at work and 5% in halls of residence.

One set of survey questions asked respondents about their choice to use ASSIST rather than face-to-face, phone or e-mail enquiries. Urgency was a strong factor: 47% said that they were at home with an urgent question, while 84% preferred ASSIST to e-mail as it would give an immediate response. 27% commented that it was difficult to get into the learning centre. Some expressed a preference for online chat: 34% said they would rather chat than talk on the phone, while 9% liked to chat online rather than face-to-face, supporting the idea that some prefer the anonymity of chat. Again, respondents made good use of additional comments, which pointed to other factors, such as being at work and unable to use the phone or it being late in the evening. It was also clear that many preferred to use an online service because it integrated with working on the computer; this was presumably a strong factor for the 9% of respondents who had used ASSIST in the learning centre. Here are some of their comments:

'I was at home, finding things difficult, and decided it was the quickest and easiest way.'

'It gave me freedom to ask as many questions as I wanted without any reservations. Face-to-face, I may get the feeling I am wasting the person's time/ asking stupid questions and I would want to get it over with.'

'I was at work, and it's difficult for me to get to the learning centre in the opening times.'

'ASSIST is brilliant in that it supports me [at home] in the environment where I can work best.'
'It was 7pm in the evening and I was 49 miles away.'

'ASSIST allowed me to copy and paste useful links, and I knew all journals sourced for me would be on a transcript sent to my email.'

'I was working on the computer and it enabled me to continue with my work whilst waiting for assistance.'

'ASSIST lets both parties work out together how the problem can be solved.'

IN SUMMARY

Evaluation of the ASSIST service suggests that it performs a valuable role in helping students. There is evidence that it enables LIS to reach more students and to provide more convenient access to enquiry services. This year's survey gives an encouraging indication that ASSIST is contributing to the creation of positive student experiences at the University of Wolverhampton, and bringing benefits in raised confidence and awareness of resources and services. For ongoing success, we need to ensure that we evaluate the service regularly and effectively, and act on the results, to maintain and improve standards. The introduction of the Qwidget has shown the advantage of continuing innovation, and we should carry on looking for new ways to make our services more easily available and accessible to students.

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Supposing is good, but finding out is better: a survey of research postgraduate students at WIT libraries

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INTRODUCTION

The staff of Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) library service are committed to continuous improvement and to providing quality service for all of the library's users. Part of this commitment involves communicating with our different user groups by means of surveys, with a view to ascertaining their needs and fulfilling their requirements as effectively as possible. A survey of undergraduate students and academic staff was, for example, completed in 2003.¹

Given the strategic importance of fourth-level education to Ireland's economy, the number of research postgraduate students registered at WIT

has increased incrementally in recent years. Based on this, and on a recommendation following on from an audit of the library service to review the borrowing entitlements of postgraduate students at WIT, we had decided by 2008 that a survey of research postgraduate students was now timely. This article describes the background to the survey, its design, development and administration. The results of the survey and proposed actions going forward are also discussed.

BACKGROUND

The library provides a comprehensive physical support framework for research postgraduates in the form of dedicated postgraduate suites (within which individual work spaces are provided) as well as postgraduate meeting and thesis rooms.

In a bid to further support these students, the library also appointed a postgraduate liaison officer in 2005. Her main role is to act as a primary contact or communications vehicle between WIT's postgraduate support unit, the library and the research postgraduate community. The liaison officer participates in a number of postgraduate events across campus, thereby providing the community with a familiar name and face to contact in the library.

While we have long recognised that research postgraduates represent a distinctive group of students with unique research needs, and while many efforts have been made to provide relevant and effective library services for them, this was the first time that a formal survey of the group was undertaken.

PURPOSE OF SURVEY

The main purpose of this survey was to establish contact with research postgraduates in order to gather feedback from these students on their levels of awareness of and satisfaction with the library services most relevant to them. The survey also provided the students with a forum for comments and suggestions, so as to provide us with recommendations for the long-term development of library services for postgraduates.

The services and facilities surveyed represent key aspects of the library service. They include borrowing, inter-library loans, access issues, collections, electronic resources, library website, websites by subject, academic liaison team, information desk and learning support.

METHODOLOGY

The key areas listed above provided the basis for ten general survey categories which, in turn, contained 43 quantitative and qualitative questions, as suggested by library staff responsible for each area. In addition, an initial category on the student profile was included. This contained some preliminary questions in order to elicit the stage of study the respondents were at, their field of research and whether they had completed their undergraduate studies at WIT. As referred to earlier, the final question on the survey asked the respondents for comments or suggestions.

DATA COLLECTION

It was decided early in the development stage to deploy an online or web-based survey methodology. This was done for a number of reasons. The demographic of research postgraduates in WIT is varied. Many are studying part-time. Flexibility and convenience of access are thus key, with the postgraduate support unit recommending e-mail as the preferred, and indeed most practical, mode of contact for research postgraduates.

In addition to this, WIT holds a licence to the commercial software package SurveyMonkey (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>). SurveyMonkey is an online software tool that allows account or licence holders to quickly and easily create anonymous, web-based surveys, composed of a variety of quantitative and qualitative questions from templates available on screen. The availability of these templates ensures consistency of style, colour, text appearance and layout and makes for a professional look and feel.

Each survey automatically generates an e-mail link which, in our case, meant that we could contact all of the research postgraduates within a single e-mail distribution. The e-mail invited students to complete the survey from their web browsers. This method ensured that the survey was not dependent on location and further addressed the need among this grouping for convenience and practicality.

The SurveyMonkey software also provides effective and efficient tools for data analysis. The responses to quantitative or closed questions can, for example, be downloaded in spreadsheet documents for statistical analysis, while the responses to qualitative or open questions can be exported to a word processor for thematic breakdown.

Overall, we consider that for the purpose of the research undertaken SurveyMonkey served its function very well.

CONDUCTING THE SURVEY

It was also decided early in the development stage to survey all members of the research postgraduate community at WIT. In line with Chrzastowski and Joseph (2006), 'a survey of the whole, rather than a sampling method' was selected.² This involved mailing the survey link to all full- and part-time research postgraduates. Prior to this, a draft version of the SurveyMonkey questionnaire was pre-tested among library staff. Feedback was positive.

The survey was mailed to 168 students in total on 27 May 2008. The deadline for completion was 13 June 2008. We felt that this two-and-a-half-week time span allowed sufficient time for students to complete the survey. Students were assured that all replies were voluntary and anonymous.

Although one of the main disadvantages of online surveys relates to a lower response rate than with traditional postal surveys, in the case of this survey the response rate was relatively high. Replies were thus received from 59 students, making for an overall response rate of 35%. This is a satisfactory response rate, which we consider fulfils the main purposes of the survey. As will be outlined in the 'Findings' section below, it represents research postgraduates' levels of awareness and satisfaction with the library services and facilities that are particularly relevant to them. It also provides us with student recommendations for the long-term development of library services for postgraduates.

FINDINGS – DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The main results of the survey are outlined below. Based on Mark Twain's claim that 'Supposing is good, but finding out is better',³ these results are discussed in terms of our assumptions of postgraduates' awareness of and satisfaction levels about library services and facilities, as opposed to their actual awareness and satisfaction levels. As will be outlined below, the results provide 'food for thought' for library projects going forward.

1. Departments

Question 1 asked students to indicate their department at WIT. As we predicted, the majority of respondents (47.4%) are registered in the graduate business and computing, maths and

physics departments. In contrast, the departments of architecture, education, construction and civil engineering and nursing did not provide any respondents.

This division accords with the overall division of research postgraduates at WIT, where the departments of graduate business and computing, maths and physics have the largest number of research postgraduate students, while there are very few research postgraduates registered in the departments of architecture, education, construction and civil engineering and nursing.

2. Borrowing

Research postgraduates may borrow ten long-loan books (for thirty days) and two short-loan books (for two days). We assumed that the students were aware of this quota and wanted to determine if they were satisfied with it. Surprisingly, the majority of the respondents were unaware of their borrowing rights. In a bid to redress this issue, detailed information on borrowing rights has been added to the postgraduate page on the library website. More positively, those who were aware of their borrowing rights expressed general satisfaction.

3. Inter-library loans

The inter-library loans service obtains books and journal articles that are unavailable in WIT libraries from other libraries worldwide. Our assumption that inter-library loans is an essential service for researchers was borne out in the survey results, which reveal that 70% of respondents have availed themselves of inter-library loans. Overall satisfaction levels are very high, with 97% expressing satisfaction with the service. These results are very encouraging, as is the following positive comment, which was included in the comments section of the survey: 'Excellent service, the staff are very pleasant and professional.'

4. Collections

The collections section of the survey explored postgraduates' perceptions of the relevance of the various library collections to their research. Not surprisingly, and in line with the results of the survey recently undertaken by Walton and Harvell in Sussex (2008), the results of our survey also 'confirm the importance of online access to journals and databases'.⁴ Databases and electronic journals were rated 4.61 out of a possible 5. As expected, books were also considered very relevant, with a rating of 3.55. Surprisingly, the research postgraduate students did not rate print journals particularly highly, ranking them at 2.80.

Not surprisingly, audio-visual items were perceived as the least-relevant library collection for researchers, ranking at 2.35.

Students' satisfaction levels for each of the individual collections are consistent with these ratings; however, there is some demand for subscriptions to additional databases. The position is clearly articulated in the following student comment: 'Electronic journals are good in general, but there is a couple we don't have access to which would be helpful.' While we do not expect to be significantly adding to our subscriptions in the short term, raising students' awareness of our existing database collection is high on our agenda for the coming academic year.

5. Webpages

The library website is designed and maintained by a core team of library staff. The website recently underwent a major transformation in a bid to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate. This survey was interested in gauging research students' reaction to the site's new look and feel. The fact that 58.7% judged the site as very user-friendly – the implication being that it is easy to navigate – was positive.

Questions were also asked to gauge usage of the library's websites by subject pages, designed to act as a portal to quality web resources. Although it was determined that only 34.8% of research postgraduates use these pages, this is, on reflection, probably not that surprising since these pages are mainly targeted at undergraduates. In a bid to increase their usage by postgraduates, a link to the pages has recently been added to the postgraduate webpage.

6. Information services

Information services incorporate the information desk and the learning support service. The survey found that 63% of research postgraduates have used the information desk and, according to the following comment, they are satisfied with the service received: 'I think they do a good job ... they are always very helpful.'

In terms of the learning support service, the survey revealed that 82% of the students surveyed are aware of the availability of the library's training programmes on the key research databases. This is a positive finding. When asked if they would be interested in attending organised tutorials, 44% of the respondents expressed interest, while 56% did not. These findings align with our own feelings on research postgraduate training:

that is, that while some students are interested in database training, others regard themselves as self-sufficient in this area.

Despite this, the fact that approximately 80% of the students surveyed did indicate some interest in attending reference-management, inter-library loan and specific database training sessions in the future has provided us with a roadmap for planning library-training sessions in the longer term. These sessions are currently in development and are being piloted among the research postgraduate community.

7. Liaison and communication

WIT libraries academic liaison team is composed of library staff who have been appointed as liaison or communications officers between the library and the individual schools and departments at WIT. As mentioned already, the team includes a research postgraduate liaison officer, who works closely with the postgraduate support unit at WIT. Based on this fact, we would have assumed that the research postgraduates would have been aware of the liaison service. The results of this survey, however, reveal that 63% of the students surveyed are unaware of it.

This suggests a need to review the means by which we communicate with research postgraduates. The point is, indeed, articulated by one of the survey respondents, who recommends 'e-mailing research postgraduates at the beginning of each semester reminding them of the service available'. In line with this suggestion, the results of Walton and Harvell's survey at Sussex led them to also recommend 'transferring resources' into what they describe as 'more successful channels (personal contact, liaison and webpages)'.⁵ As a result of these findings, the research postgraduate liaison officer has in recent months initiated a process of regular e-mail contact with postgraduate students on all library-related issues.

GOING FORWARD

A fundamental concern when conducting any user survey, small-scale or otherwise, is the extent to which the results and recommendations will be used to inform the service in the longer term. Hernon (2000) stresses the importance of keeping promises to change the library service based on the findings of a survey.⁶ At the very least, as was revealed in our survey, a survey is a good way to establish communication between the service and its users by offering them a straightforward

means of providing feedback on issues relevant to them.

As outlined in the 'Findings' section above, despite a lack of awareness of some resources and services, the survey reveals that the research postgraduates at WIT are generally satisfied with the library service. In a bid to increase overall satisfaction levels, we are committed to actively addressing any areas of dissatisfaction that arise and to ensuring that the library service remains relevant for these students into the future.

In relation to this, the following actions are under way. The postgraduate support page on the library website has been updated to include research postgraduate borrowing rights and a link to the websites by subject page. The library learning support team is currently running pilot sessions on endnote, inter-library loans and specific research databases. Regular e-mail contact has also been established between the postgraduate liaison officer and research postgraduate students.

As outlined in the introduction, we are committed to undertaking more detailed, follow-up surveys of all of the library's users, including research postgraduates, in the longer term. Watch this space!

NOTE:

A detailed report from the survey is available at http://library.wit.ie/ResearchSupport/PostgraduateSupport/Pgrad_survey_report_Aug81.pdf.

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Low-cost marketing initiatives at Waterford Institute of Technology libraries



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During the period 2007–2008, Waterford Institute of Technology libraries embarked on a series of low-cost marketing initiatives aimed at enhancing services, heightening the profile of the library and improving our communications with users. These initiatives were a range of simple low-cost schemes that were modest in approach, required little or no direct cost and had a positive impact on our operational environment. In our experience, it is possible for a small to mid-sized institution with little or no marketing expertise or without any great budget (and let's face it, who has at the moment?) to improve library services, to promote Web 2.0, to increase library visibility and to start to build a library brand.

THE 'FAB' CAMPAIGN – FINES AMNESTY ON BOOKS

WIT libraries carried out an inventory of its stock collections in summer 2008. In advance of the inventory and as part-preparation, we commenced a 'fines amnesty on books' campaign. Run over two days, fines on all standard loan items returned were waived, irrespective of overdue date. The campaign was advertised using tradi-

Fines Amnesty on Books Campaign

All Fines will be Waived on
all Overdue Library Books
Returned on

14th & 15th May 2008

(Excluding Shortloans)

tional marketing methods such as word of mouth at customer desks, circulating fliers and posters with the library brand placed throughout the college, as well as web technologies like e-mail, blog posts, RSS and the library website. FAB generated both direct and indirect benefits for the library. In excess of 175 overdue items were returned during the campaign which, using a mean cost of €35 per item, equated to around €6,000 in returned stock, and 97 patrons had fines waived during the amnesty, equating to around €1,500. A simple direct cost/benefit analysis shows a net gain of approximately €4,500, as well as additional overdue stock items retrieved in advance of the stocktake. Indirectly, there was a very strong 'feel-good' factor generated amongst our users and the library received enhanced promotion and goodwill through the marketing campaign.

BOOK AID INTERNATIONAL

In recent years, WIT libraries have, in conjunction with the WIT pastoral service and local business, facilitated the donation of academic textbooks to the developing world through Book Aid International. Each year, the library accumulates large numbers of high-quality textbooks from staff, students and other donors on behalf of the institute and arranges to have them donated and shipped to the relevant development agency. We estimate that over 5,000 textbooks have been dispatched as far afield as Tanzania. The cost of shipping is borne by local industry. In 2009, WIT will facilitate the donation of quality used textbooks to Read International. Obviously a socially construc-

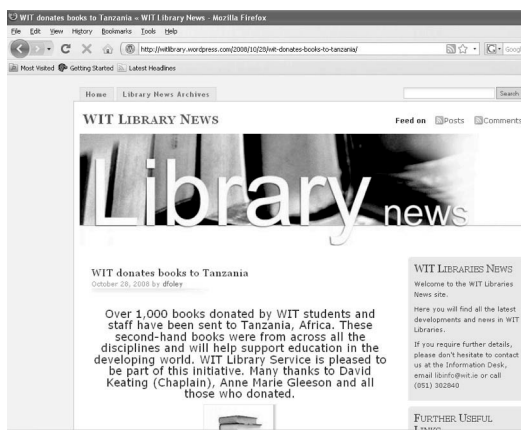
tive thing to do, it also gives the library a positive exposure with the wider community.

WEB 2.0

WIT libraries are no different to many libraries in attempting to embrace and promote Web 2.0 technologies to provide better services to our users. Web 2.0 technologies can be extremely cost-effective in marketing libraries and providing a platform on which to raise profile.

Blogs

We launched our library news web blog (<http://witlibrary.wordpress.com>) in early 2007 using the WordPress platform. This free library news blog has been utilised to advertise new services, databases, events, announcements and all our latest developments and news. The blog is inter-linked with the library website to provide regular updates and can automatically generate RSS feeds for new entries. Users may also sign up to the library news feed.

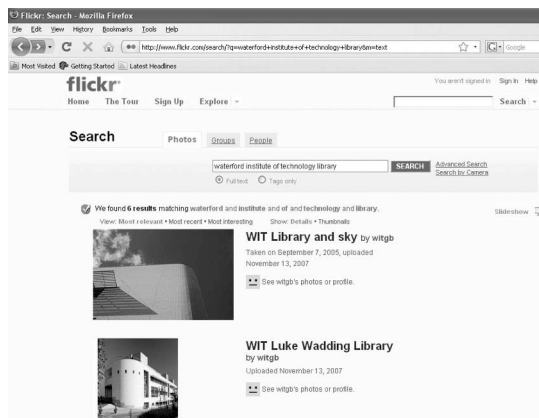


Instant messaging

We also launched a free instant-messaging reference service for our users in spring 2008, enabling real-time chat and reference interaction from anywhere. Our IM service is based on Meebo but there are many such free services which also facilitate interaction with other IM services. Although levels of adoption for this service have not been huge, we regard it as a very useful niche service.

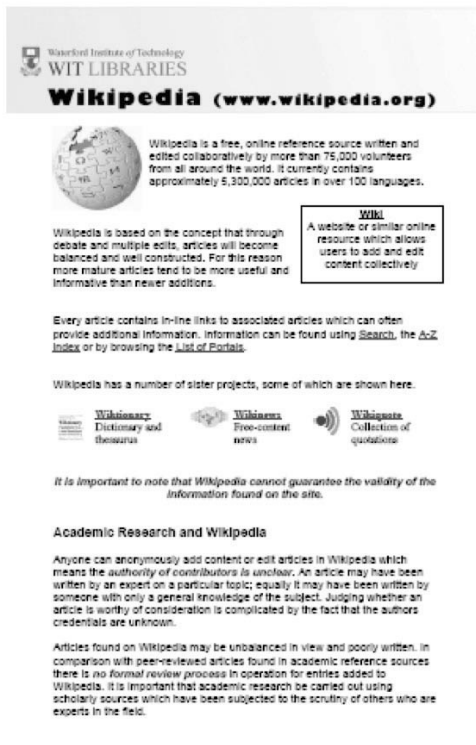
Flickr

We have also recently set up our own Flickr photography account. This is also a free and relatively easy service for anyone with an interest in photography. Flickr can be used constructively to promote the library 'image' and has the potential to give a library increased exposure and to become part of a social online photo-sharing community. There is a vast amount of library-related photography accessible on Flickr.



Web 2.0 guides

WIT has created a number of in-house guides (see <http://library.wit.ie/GettingStarted/Library-Guides>) to assist and inform our users of the potential benefits of web 2.0 social tools. Having long developed and designed our own library help and self-help guides, we have attempted to go beyond the more traditional 'How to search the catalogue' guide and developed a series of Web 2.0 help guides. These include the 'WIT guide to social bookmarking', '... to Google Scholar', '... to Flickr', '... to Wikipedia'. Covering just two pages, these are written and designed in-house, are publically available and contain a concise introduction to the subject with full WIT library branding and contact details.



None of these initiatives required any financial investment or any major expertise whilst enabling the library to position itself in a space which many students now regularly inhabit.

WEBSITE

In late 2007, faced with an evolving client base, new challenges around usability and incorporating more interactive, user-friendly Web 2.0 tools and technologies into our services, WIT libraries made a conscious decision to re-assess its website, <http://library.wit.ie>. Over the course of an eight-week period, WIT libraries re-designed and re-launched the library website. Although the project required many library staff hours and much effort, existing staff expertise and technological infrastructure meant that there were no additional direct monetary costs to the library budget. The new website integrated Web 2.0 qualities such as alternate images, a news blog, RSS feeds, multiple contact options, instant messaging and live chat, social bookmarking and sharing options, snap-shot images and Browsealoud audio options for increased accessibility. Using conventional language rather than library terminology, and moving from deep navigation to quick links and tabs, these changes have resulted in putting the website and catalogue at the centre of our library services. The website overhaul has been very well received, as was confirmed in WIT libraries' summer postgraduate survey of 2008. The website is constantly evolving, and this dynamism has enabled us to market library services more effectively and proactively.

HERITAGE COUNCIL GRANT AND NATIONAL HERITAGE WEEK

In 2008, the library was successfully awarded grant funding from the Irish Heritage Council under the 2008 museum and archives grant scheme. We were awarded €5,000 to partially fund a cataloguing and inventory project for a significant theological, ecclesiastical and law collection, namely the Christ Church Cathedral collection, of which we were recently made custodians. The completed project resulted in the creation of over 800 electronic records and a searchable online index through the existing library catalogue.

During National Heritage Week (August 2008), the library hosted a number of very successful public events. These included the staging of an open week and an exhibition in the special collections room of the library and a series of public lectures from local heritage/history experts. These events were advertised through our own marketing channels but also through the institute's website and local radio and media. We found many retired staff members particularly responsive to the events but also found that awareness

of the collection was very much heightened, and consequently the library and its services. Grant and funding awards provide a great opportunity to raise the profile of a library. Prior to this, we had little experience of grant applications and less of heritage-related or special/archive collections. The grant has permitted us to improve our own expertise and to publicise and increase awareness of our special-collection resources.

INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORY

The library plays a central role in the maintenance and operation of the institutional repository, <http://repository.wit.ie>, launched in 2007. In addition to the obvious accessibility and citation benefits for researchers, the library's profile is directly enhanced via Google Scholar, through the positioning of the library brand and through the role of the library in the academic/repository cycle. The repository is powered using the University of Southampton's free software EPrints 3.

Q-NESS CAMPAIGN

The 'Q-ness quiet study campaign' was unveiled – in an attempt to promote quiet study areas within the library for students – at a particularly opportune time: before the 2008 Christmas exams. 'Q-ness' is a play on the Gaelic word for silence, *ciúnas*. Fliers, posters and blog posts were used to market the campaign. Based primarily on proactive and increased staff presence and strong visual aids, and requiring little financial outlay, the Q-ness campaign was well received by staff and students. During a critical period for library users, Q-ness enhanced the quiet study zones and encouraged more diverse usage of the different learning and group zones within the library.

SIGNAGE

This was a low-cost, relatively modest operational initiative designed to improve the working and aesthetic environment for the user within the library. In addition, we attempted to build the library 'brand' by removing all existing signage and replacing it with a consistent design in more strategic and effective locations, combining visual and text-based messages. In our experience, the old signage had become stale and inconsistent and it lacked impact. Notices, posters, bookmarks, library guides, handouts, bay-ends and signs now all have a consistent library brand/design, completed by our own staff in-house. All contain consistent and key library information relating to web address, contact e-mail and phone numbers.

The library hopes to develop this concept further in summer 2009, with a nod to Leeds Metropolitan University,¹ by zoning the different learning areas in the library by colour and alpha code.

ENGAGING WITH USERS

Open-day stand

In conjunction with the marketing and schools liaison office, the library got directly involved with the annual open day for students and parents of second-level students who had chosen WIT as their first option for third-level education. The library had a stand on the main concourse amongst all the other departments. Library staff took the opportunity to raise awareness about the library and its role on campus. Offering enticements and give-aways – pens, notepads, magnets, chocolates, gadgets (with thanks to some of our commercial suppliers) – the library proved one of the most popular stands on the night. There was a lot of interaction with the public and potential students and this proved to be a very effective and worthwhile platform for raising perceptions about the library. Handouts were limited to short basic facts and figures about the library, effective and easy to digest.

Surveys

We have carried out two wide-ranging surveys over the past few years: one surveying over 1,250 students and staff using traditional questionnaires and the second a specific cohort of 170 post-graduates using SurveyMonkey. Although they are labour-intensive, surveys are an extremely constructive way of marketing the library and its services and of engaging with users to make changes. Both surveys generated internal reports and were published in library literature.

Postgraduate meet and greet

The library hosted an open reception for new postgraduates in autumn 2008. The purpose of this meet-and-greet session was to engage directly with the postgraduate cohort and to familiarise them with some of our staff and library services that are directly relevant to them. The hosting of the reception was one of the outcomes from a previous postgraduate survey (mentioned above). The event cost of €150.00 was negligible and involved fairly low-level targeted advertising such as e-mail, word of mouth, direct invitations, posters, flyers and the library blog. More than 30 postgraduates attended, and library staff met and chatted with students availing themselves of the free tea and coffee and pastries. A short series of quick-fire presentations on library services

and a Q-&-A session followed. Such an event was relatively novel for the library but, considering its success, we hope that this will be the first of many such events across other academic departments and student groups. It is intended to host an open night for our international students later this year.

STAFF PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, IN-HOUSE PUBLICATIONS

Another valuable and underestimated way of marketing the library is through staff publications, networking and involvement in external projects. These can include library staff, both professional and para-professional, publishing or co-publishing articles, presenting at conference/seminars or working on external projects outside of the library. Not only can this ensure that the library has input into projects that may not be directly library-related but it can increase the skill sets of those involved, benefit the projects and raise the profile of the library. Examples of such projects might include workplace partnership, workshops, policy groups, cross-departmental learning and teaching projects and so on. Many staff here at WIT libraries are proactively involved in writing articles for various scholarly journals and have a strong track record of publications. Staff have also delivered presentations at seminars and national conferences and been involved in the professional association's national committees and strategic review groups. Aside from the obvious continuous professional and personal-development benefits for staff themselves, the library's profile can be promoted through its employees' activities. A similarly overlooked area in which libraries can directly and effectively market their services in an informal style is through the wider institutional in-house publications. Such publications are always happy to receive contributions. College rags, e-zines, staff updates and newsletters and other ad hoc publications have a wide internal captive audience and afford a free and timely method of promoting library awareness and communicating information at key times during the year. In the past year, WIT libraries have publicized our services through the main student publication, Grapevine; through the academic research unit publication Research matters; and through the staff newsletter, WITness. This can be a very cost-effective and beneficial marketing route.

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Latest research findings from the RIN



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The Research Information Network (RIN) is entering a busy phase of publishing new research findings in the field of research information.

The first of these to be published is a report on 'E-journals: their use, value and impact' (www.rin.ac.uk/use-ejournals). The study underpinning it was conducted by the Centre for Information Behaviour and the Evaluation of Research (CIBER) at University College London, using deep log analysis of publishers' usage logs as well as data from SCONUL, the Higher Education Statistics Agency and other sources. The report analyses the behaviour of researchers in a sample of UK higher education institutions and disciplines, and explores the relationships between usage, institutional expenditure on electronic journals and research outcomes. There are several sets of findings worth highlighting here. First, e-journals are heavily used and nearly everything that is made available is used.

Second, researchers seek and use information in very different ways. For example, users in research-intensive institutions visit e-journals more but spend much less time per visit, and they are much more likely to enter via gateway sites. Users in government laboratories and in different universities exhibit very different behaviour, even within the same subject. Users are also bypassing carefully crafted discovery systems. Just four months after ScienceDirect's content was opened to Google, a third of traffic to ScienceDirect physics journals came from that route. Few readers use the advanced search functions on publishers' websites.

Third, e-journals represent good value for money. Readers use e-journals well into the night and over the weekend, with nearly a quarter of ScienceDirect use occurring outside the traditional 9-to-5 working day. Researchers and students in

higher education downloaded an estimated 102 million full-text articles in 2006/07, at an average cost of 80p. Journal expenditure correlates with use, with a strong positive correlation between universities' expenditure on e-journals and the volume of downloads of articles per capita.

Finally, per capita journal use and expenditure correlate strongly and positively with research outcomes, such as papers published, numbers of PhD awards and income from research grants and contracts. These results can be modelled to show that increases in downloads are statistically associated with dramatic – but not necessarily causal – increases in research productivity.

The RIN and CIBER are now embarking on a second, qualitative phase of the study to explore these findings further and find out what researchers are doing once they have downloaded their articles. Questions include:

- Does a large amount of use equate with satisfaction?
- Why do users spend so little time online?
- What are the reasons for going to a gateway site?
- Why do very few researchers use advanced searching?
- Why is the use of internal search engines not much more favoured?

Results are expected in early 2010.

Further RIN reports follow in Spring 2009. A new report titled 'Creating catalogues' (www.rin.ac.uk/creating-catalogues) will look at how bibliographic records for all content held by UK academic and research libraries are created and distributed and at how they are utilised by all involved in the supply chain, from the publisher to the final end user.

A short report will follow investigating the UK's share of all research articles published globally (http://www.rin.ac.uk/uk_presence_research). It asks why different sources of bibliometric analysis come up with such different figures for the UK's share, and explains the differences that result from different methodological choices. The conclusions make important recommendations about producing and using bibliometric studies properly and transparently.

In May, the RIN will publish a series of reports on 'barriers to access to research information resources of importance to researchers' (www.rin.ac.uk/barriers-access).

The series will provide quantitative and qualitative analysis on the nature and scale of the barriers and recommendations on the ways in which they might be reduced or overcome. Areas of investigation include the differences in availability of content to different users from the point of view of the institutions and libraries; how institutions manage access to information sources for non-members; how researchers secure access to licensed content not immediately available to them; and how their access to a range of data and information is subject to restrictions apart from licensing costs, including patents, corporate confidentiality, barriers to disclosure of market data, security restrictions and privacy laws.

Two further reports will be published in June/July 2009. One will be aimed at 'understanding researchers' information needs and uses in life sciences' (www.rin.ac.uk/case-studies). Another will be an in-depth study on 'the publication and dissemination behaviour of researchers' (www.rin.ac.uk/research-assessment-behaviour), which the RIN hopes will inform the autumn consultation on the Research Excellence Framework.

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The Irish Working Group on Information Literacy (WGIL),

Part II: Report of cross-sector activity 2006–2008 and recommendations for action



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BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

In 2006, the Library Association of Ireland (LAI) Working Group on Information Literacy (WGIL) was established with an agreed role to 'recommend strategies for the development of information skills education at both theoretical and practical level in the library and information services sector in Ireland'.¹

A two-year review of current information literacy activity in the Republic of Ireland by WGIL culminated in the completion of a cross-sectoral report which provides a snapshot of information literacy in a number of library and information services sectors in Ireland (academic and special libraries sector, schools, public, health, government and related libraries sector). To further IL advancement, the report also includes a set of recommendations to be considered by the executive board of the Library Association of Ireland as per the terms of reference of the group.

With some exceptions, IL activities in Ireland have been poorly documented, and there appears to be little consensus about how library and information centres across the individual LIS (Library and Information Service) sectors can best integrate IL

into their menu of user services. Russell makes the point that there is a dearth of literature about IL in an Irish context, with no definition of information literacy being produced and with many Irish institutions defining IL according to their own needs and looking to international models and guidelines.²

The language and terminology used around information literacy and information skills remain problematic, resulting in some stigma and uncertainty around use of the terms. IL has not been fully embraced by practitioners and is not understood by the public. Different sectors use and adapt the language they require for their own needs, but this does create challenges in trying to formulate national policy and understanding.

Much has been written about use of the phrase 'information literacy', as opposed to 'information skills', and it is clear that Irish LIS sectors take a pragmatic approach to using terminology that fits their needs. What is apparent is that, outside of academia, there is no consensus on which term should be used. The term 'information literacy' has not been fully embraced in Ireland, as many LIS professionals prefer alternative but equivalent terms, such as 'information skills' or 'user training'. While many institutions, particularly in the third-level education sector, have initiated and developed extensive IL programmes, their efforts remain largely unrecognised outside their immediate spheres. Sharing of resources and experience appears to take place primarily on an informal level, and collaboration with collegial (or stakeholder) groups, such as academics, remains the exception rather than the norm.

Currently, there exists no cohesive national strategy for IL. Although there are some levels of resource-sharing and co-operation among practitioners, they tend to be ad hoc.

There have been some key developments, particularly in the academic library sector, which have raised the profile of IL in Ireland, and may pave the way for the establishment of a more connected national approach. These include the 2004 report produced by the Working Group on Information Skills Training (IST), a sub-committee of CONUL (Consortium of National and University Libraries), the establishment of the CONUL Advisory Committee on Information Literacy and the organisation of the first national seminar on IL in Ireland (2006) in association with the Academic and National Library Training Co-operative (ANTLC).³ There has also been much work done

in individual sectors, such as the establishment of the public libraries 'lifesteps' framework programme (<http://www.lifesteps.ie>), as well as many examples of co-operation and collaboration *intra*-sectorally. However, despite this progress, IL 'has not been recognised as such at the highest political level [in] Ireland',⁴ and has been subsumed within an 'information society' agenda focussing primarily on the promotion and development of ICT skills and infrastructure. Politically and socially, literacy, rather than information literacy, remains a more prevalent socio-political concern.

Reviewing the evidence, it is reasonable to state that while IL is to some extent implicitly acknowledged in Irish government policy, particularly in the context of the transferable skills, the importance of the information society and lifelong learning there needs to be much more explicitly recognised. To this end, the formulation and promotion of a national strategy for IL would ideally enable a number of positive outcomes:

- consolidation of the disparate and fragmented approaches to the development of IL education programmes across the various sectors
- opportunities to tailor IL education programmes to individual sectoral requirements
- inter-institutional and inter-sectoral collaboration for IL education
- initiation of a strong and persuasive lobby to secure the inclusion of IL in national governmental policy
- international recognition of Ireland's IL activities.

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report and its recommendations represent the culmination of almost two years' endeavour of the working group. It aims to offer a framework for the potential development of information literacy education on a national scale, through the examination of best practice, both nationally and internationally, and through recommending the adoption of flexible IL standards and guidelines, which will enable libraries to develop suitable IL or information skills programmes that best suit the needs of their particular users.

In terms of scope, the report encompasses information literacy activities within the library and information services sector in the Republic of Ireland, and adheres to the terms of reference of WGIL through the following objectives:

- to provide an overview of information skills educational activities in the LIS sector in Ireland
- to disseminate information about information skills educational initiatives, development and practice in Ireland
- to promote the understanding and development of information skills education in Ireland and to provide advocacy for it
- to make recommendations for the practical development of information skills education in the library and information services sector in Ireland.

OVERVIEW OF APPROACH

The methodological approach to compiling the report was a hybrid or mixed model. Quantitative work was carried out in conjunction with more qualitative case studies; generic literature reviews and searching were carried out as appropriate to each sector's needs. Representatives from the individual LIS sectors assumed responsibility for collecting data and producing an analytical report for their own sector. SurveyMonkey was used to collect data for any online surveys carried out. The survey instrument consisted of eight questions, designed to elicit descriptive information about IL education activities at the respondents' institutions, as well as about the problems and barriers experienced by them in the course of their IL work. Carried out across the individual sectors between summer 2007 and spring 2008, the case studies represent a useful snapshot and overview of the work being done in the various sectors (and of perceived barriers)

SECTORAL REPORTS

The report reviewed information literacy activity and status across the range of LIS sectors in Ireland, including academic and special, schools, health, government and related and public libraries.

With limited existing cross-sectoral or multi-sectoral IL work in Irish libraries (some notable exceptions notwithstanding), one of the key challenges for the group in producing this report was ensuring that the WGIL was fully representative of all Irish library sectors. It was imperative for inclusiveness and credibility purposes that all sectors had some representation and involvement in the process.

Another challenge was the difficulty in finding consistency and consensus in a cross-sectoral

approach: IL means different things to different people and different things in different organisations. Sectoral approaches to IL tend to be dissimilar and specific to their own needs. For example, in health IL may be evidence-based whereas in special libraries a more corporate or strategic approach may apply. Academics tend to be concerned about learning outcomes and pedagogy, whilst public libraries are more concerned with social inclusion. In addition, there is a fear of the unknown – many sectors worry about what other sectors are doing. Despite this, all the sectors do share *recognition* of the need for information literacy for their users.

The review indicated the unevenness of the playing field, with some library sectors being much more evolved than others in terms of IL activity. The school libraries in particular remain chronically underdeveloped in Ireland. Qualitative responses from practitioners across all of the sectors highlighted some of the key issues for IL development. Respondents indicated common barriers to the implementation of information literacy programmes in their sector. These included:

- lack of time
- inadequate resources (funding, staff and facilities)
- lack of interest from end-users
- poor understanding/awareness of the importance of information literacy or information skills by end-users
- insufficient training to develop information literacy programmes
- poorly developed ICT infrastructure / lack of broadband.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the sectoral reports only represent a snapshot of current activity in the LIS sector, they confirm and affirm the importance of information literacy and information skills in the work of libraries and library staff. The diversity and different levels of evolution of IL across sectors is apparent in the findings. What is also perceptible is the need for continued leadership and direction sectorally and nationally. This should be provided by the Library Association of Ireland, as our professional body, and be directed not just towards its members but towards policy-makers and government. IL, in whatever guise or name it takes, is now a key requirement and core competency for what libraries do. What is equally important is that the LIS sector can make the case for IL. Most

librarians or information professionals no longer need to be convinced of the value, operationally or strategically, of IL. They 'recognise the need'. However, the case needs to be made to society at large, particularly at political and policy level, so that the value of IL is acknowledged and accordingly given due recognition through policy, first, and resources, second. This will require a sound framework and an integrated policy.

The recommendations and final conclusions of the report represent the views of the WGIL group as to how best to advance IL in an Irish context. These views do not purport to be a complete solution nor do they claim unique originality. They do represent the strong and enthusiastic opinions of practitioners with a genuine and practical passion for IL and libraries.

One of the key objectives of the group was to progress a series of recommendations for submission to the LAI executive board. There was wide-ranging agreement amongst all members of the group that these recommendations should be practical, robust and meaningful and should provide real direction for the future development of an appropriate national IL policy for all library sectors. It is hoped that, following further consultation with LAI members, many of these recommendations will be taken on board and that the executive board of the LAI will use its influence to try and ensure that the best of these proposals can be delivered. The following is a list of the WGIL recommendations. Because we need to be particularly mindful of current difficult economic conditions, some of these are practical, others more aspirational:

- Formulate a national IL policy, promoted and driven by the LAI.
- Investigate the applicability to Ireland of a 'national information literacy framework' similar to that in Scotland.⁵
- Formally adopt the CILIP (2004) definition of IL ('Information literacy is knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner') as a working definition and the Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy (ANZIIL) information literacy framework (2004) in any IL national policy.
- Increase advocacy of IL – both within the profession and nationally – as part of a wider equality agenda.
- Raise awareness nationally of the strategic value of information literacy through advo-

cacy, dissemination, lobbying and targeted interventions.

- Promote the socio-economic capital of IL at policy level, particularly in the context of the information-society agenda, lifelong learning and employable transferable skills.
- *Lobby; get political!* Use the political influence of the LAI at local government, departmental and national government levels.
- Lobby government and departments to deliver the necessary broadband/ICT infrastructure, particularly as it relates to schools and rural public libraries.
- Promote the inclusion of IL in education at all levels.
- Recommend IL to be made a key strategic training and priority for all in the LIS sector.
- Investigate funding of dedicated IL post(s) at a national level.
- Support further research into IL activities in Ireland.
- Facilitate and host a national (or international) IL seminar/conference.
- Co-ordinate existing disparate IL activity in Ireland.
- Develop a presence or 'community of practice' on the NDLR – National Digital Learning Repository.⁶
- Establish a new standing IL group within the LAI and build relationships with other appropriate groups such as CONUL (Ireland's Consortium of National and University Libraries) and COLICO (Committee on Library Co-operation in Ireland) and international groups such as the CILIP CSG (Community Services Group) IL group (UK).
- Employ a dedicated national IL officer.
- Adopt and assimilate the new IL logo developed by the International Federation of Library Associations.

In order to achieve many of the stated recommendations of the group, WGIL suggests that a *national expert advisory group* is formed to assist and guide any future IL groupings (and indeed the LAI itself) in delivering achievable recommendations in action and implementation phases.

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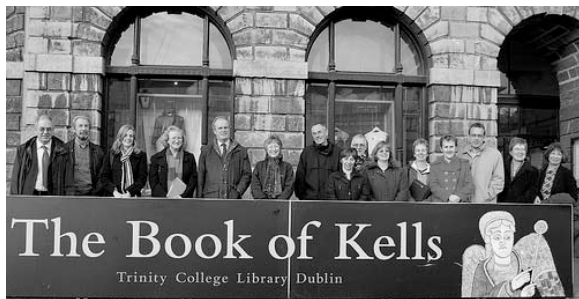
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CyMAL/WHELF study tour of Dublin

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(l to r) Richard Mellowes (Cardiff University); Mike Hopkins (Aberystwyth University); Rebecca Mogg (Cardiff University); Nicola Watkinson (Glyndŵr University); Jeremy Atkinson (University of Glamorgan); Sue Mace (WHELF Development Officer); Christopher West (Swansea University); Mairwen Owen (Bangor University); Tony Lamb (Swansea Metropolitan University); Anne Harvey (Swansea Metropolitan University); Sally Wilkinson (Trinity College Carmarthen); Carol Edwards (National Library of Wales); Paul Riley (University of Wales Institute, Cardiff); Lesley May (University of Wales Newport); Mieko Yamaguchi (Bangor University).

WHELF (Wales Higher Education Librarians Forum) is an umbrella organisation – or a mini-SCONUL – for all higher education (HE) libraries in Wales, along with the National Library of Wales.¹ Sixteen staff representing both WHELF and CyMAL (the Welsh Assembly Government body for museums, archives and libraries) completed a study tour of Dublin from 12 to 14 November 2008. WHELF is grateful to CyMAL for their participation in the study tour and for their financial contribution, which covered accommodation and travel costs in the Dublin area.

The study tour was modelled on the well-established SCONUL study tours. Our study tour was rather more modest in terms of travel, time and cost but proved to be equally stimulating and cost-effective. It was particularly productive to visit four very different HE libraries (and some of the other nationally important and unique libraries) in such a short space of time. Basing the study tour in a single conurbation maximised the opportunities to visit libraries and to exchange experience with Irish colleagues, as is shown by our programme:

Wednesday 12 November 2008

13.00: Trinity College Dublin

Thursday 14 November

Options:

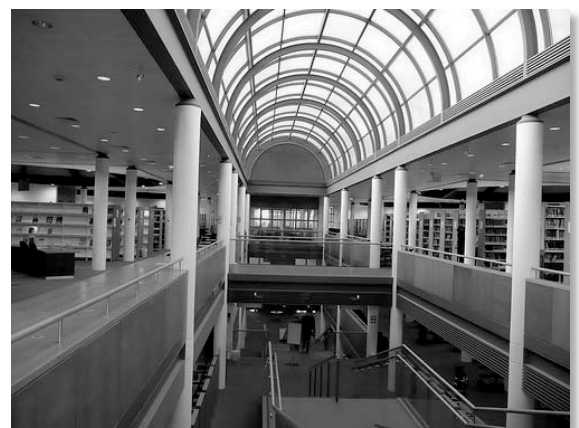
10.00: National Library of Ireland
10.00: Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland
10.30: COLICO (Committee on Library Co-operation in Ireland) meeting
10.30: St Patrick's College
14.30: University College Dublin

Friday 14 November

Options:

9.45: Dublin Institute of Technology
10.00: National Library of Ireland
10.00: Royal Irish Academy
13.00: Dublin City University

Seven WHELF members also attended a COLICO meeting as part of the study tour. COLICO is a North-South body which monitors and encourages co-operative projects on the island of Ireland and works towards providing and enhancing shared resources for library staff and users. Members North and South were keen to investigate possible opportunities for co-operation with WHELF.



John and Aileen O'Reilly Library,
Dublin City University

The tour was especially useful for ideas for library design. Several HE libraries in Wales plan to have new buildings and facilities over the next decade. The significant investment in the HE sector in Ireland over the last twenty years has produced some striking examples of library design, particularly in Dublin City University and in the Ussher Library in Trinity College Dublin. A number of the other libraries we visited also had impressive design features, including the very new health sciences library in University College Dublin and the very large UCD main library.²



Ussher Library, Trinity College Dublin

HE investment in Ireland has also included an impressive level of resource provision. The IReL (Irish Research Library) received 35 million euros in total as part of a government strategy to double postgraduate numbers by 2010. Initially covering just information technology and biotechnology (2004), it was then extended to other subject areas, including humanities and social sciences in 2006. It provides 109 bundles, ranging from Science-Direct to the ACLS Humanities e-books package, with over 22,000 e-journal titles.

Some common themes emerged from the Dublin HE libraries:

- There has been an impressive level of investment by the Irish government in HE library e-resources and in new library buildings.
- At present, there is relatively low use of self-issue and radio-frequency identification

(RFID), although this is expected to change over the next few years in some libraries.

- There was a fairly low number of fixed PCs in libraries but a correspondingly high use of personally owned laptops. All of the library buildings were wireless-enabled.
- Compared to several WHELF libraries, there was a fairly traditional approach to individual study spaces in libraries, with the enforcement of quiet behaviour, banning of mobile-phone use and strict rules on eating and drinking. This was counterbalanced by extensive and impressive separate group-study rooms in almost all libraries.
- There was no 24x7 opening yet and opening hours were relatively limited compared to many UK HE libraries.

The timing of the tour was also useful in the preparation of a revised WHELF 'Action plan', which is currently being developed. Many of the ideas and impressions picked up in Dublin will be fed into the revised 'Action plan' for the next two academic years. The joint approach to e-resources and research support was particularly impressive and deserves replication on a smaller scale. Similarly, a joint approach to some of the library-design ideas, use of Web 2.0 and other new technology and institutional repository development are just some of the areas that deserve further investigation. We are also investigating the possibility of a reciprocal visit by Irish HE librarians to WHELF and other libraries in Wales.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WHELF is grateful to CyMAL and particularly to Huw Evans (Head of Advice and Support) for his participation in and support for the study tour. Thanks are also due to Sue Mace (WHELF development officer) for providing an excellent programme and for organising us all, along with Philip Cohen (Head of Library Services, Dublin Institute of Technology) for his invaluable help as our Dublin contact person.

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- 1 See <http://www.whelf.ac.uk/background.shtml>
- 2 A WHELF Flickr photostream has been set up of photographs taken by some members of the study tour of library design and service features in Dublin: visit <http://www.flickr.com/photos/34292444@N06/>

In memoriam: Tom Graham



Tom Graham, University Librarian at the University of York, 1984-1997, and at Newcastle University from 1997, died on 30 November 2008. In appearance always a fit and active person, a keen hill walker, he had successfully undergone major heart surgery in 2007, only to find in the spring of 2008 that he had cancer. He continued working until a fortnight before he died.

As well as his successful management of major university libraries, Tom Graham brought to the profession a rigorous belief in sharing good practice and in collaboration with others. Cooperation was something to be pursued not merely for its own sake, but as a means to achieve shared goals for the benefit of all. He found many channels to facilitate collaboration, notably in SCONUL (Society of College, National and University Libraries), in the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) of the UK higher education funding councils, and in Research Libraries UK.

He was a member of SCONUL's Council from 1987 to 1995, and Vice-Chair (1991-92) and Chair (1992-94) at the moment when SCONUL and COPOL (the Council of Polytechnic Librarians) merged. Apart from these roles in the governance of the professional society he was also active in its grass-roots activities: a member of its Advisory Committee on Buildings, 1985-92, and again in 1996-99. He was a member of the joint Working Group on Scholarly Communications (established by SCONUL and Research Libraries UK) from 1995 to 2008, and its Chair from 2000 to 2004.

From his work in these groups two major interests can be seen – the successful design of university library buildings, and the importance of gaining optimal value for library users from the purchases made by libraries.

Tom Graham wanted the maximum number of people to benefit from published knowledge and scholarly results. By collaborating with other libraries and agencies (largely through JISC) he was one of the leaders in establishing cooperative purchases by libraries of electronic journals, so

that, from the late 1990s, more journals became available to more people. Through SCONUL and RLUK he worked hard to influence the process of scholarly publication in universities, and was rewarded when databases of scholarly publications began to be established in universities themselves, thus providing an alternative platform alongside commercially-published learned journals.



Tom Graham at Newcastle conference

Many of us will remember Tom armed with his pocket camera when visiting other libraries and enjoying meeting new faces at our annual SCONUL conferences. Tom was always sure to greet and welcome those attending SCONUL conferences and meetings for the first time. In his sympathetic and cheerful character he represented the inclusive culture we espouse in our profession.

In memoriam: Tony Bowyer, 1924-2008



Tony Harold Bowyer, former Librarian of Queen Mary College, University of London, was born on 18 April 1924 and died on 12 December 2008.

Tony Bowyer enjoyed a successful career as an academic librarian

in his native London and in Birmingham and he went on, in his retirement, to further achievements as a historian. His kindness and modesty will be missed by many friends and colleagues.

The start of his career was delayed by service in the Navy at the end of World War II, after which he studied Economic History at the London School of Economics and was married in 1952 to Nora, whom he had met as a fellow-student five years earlier and who predeceased Tony by only a few months.

Early professional roles were at the British Library of Political and Economic Science and then as head of acquisitions at the University of London Library. In 1962 he moved to the University of Birmingham Library as deputy librarian, at the height of the 'Robbins' expansion of universities, and played a major part in developing a cooperative framework of major libraries in the city, including the setting up of BLCMP (the Birmingham Libraries Cooperative Mechanism Project).

Returning to London in 1971 as Librarian of Queen Mary College, he set out to energise a library that had yet to embark on serious growth. He developed the staff by creative evolution, one of his first steps being to appoint QMC's first subject librarians and creating a highly effective structure of professionals combining subject and management portfolios. He was ambitious but realistic about what was possible for the library in a college that still considered itself small; however, with a youthful and service-minded team devel-

oping around him, the library's impact became progressively greater.

As at Birmingham, he took an active part in developing library cooperation within the University of London and nationally, as evidenced by his articles 'Cooperative schemes and resource sharing: case-study of the University of London' (1981)¹ and 'National library coordination and the art of the possible' (1981).²

His interest in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe led him to participate in the activities of the SCONUL Slavonic and East European Group (later the Advisory Committee on Slavonic and East European Materials) and he assisted in the compilation of the group's *Directory of libraries and special collections on Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.* (1971).³ However, it was in SCONUL as a whole that he made his most significant contribution to library cooperation at the national level. He served as Honorary Treasurer from 1973 to 1979, as Vice-Chair in 1979-81 and finally as Chair in 1981-83, then in 1984 as past Chair. He played an important part in the constitutional and financial changes as the result of which SCONUL became a more formal and effective organization. He represented SCONUL on the British Library Advisory Council and on the Joint Consultative Committee, which brought together various library professional bodies. He displayed a keen interest in matters of copyright.

He also researched the early history of SCONUL for his 'The founding of the Standing Conference of National and University Libraries' (1980).⁴

Tony retired in 1984, his final contribution at QMC being to set in motion the much-needed new college library project.

Retirement gave him the opportunity to turn himself back into an historian. His initial aim was to write a biography of the controversial eighteenth-century politician Sir Philip Francis, the probable author of the 'letters of Junius', about the earliest editions of which Tony had published a study in 1957. The biography remained unfinished, sadly, but Tony's impeccable research led to the publication of a number of significant articles. 'India and the personal finances of Philip Francis' appeared in the *English historical review*⁵ and 'The appointment of Philip Francis to the Bengal Supreme Council' in the *Historical journal*,⁶ both in 1995. Other articles were published in *Parliamentary history* (1999 and 2006),⁷ *Albion* (1995)⁸ and *The mariner's mirror* (2001).⁹ His reputation as a histo-

rian led to his involvement as a contributor to the *Oxford dictionary of national biography* for which he wrote eighteen entries, focused on Britons who had served in India during the eighteenth century. Tony combined the qualities of a kindly, supportive and charming family man and colleague with those of an efficient and modernizing librarian. His passions for cricket and for chocolate were well known. He also had an enthusiasm for travel, particularly in his life-long love of Italy, but also in the more intrepid travels in central Asia which followed his retirement.

As a companionable man he found in retirement a natural niche in the Institute of Historical Research, but the circle of friends and colleagues who will greatly miss him extends far more widely. He is survived by his daughter, Katharine, and son, David.

(A similar obituary is appearing in *CILIP library and information update*.)

Neil Entwistle and J. E. O. Screen

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The fifth annual Librarians Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC) took place at Cardiff University from 30 March to 1 April 2009. Around 300 delegates gathered together to hear from four keynote speakers, and to attend a wide choice of parallel sessions covering this year's conference themes of:

- inquiry-based learning and information literacy
- emerging technologies
- information literacy for life
- supporting research.

Before the official start of the conference there was a choice of pre-conference workshops. Despite leaving home at 5.30 that morning I didn't manage to make the first workshop at 10.30 am. I did, however, thoroughly enjoy the 'Oh no – not another voting session!' workshop run by Emily Shields and Jayne Evans from Manchester Metropolitan University. This gave me lots of ideas for incorporating voting into my training sessions, with or without the sort of technology being demonstrated. The pre-conference workshops were followed by lunch, which built up much-needed energy levels for the programme ahead.

The conference officially began with a welcome and introduction from Dr David Grant, Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff University. It was heartening to hear of recent investments into Cardiff libraries by both the university and the city council. I had hoped to pop into Cardiff's new central library (opened on 14 March 2009) but the conference programme ended up keeping me fully occupied. The welcome and introduction were followed by the first keynote speech of the conference. This was made by Melissa Highton, head of Learning Technologies Group at the University of Oxford, and was entitled 'Managing your flamingo'. One area that she spoke about was what she called

'open content literacy' and our role in supporting students, researchers and staff in finding, using and making open access learning materials. As part of this she showed us iTunes-u where the university has uploaded 150 hours of video and audio material of lectures.

The rest of the afternoon was spent attending a wide range of parallel sessions. I also had the opportunity to experience my first-ever Welsh cake – it certainly wasn't my last! After the sessions there was just time to check into the hotel before heading back out to catch the coach to the networking event at Caerphilly Castle, an extremely impressive venue, found approximately 7 miles north of Cardiff. There was plenty of food and some Welsh wine, which proved very popular. To celebrate LILAC's fifth year there was also a lilac-coloured iced cake.

The second day of the conference was another jam-packed day in which I attended six parallel sessions and heard two keynote speeches. There was also a bit of time to have a look at the poster exhibition. One parallel session I found particularly interesting was called 'The reality of information literacy: does Joe student actually understand what's going on?'. This was a video made by students at the University of Sheffield that explores students' understanding of the concept of information literacy. It was great to hear from students themselves and was extremely eye-opening. Although the students in the video demonstrated information literacy skills, very few of them had any idea what the term 'information literacy' meant.

The keynote speeches were made by Patricia Iannuzzi, Dean of University Libraries at the University of Nevada, and Leslie Burger, Director of Princeton Public Library. Patricia Iannuzzi spoke about the importance of engagement with students and understanding what motivates them. She pointed to how the gaming industry had developed its products to appeal to young people and how we could learn from them in our attempts to engage students. Leslie Burger highlighted the importance of libraries from all sectors in information literacy and the key role that public libraries can play in helping people to become digital citizens so that they can actively participate in today's society.

The second day was followed by the conference dinner, held at Cardiff Museum. This was another spectacular venue and a good opportunity for delegates to reflect on the variety of sessions they had

attended over the past couple of days. After the dinner the CSG IL (the Information Literacy Sub-Group of CILIP's Community Services Group) information literacy award for the most inventive initiative in the sphere of information literacy was awarded to Rónán O'Beirne for the PoP-i project. PoP-i was 'a collaborative, non-commercial venture between Imperial College London and the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council Library Service to develop an on-line learning programme for information literacy aimed at public libraries based on the instructional design principles created by ICL in their information literacy internal programme'.¹ The evening was rounded off by music and dancing.

The final day of the conference involved further parallel sessions followed by a keynote speech from Conor Galvin, lecturer and researcher at UCD Dublin. He talked a lot about technology and its use in education: it is important that we think about the way forward but we must not let technology enslave us. Just before the conference ended Janet Cottrell, Sarah Faye Cohen and Cinse Bonino were awarded 'best paper with an inquiry-based learning focus', sponsored by the Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences. They won the award for their workshop entitled 'Embedding information literacy: an exercise in inquiry'. Runners-up were Geoff Walton and Alison Pope for their paper on 'Research informed teaching, information literacy and the inquiry-based learning nexus'.

The last challenge of the day was to make it to Cardiff train station without getting caught up in the throng of football supporters who were preparing for the World Cup qualifier that evening. Once I had safely made it onto the train there was plenty of time to reflect on the last three days. The conference was very useful and has given me a number of ideas which I plan to investigate further with my colleagues. It was also extremely enjoyable and presented the perfect opportunity to network with other information professionals with similar interests. I have high expectations for LILAC 2010!

REFERENCE

- 1 Rónán O'Beirne, *Pop-i project website*, September 2006; see http://www.bradlibs.com/intranet/POPi_testOneRO/ProjectWelcomePage.htm (accessed 7 April 2009)

"We're all doomed!"

The SCONUL Top Concerns Survey 2009



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INTRODUCTION

Each year, SCONUL carries out a brief, web-based survey of the top concerns of SCONUL directors and librarians. As well as providing a snapshot of the issues which fill up our mailboxes, the Top Concerns survey is a useful pointer for the development of SCONUL strategies so that these match our members' priorities.

Since 2007, the SCONUL Top Concerns survey has used the e-inform web survey software developed by Priority Research Ltd. SCONUL is very grateful to Priority Research Ltd for their continuing involvement and support in library-based surveys.

To make the survey even quicker and simpler to complete in 2009, a previous question on top concerns over the last three months was omitted. Instead, respondents were asked to concentrate on the top issues and priorities over the coming twelve months. As well as being more helpful for strategic planning, it had been found that responses to the two sets of questions were very similar.

There were 105 responses to the latest Top Concerns survey, which was circulated to the SCONUL mailing list in late March 2009. The survey was available for completion until mid-April. The response rate was slightly lower than the 115 respondents for the 2008 survey, but still represents just under two-thirds of SCONUL institutional members in the UK and the Republic of Ireland¹.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Given the dramatic changes in the world economy over the last year, it is unsurprising that the predominant concern of SCONUL directors and librarians over the next twelve months is funding and financial management. Issues like library budgets and the costs of resources were a high or a very high concern of 97% of survey respondents. Funding was the top concern of all of the sub-groups within the survey, reflecting current uncertainties over higher education funding across the different countries, the types and size of institution and the differing organisational structures within the SCONUL membership.

The three top concerns in the 2009 survey were the same as in the 2008 survey. However, there was a marked difference in their ranking; the 2008 rating is given in brackets below:

- Funding and financial management: 97% (84%)
- E-environment: 91% (84%)
- Space and buildings: 79% (94%)

An additional question in the 2009 survey covered space and buildings, which was the top concern in last year's survey. Within this area, the three top concerns were:

- Re-focussing and diversifying learning spaces: 76%
- Planning a refurbishment of a current library/information centre: 68%
- Providing informal social learning and networking facilities: 62%

As usual, the full report of the survey along with the datafield summary and the full text of the questionnaire is available on the SCONUL website (www.sconul.ac.uk).

TOP CONCERNS OVER THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS

The top concerns of SCONUL directors and librarians over the coming year are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Top Concern Percentages for the Next Twelve Months



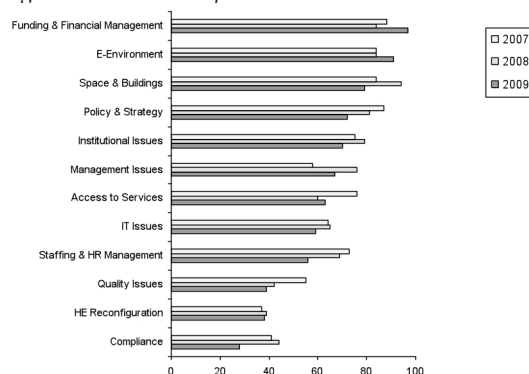
The 97% of respondents rated funding and financial management as either a very high or a high concern. This is the highest rating for any concern over the last three years and reflects the worrying financial and funding prospects over the next year or so. Like Private Frazer in *Dad's Army*, played by the late, great John Laurie, the collective view may be that 'we're all doomed!'. This was also shown in some of the free-text qualitative comments to the final question in the survey:

- *Affordability and the economic downturn are affecting priorities in the institution.*
- *The biggest single issue over the next year is likely to be dealing with the fall out from the pound's collapse and the subsequent rise in the cost of journals.*
- *Survival! Budgets will be cut, staffing will be cut.*

The E-environment continued to grow as an issue, with 91% of respondents rating this as either a very high or a high concern over the next year, compared to 84% in 2008. Space and buildings dropped from 94% last year to 79% in 2009. This might also be a reflection of the uncertainties of future capital investment plans in many institutions.

TRENDS IN SCONUL TOP CONCERNS

Figure 2: Trends in Top Concerns 2007-09



As the SCONUL Top Concerns survey has been run in the same format for the last three years, it may be possible to discern some trends in our top concerns. Given the relatively small sample sizes, some caution is needed in this trend analysis, which should be regarded as indicative rather than definitive.

The trends over the last three years appear to be:

- Most concerns have a fairly constant rating. Like the poor, issues like management and IT are always with us.
- Funding issues and the E-environment have increased as concerns over the last three years
- Correspondingly, quality and compliance issues appear to have decreased as major concerns over the same period. Staffing and HR management issues have also diminished: this may reflect the gradual implementation of HERA (Higher Education Role Analysis) over this period.

UCISA TOP CONCERNS

Our sister organisation UCISA (Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association) also carries out a biennial Top Concerns survey of higher education IT directors and representatives². This is a more detailed survey, with a rather different methodology. It builds up a larger number of top concerns (twenty-eight in the latest January 2009 survey) from free text suggestions from UCISA members. Respondents are then asked to rank their top ten concerns from the list of twenty-eight in terms of four differing areas:

- Strategic importance
- Emerging issues
- Using the most senior IT/IS management time
- Using the most IT/IS resources

The four sets of rankings are then merged into a combined top ten concerns. Paralleling SCONUL members' concerns over the financial future, the top rated concern in the 2008-09 UCISA survey was *Funding and sustainable resourcing of IT*. Figure 3 compares the top ten concerns from the most recent SCONUL and UCISA surveys.

Figure 3: SCONUL and UCISA Top Ten Concerns in Rank Order

Ranking	SCONUL	UCISA
1	Funding & financial management	Funding & sustainable resourcing of IT
2	E-environment, including e-resources & e-learning	Business systems to support the institution
3	Space & buildings	Organisational change and process improvement
4	Policy & strategy	IT strategy & planning
5	Institutional issues	Service availability and resilience
6	Management issues	E-learning
7	Access to services	IT/IS service quality
8	IT issues	Governance of IT
9	Staffing & HR management	Development of an architected, enterprise-wide IT infrastructure
10	Quality Issues	Data centres

SPACE AND BUILDINGS TOP CONCERNS

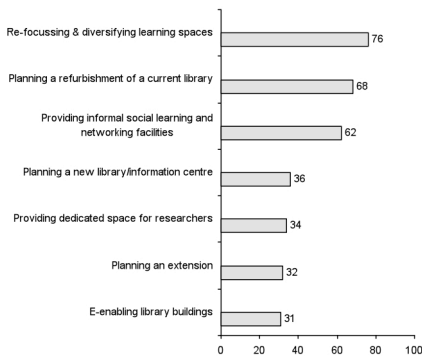
As space and buildings had been the top rated concern in the 2008 SCONUL survey, some additional questions on this area were added to this year's survey. Within this area, the three highest rated concerns were:

- Re-focussing and diversifying learning spaces (a high concern of 76% of respondents)
- Planning a refurbishment of a current library/information centre (68%)
- Providing informal social learning and networking facilities (62%)

Additional free-text comments included:

- *Adapting current library space to accommodate additional services*
- *Making the case for an extension*
- *Integration with other student services*

Figure 4: Space & Buildings: Top Concerns Over the Next Twelve Months

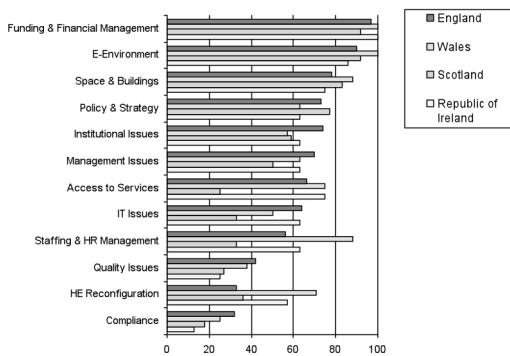


TOP CONCERNS OF SUB-GROUPS

The survey included some demographic questions. Respondents were asked to indicate their home country, their type of institution (based on the SCONUL *Statistical Return*), the size of their institution in terms of student FTEs and their type of organisation (again, based on the categorisation in the SCONUL *Statistical Return*).

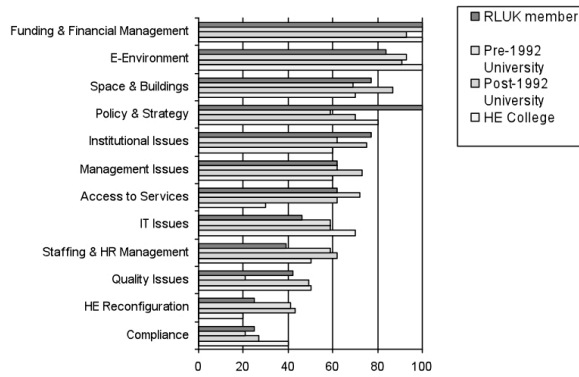
This allowed cross-tabulation of this data against the top concerns ratings over the next twelve months. The demographic response rates broadly matched the make-up of SCONUL members but, inevitably, some of the sample sizes were small, so there should be a cautious interpretation of these results.

Figure 5: Top Concerns Over the Next Twelve Months by Country



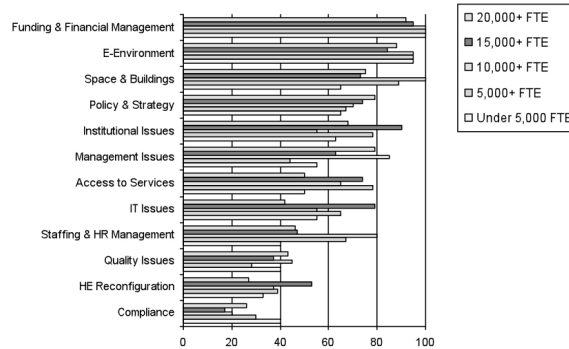
Response rates by country broadly matched the number of SCONUL members in each country but the sample size from Northern Ireland was too small to be included. Most responses were very similar to the overall ratings for these issues. Minor variations were attributable to policy differences across the countries; for example, Higher Education reconfiguration remains a significant issue in Wales.

Figure 6: Top Concerns Over the Next Twelve Months by Type of Institution



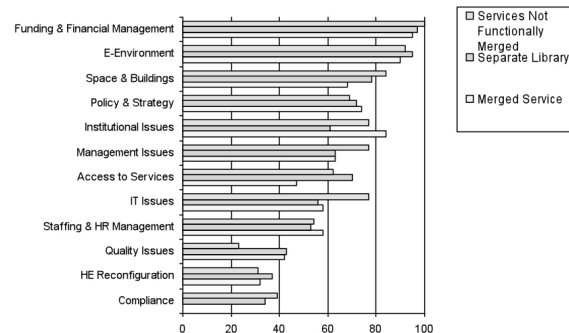
The categorisations are based on the four broad groupings used in the SCONUL *Statistical Return*. Again, the similarities in the ratings for issues over the next twelve months are striking.

Figure 7: Top Concerns Over the Next Twelve Months by Size of Institution



Despite the very wide variations in size of institution across the SCONUL membership, the same broad concerns appear to be shared between the largest and the smallest institutions.

Figure 8: Top Concerns Over the Next Twelve Months by Type of Service



The categorisation of organisational structure is based on the SCONUL *Statistical Return* once again. As was suggested by the UCISA survey,

both separate library and converged services have broadly similar concerns.

CONCLUSION

For the last three years, the SCONUL Top Concerns survey has provided useful input into deciding SCONUL strategic priorities. The 2009 survey showed once again that SCONUL directors and librarians have to balance an increasingly complex and demanding set of issues.

Unsurprisingly, the funding situation this year meant that finance was a dominant concern for the next twelve months. As in previous surveys, this was also the case across the various sub-groups within the SCONUL membership. It also paralleled the primary concern in the UCISA Top Concerns survey, carried out in January 2009. We may all be increasingly gloomy about our financial futures, but we can take solace in the fact that we are not alone in our pessimism.

REFERENCES

- 1 C.M. West 'What's in our in-trays? The SCONUL top concerns survey 2008', SCONUL Focus, 44, 2008, pp41-45 <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/newsletter/44/15.pdf>
- 2 UCISA Top Concerns Survey 2008 (Oxford: UCISA, 2009) <http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/publications/topconcerns08.aspx>

(Web sites accessed 28 May 2009)

RLUK/SCONUL digest of scholarly communication news

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This is taken from the 'Research Libraries UK/ SCONUL Digest of Scholarly Communication News' of February and April 2009. This online newsletter (supplied to SCONUL representatives in member libraries) is a service provided by the RLUK/SCONUL Group on Scholarly Communication for internal distribution to staff of library and information services in SCONUL institutions.

The group also encourages the use of the digest to inform academic staff within universities in the UK and Republic of Ireland of developments in scholarly publishing.

ICOLC STATEMENT ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

The first topic in the last 'Digest' of 2008 was the effect of the global economic situation upon library purchasing, and that topic is also the first topic for 2009. Reports from UK libraries continue to suggest that the fall in the exchange rate for sterling will have a devastating effect upon library budgets, although hard evidence is difficult to come by. It would be helpful if libraries could share their estimates of the budgetary effect of the economic situation so that action can be taken at national level if the situation is as bad as informal conversations would suggest. In the meanwhile ICOLC, the International Coalition of Library Consortia, has issued a 'Statement on the global economic crisis and its impact on consortial licenses', available – with a list of the signatory consortia – at <http://www.library.yale.edu/consortia/>. The statement balances a strong message to publishers that most consortia will not be able to afford price increases on 'big deals' with an

appeal to publishers to work with consortia in finding business models that will meet the needs of both publishers and libraries. It is not surprising that there has been no formal response from publishers to the ICOLC statement. The test of its effectiveness will come in the negotiations for the 2010 'big deals' and in libraries' responses to the offers that they receive from publishers.

PUBLISHERS' PRICING

Little is known as yet about how publishers will react to the statements about the current financial crisis from library groups such as ICOLC. One 'non-profit' publisher, *Annual Reviews* (www.annualreviews.org) will freeze institutional and site licence pricing for 2010, claiming that their subscription rates are set at a level only 'sufficient to recover costs and make appropriate investments in technology'. On the other hand major commercial publishers are still producing statements to reassure their investors that the profits from journal publishing will continue to grow. One of those predicting further growth is Sir Crispin Davis, the retiring CEO of Reed Elsevier in an article in 'Times Online' at http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/media/article5768684.ece. The basis Sir Crispin Davis gives for this view is that the legal and research sectors are 'better equipped to withstand the downturn than many others'. The views of the librarians in those sectors are not reported.

SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING COSTS AND BENEFITS

The JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) has published a major new report entitled 'The economic implications of alternative scholarly publishing models: exploring the costs and benefits', available at <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/publications/economicpublishing-modelsfinalreport.aspx>. The report is authored by teams from Victoria University in Melbourne (led by Professor John Houghton) and from Loughborough University (led by Professor Charles Oppenheim). Previous cost studies have been of traditional publishing costs, but this new report examines the costs of three alternative publishing models: subscription publishing, open access publishing and 'self-archiving' in a repository. In this report, for the first time the costs are related to the economic benefits from the three different publishing models, and the evidence results in a powerful argument for open access to publicly funded research outputs. In their report, Houghton et al. looked beyond the actual costs and savings of different models and examined

the additional cost-benefits that might arise from enhanced access to research findings. The report shows that in 2007 the estimated cost to the UK taxpayer for the three models would have been £230 million to publish using the subscription model, £150 million to publish under the open access model and £110 million to publish with the self-archiving with peer review services, plus some £20 million in operating costs if using any of the different models. When considering costs per journal article, Houghton et al. believe that the UK higher education sector could have saved around £80 million a year by shifting from toll access to open access publishing. They also claim that £115 million could be saved by moving from toll access to open access self-archiving.

EPSRC OPEN ACCESS POLICY

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council has now joined the other UK research councils in adopting a mandatory open access policy for its grant-holders. The EPSRC was awaiting the report from an independent study commissioned by Research Councils UK and which was completed in late 2008. The confidential findings from the study are now being taken forward by the Cross-Council Research Outputs Group and will be used to inform future policy on open access. The EPSRC council agreed at its December meeting to mandate open access publication, but that academics should be able to choose whether they use the green option (i.e. self-archiving in an online repository) or the gold option (i.e. pay-to-publish in an open access journal). Further details will be published in spring 2009. The policy statement is available at <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/AboutEPSRC/AccessInfo/ROAccess.htm>.

NEW POLICIES AND APPOINTMENTS FROM PRESIDENT OBAMA

The early signs are that the Obama administration is taking a more open attitude towards public information. The terms under which content is available on the new WhiteHouse.gov website are governed by a creative commons attribution licence. The website also allows more 'spidering' and archiving than the previous administration's site. Likewise the Obama memo on the Freedom of Information Act states that 'agencies should take affirmative steps to make information public', i.e. not only responding to particular requests for information. On appointments, Obama's nominee for Secretary of Energy, Steven Chu, is a physicist who is accustomed to depositing his own papers in Arxiv. On the other hand, Obama has selected

a lawyer used by the Recording Industry Association of America to be the third in command at the Justice Department. And Obama's choice as deputy attorney general, the second most senior position, is the lawyer who oversaw the defence of the Copyright Term Extension Act. So some mixed messages, but the overall attitude from the new administration seems to be in favour of openness.

OBAMA SECRECY ABOUT COPYRIGHT TREATY

However, it appears that the new open policies announced by the Obama administration do not extend to being open about the administration's copyright proposals. Last year the Bush administration defended the unusual secrecy over an anti-counterfeiting treaty being negotiated by the US government which could criminalise some peer-to-peer file-sharing that infringes copyrights. Now President Obama's White House has tightened the cloak of government secrecy still further, saying that a discussion draft of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement and related materials are 'classified in the interest of national security pursuant to Executive Order 12958'. The 1995 Executive Order 12958 allows material to be classified only if disclosure would do 'damage to the national security and the original classification authority is able to identify or describe the damage'. In one of his first acts as President, Obama signed a memo saying that the Freedom of Information Act 'should be administered with a clear presumption: In the face of doubt, openness prevails'. It appears that legislation on copyright issues is treated as a security issue rather than being treated as 'open'.

NIH MANDATE MADE PERMANENT

President Obama has signed into law the 2009 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which includes a provision making the National Institutes of Health (NIH) public access policy permanent. The NIH *Revised policy on enhancing public access* requires eligible NIH-funded researchers to deposit electronic copies of their peer-reviewed manuscripts into the National Library of Medicine's online archive, PubMed Central (PMC). Full texts of the articles are made publicly available and searchable online in PMC no later than 12 months after publication in a journal. The NIH policy was previously implemented with a provision that was subject to annual renewal. Since the implementation of the revised policy the percentage of eligible manuscripts deposited into PMC has increased significantly, with over 3,000 new manuscripts being deposited each month. The

new provision reads in full: 'The Director of the National Institutes of Health shall require *in the current fiscal year and thereafter* that all investigators funded by the NIH submit or have submitted for them to the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central an electronic version of their final, peer-reviewed manuscripts upon acceptance for publication to be made publicly available no later than 12 months after the official date of publication: *Provided*, That the NIH shall implement the public access policy in a manner consistent with copyright law.'

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND SPRINGER PILOT AGREEMENT FOR OA PUBLISHING

The University of California libraries and Springer Science+Business Media have concluded an experimental agreement to support open access publishing by UC authors. The arrangement is part of the journals licence negotiated by the California Digital Library on behalf of the ten campuses of the University of California.

Under the terms of the agreement, articles by UC-affiliated authors accepted for publication in a Springer journal beginning in 2009 will be published using Springer Open Choice, with full and immediate open access. There will be no separate per-article charges, since costs have been factored into the overall licence. Articles will be released under a licence compatible with the creative commons licence. In addition to access via the Springer platform, final published articles will also be deposited in the California digital library's eScholarship repository. The University of California-Springer agreement is the first large-scale open access experiment of its type undertaken with a major commercial publisher in North America. The question has been raised about whether such a model could be adopted in the UK, and any comments on this question should be addressed to Hazel Woodward, chair of the JISC journals working group at hazel.woodward@cranfield.ac.uk.

EXPANDED GREEN AND GOLD ROUTES TO OPEN ACCESS AT NATURE PUBLISHING GROUP

Nature Publishing Group (NPG) is expanding open access choices for authors in 2009, through both 'green' self-archiving and 'gold' (author-pays) open access publication routes. Eleven more journals published by NPG are offering an open access option from January 2009. For a publication fee of £2,000 / \$3000 / €400, articles will be open access on the journal website and identified

in the online and print editions of the journal with an open access icon. The final full-text version of the article will be deposited immediately on publication in PubMed Central (PMC), and authors will be entitled to self-archive the published version immediately on publication. Open access articles will be published under a creative commons licence. Authors may choose between the Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported and the Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported Licence. The Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike Licence permits derivative works, ensuring that authors can comply with funders such as the Wellcome Trust. Other articles will continue to be published under NPG's exclusive licence to publish, and its usual self-archiving policy will apply. Editors will be blind as to whether or not authors have selected the open access option, avoiding any possibility of a conflict of interest during peer review and acceptance. Print subscription prices for these journals will not be affected. Site licence prices will be adjusted in line with the amount of subscription-content published annually. Continuing its support for the 'green route' to open access on high-impact journals, NPG has extended its manuscript deposition service to include 32 more titles. Forty-three journals published by NPG now offer the free service to help authors fulfil funder and institutional mandates for public access. NPG's manuscript deposition service will deposit authors' accepted manuscripts with PMC and UK PubMed Central (UKPMC). NPG's licence to publish encourages authors of original research articles to self-archive the accepted version of their manuscript in PMC or other appropriate funding bodies' archives, in their institution's repositories and, if they wish, on their personal websites. In all cases, the author's version of the accepted manuscript can be made publicly accessible six months after publication. NPG does not require authors of original research articles to transfer copyright. NPG's policies are explained in detail on this webpage: www.nature.com/authors/editorial_policies/license.html.

WILEY PROFITS CONTINUE TO GROW

According to a press release available at <http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/John-Wiley-Sons-Inc-Announces/story.aspx?guid=%7BC20ACC91-93EC-4902-A2A1-526C1C21947F%7D>, Wiley's profit levels continued to grow in 2008 (referring to 'fiscal year 2009' but dated 9 December 2008) despite the money spent on acquiring Blackwell. Wiley's scientific, technical, medical and scholarly sec-

tion's 'direct contribution to profit for the second quarter advanced 11% over the same period of the prior year to \$105 million, or 14% excluding the unfavorable effect of foreign exchange'. (Interesting that a US publisher is also feeling the effect of exchange-rate fluctuations.) The press release reveals that STMS and higher education business 'generated solid top-line growth', whereas Wiley's professional/trade revenue was down. The Blackwell factor is mentioned as a '\$6 million acquisition accounting adjustment' and the combination of the Wiley and Blackwell STMS businesses are seen as having a 'positive effect' upon revenue growth.

WIKIPEDIA TO INTRODUCE SOME QUALITY CONTROL?

Doubts have often been expressed about the absence of quality control within Wikipedia, although most users appear to find the quality of articles acceptable for their purposes. However, change may be on the way in how Wikipedia operates. An article by Noam Cohen in the *New York Times* of 23 January 2009 reported that Wikipedia appears ready to introduce a system that prevents new and anonymous users from instantly publishing changes to the online encyclopedia. Stung by criticism after entries appeared reporting (erroneously) that Senators Edward Kennedy and Robert Byrd had died, Wikipedia appears ready to introduce a system that prevents new and anonymous users from instantly publishing changes to the online encyclopedia. The new system is called 'flagged revisions', whereby only registered, reliable users would have the right to have their material immediately appear to the general public visiting Wikipedia. Other contributors would be able to edit articles, but their changes would be held back until one of these reliable users has signed off, or 'flagged', the revisions. The system has been trialled by the German version of Wikipedia since last May.

CHANGES IN ACCESS TO LEGAL EDUCATION MATERIALS?

This 'Digest' attempts to look ahead to changes in scholarly communication, sometimes successfully, sometimes pointing to developments which lead nowhere. A recent posting to the Liblicense list pointed to possible changes taking place in access to legal education materials, the legal community not having been at the forefront of open access developments before now. The Liblicense posting concerned the launch of the Legal Education Commons (LEC), at <http://w.cali.org/lec>, a source of open access, full-text teaching materials for law school courses from the Center for

Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI) and Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet & Society. (See the CALI announcement at <http://www2.cali.org/index.php?fuseaction=pages.news&PHPSESSID=608277c566ab4ad5abd34c6a08dff119#212> and the Berkman announcement at <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/node/5014>.) The LEC reportedly contains more than 700,000 full-text cases and other court documents, plus approximately 300 illustrations from CALI tutorials. The copyrighted materials in the commons are governed by a creative commons attribution share-alike licence. Does this new service indicate an interest from the academic legal community in using an open access publishing model for legal education materials?

MORE NEW OPEN ACCESS MANDATES

During February and March 2009 a number of major universities have either introduced open access mandates or extended existing mandates. Harvard University is implementing mandates faculty by faculty. Faculty members in the Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Government have joined their colleagues in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the Law School in voting to deposit all their publications in the university repository. MIT faculty have also voted unanimously in a similar fashion, that 'Each Faculty member grants to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology nonexclusive permission to make available his or her scholarly articles and to exercise the copyright in those articles for the purpose of open dissemination.' Likewise the university council of Boston University 'voted to support an open access system that would make scholarly work of the faculty and staff available online to anyone, for free, as long as the authors are credited and the scholarship is not used for profit'. And in the UK the University of Edinburgh has adopted an OA mandate. The open access publications policy was approved by the university's Electronic Senate on 18 February 2009: 'This ... Publications Policy ... requires researchers to deposit their research outputs in the Publications Repository, and where appropriate in the Open Access Edinburgh Research Archive in order to maximise the visibility of the University's research ... This policy will be implemented [i.e. become mandatory] from January 2010, and in the meantime, researchers are encouraged to deposit outputs.' The Edinburgh approach is significant in integrating the administrative requirements of a publications database with the broader requirements of an open access institutional repository. Equally significant in a European context is the inclusion of open access in the draft National Law

of Science in Spain. This draft provides for the deposit of publications by Spanish researchers in either institutional or disciplinary repositories no later than six months after publication, and the draft also states that the deposited version can be used for research evaluation. The draft law is available online at <https://lcyt.fecyt.es/>.

IREL-OPEN BEGINS TO SHOW RESULTS

IREL-Open is well on the way to achieving its objective of creating a federated open access repository service for Ireland. The project has been receiving Irish government funding for the past two years and is already showing results. All university institutional repositories are up and running and a national harvester will be in place by December this year to give enhanced cross-searching functionality. Usage figures for the content available are already impressive, particularly for previously unused thesis content. Further information about IREL-Open is available at <http://www.irel-open.ie/>.

NEW REPORT ON PAYING FOR OA PUBLICATION CHARGES

The report of a working group on 'Paying for open access publication charges' is now available on the RIN (Research Information Network) website at http://www.rin.ac.uk/files/Paying_open_access_charges_March_2009.pdf. The working group – which contained representatives from toll access and OA (Open Access) publishers as well as from academic institutions – was set up by Universities UK and the Research Information Network to produce guidance for higher education institutions, publishers and authors on how the payment for 'gold' open access can be managed in the interests of all stakeholders. As well as containing practical recommendations, the report sets the 'gold' open access option in the context of the benefits from greater access to academic journals, and also outlines the 'green' route to open access. The report also contains the text of the report on the JISC surveys of authors and institutions conducted in 2008, surveys which illustrate both the interest of authors in using the 'gold' route to open access and the current confused state of arrangements for publication charges. More details on RIN activities can be found elsewhere in this issue of *Focus*.

CANADIAN CAMPAIGN ON ACADEMIC AUTHORS' RIGHTS

'Research is more valuable when it's shared', according to a new educational initiative launched in partnership by the Canadian Associa-

tion of Research Libraries (CARL) and SPARC (the Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition). Called 'Greater reach for your research', the campaign encourages Canadian authors to use their campus digital repository to increase the use and impact of their research outputs. 'Greater reach for your research' emphasises the practical benefits of repositories, such as more exposure for researchers' articles, universal access to research literature and long-term preservation. The 'Greater reach for your research' initiative features an eye-catching new brochure and matching web portal, a slidecast on the importance of retaining copyright, the SPARC Canadian Author Addendum and updated brochure and other resources. Go to <http://www.carl-abrc.ca/projects/author/author-e.html> or <http://www.arl.org/sparc/greaterreach>.

EUROPEAN COPYRIGHT DEVELOPMENTS

The dominance of rights-holders' interests in the consideration of copyright legislation has been illustrated in the past few months by the consideration of possible new legislation by the legal affairs committee of the European Parliament. On 20 January 2009 the EP legal affairs committee voted on an 'own initiative report by Manuel Medina Ortega', the MEP who is the EP's rapporteur on possible revisions to EU copyright legislation. Manuel Medina Ortega's report defended the viewpoint of commercial rights-holders that no change is necessary to strengthen copyright exceptions and that licensing of content will provide for users' needs, and took no account of the representations made by library and other user groups. In voting on the report by 22 votes to nil, MEPs on the legal affairs committee considered advice from the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection, but there was little about consumer protection in that advice and instead a recommendation for 'a high level of protection' for publishers. The only redeeming feature in this sorry tale is that support for the Manuel Medina Ortega report was not reciprocated by Medina's own Socialist Group in the EP, not out of any concern for users of academic content but because of the effect of the report upon other issues, and the report has effectively been abandoned. Changes to the EU copyright legislation will now be considered in the new European Parliament to be elected in June, and RLUK and SCONUL institutions are urged to contact local MEPs on the issue of copyright in academic content. If the EP's current view prevails, further barriers could be created in the use of academic content across Europe. The Medina report and

other EP documents are available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/FindByProcnum.do?lang=en&procnum=INI/2008/2121>.

UK GOVERNMENT BACKS OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

The UK government has said it will accelerate the use of open source software in public services, placing open source software on a 'level playing field' with proprietary software such as Windows. Open source software will be adopted 'when it delivers best value for money', the government has pledged, and public services are advised to avoid being locked into proprietary software where possible. According to some in the open source industry (admittedly a biased viewpoint), the shift from proprietary standards could save the UK government £600m a year.

SCOPUS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

The Australian Research Council has announced that the Elsevier service Scopus has been chosen to provide citation information for the 'Excellence in research for Australia' (ERA) initiative Cluster One evaluation. (The ARC announcement is at http://www.arc.gov.au/media/releases/media_20Feb09.htm.) The ERA will evaluate research in Australian higher education institutions using a combination of indicators and expert review. Citation analysis is one of these indicators. The ARC has arranged for the Scopus team to work directly with institutions, to match their publication records with unique article identifiers in the Scopus database.

SPARKY AWARDS

Our US colleagues seem to find innovative ways of spreading the message about the importance of sharing information. SPARC organises annual SPARKY awards for students to illustrate, in a short video, the value of sharing ideas. The videos awarded prizes in the second annual SPARKY competition are at <http://www.sparkyawards.org/>. Your editor found the second runner-up simple but effective in a global context: it was 'Brighter', by Christopher Wetzels, a student at Ohio Northern University (<http://www.vimeo.com>).

AND FINALLY ...

Staff at Cornell University have found an attractive way to make their academic community aware of the cost of research journals by com-

paring the cost of journals with other things a researcher might buy, such as a car. At <http://astech.library.cornell.edu/ast/engr/about/StickerShock2.cfm> there is 'An exhibit highlighting the rising cost of library journal subscriptions to support faculty and student research. The cost of journal subscriptions continues to rise and the prices will shock you. The Cornell Libraries subscribe to over 88,000 serials, a majority of which are journals in paper or electronic form. Five years ago the most expensive engineering-related journals cost \$4,000 to \$12,000. Now prices reach \$18,000. To get a better sense of what this much money is worth, please enter the exhibit.'

Super-convergence: SCONUL shared-experience meeting, 16 February 2009

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INTRODUCTION

A shared-experience event for ten directors of service was held in London on 16 February 2009. This event followed a posting to LIS-SCONUL which asked members about their experience of so-called super-convergence, especially in relation to the bringing together of student support services. At present it would appear that a relatively small number of universities, mostly in the post-1992 group, have moved to bring together a range of services – either structurally and/or physically – often under the auspices of the director of library and information services. It is not clear if this is a relatively limited development which will remain confined to fewer than 20 institutions in

the country, or whether the institutions currently affected represent the 'first wave' of a change that will become more widespread. For this reason, the group who met on 16 February has provided this report for LIS-SCONUL. The report provides some background information as well as notes on the key themes that were discussed on the day. The group's members intend to keep in touch with each other as a shared-experience group and aim to meet again in the autumn of 2009 to compare progress.

BACKGROUND

Nineteen directors of LIS responded to a LIS-SCONUL posting in November 2008 which asked about experience of bringing together student-facing support services. Many of those who responded were either developing super-converged services or were aware of interest in them in their institutions. Models vary considerably, but the general trend appears to be to bring together a range of support activities that are generally focussed on student support and are structurally converged. In some institutions these super-converged services are supported by a common help desk and are sometimes provided from one building. The services include library, IT and AV support (where there is, of course, a tradition of convergence) with additional support services including – but not limited to – careers, welfare and counselling, student administration, chaplaincy support, student finance, learning development, study skills and programme administration. Although the term 'one-stop-shop' is less popular than it once was, the general approach is to bring all aspects of student support together in order to streamline provision.

The shared-experience group was keen to discuss what these developments meant for our own skills set and professional identities as well as how we might approach organisational structures, staff roles, service models and student expectations. We were aware of very practical challenges such as the need to complete the Sconul statistics each year! More fundamentally, we wanted to discuss the change programmes that might assist us and how we might work with colleagues from a wide range of professional backgrounds and cultures. As an aside we discussed a tendency for library and information professionals to talk (mainly) to other library and information professionals. Is this sort of fundamental change an opportunity for us to liaise more actively with other professional groups?

THEMES AND OBSERVATIONS

1 *Who's in the mix?*

The group considered the types of services being considered for super-convergence. There were examples in the sector of all of the following:

- library
- IT, including infrastructure, services and support
- multimedia/learning objects creation
- reprographics
- classroom support
- VLE support
- student administrative support, including registration and fees payment
- course management, including submission of assignments
- programme and module advice to students
- student support services, including counselling of all types, health and well being, PDP (Personal Development Planning), careers and employability, chaplaincy
- academic skills for students, including IT and information skills, study skills
- educational / learning development / staff development activities in support of academic staff
- advice to staff and students around issues such as copyright and plagiarism.

There was no evidence available to the group of quality assurance work being included in the mix.

It was recognised that the specific constituents of the 'mix' in any particular institution depends on the main drivers at work in that institution; there is no set of activities definable independently of the institutional context.

It was noted that the expansion of the boundaries of the physical learning environment, and the support needs associated with that, are bringing those responsible for designing and supporting (for example) classroom environments into closer relationship with estates/facilities departments.

2 *What are the drivers?*

The group identified a wide variety of drivers, not all of which would be present in every institution, and which would have varying degrees of force in different contexts:

- improving the student experience, with the emphasis on providing more coherent,

understandable, consistent and better-quality services and support

- organisational politics, including developments such as shrinking the senior management team by making bigger portfolios; attempts to balance the power of support areas against that of academic areas; retirement of key staff providing an opportunity for change; and naked empire-building
- a need to provide longer service hours and better accessibility
- growing emphasis on quality enhancement
- potential for efficiency gains/cost cutting
- shifting student expectations in terms of being able to have their problems resolved in a single place, not observing the traditional distinctions between different types of advice and support (e.g. library, student administration, student welfare)
- student recruitment, especially when organisational changes can be given a high profile in 'iconic' new buildings.

There were some differences in perspective about the relative strength of these drivers, some believing that politics is normally the real driver, often masquerading as an effort to improve the student experience, whilst others felt that the desire to generate efficiency gains and improve the student experience is genuinely felt in some cases. It was recognised that successful super-convergence could relieve a great deal of the pressure on academics to sort out students' non-academic issues. Does this have any implications for the concept of personal supervision by a member of academic staff?

There was discussion as to whether the interest in super-convergence was a phenomenon of post-92 universities. The group noted that pre-92 universities were in a small minority of those present at the meeting and of those who had originally expressed an interest in attending. Is it the case that post-92 universities are dealing with much more diverse student populations, and that this gives student support services a higher profile and priority in these institutions, leading to more creative thinking about their delivery?

3 Impact on the student experience

There was a feeling in the group that universities sometimes embark on convergence projects without even taking the time to ask students what they want, or perhaps not asking the right questions – instead asking questions framed by the beliefs and assumptions of staff. We need to identify

the impact on the student experience before we implement changes in order to rectify/minimise any potential adverse impacts.

Do we in fact know how to measure the impact of super-convergence on the student experience? The group did not have time to discuss KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and other performance measures but recognised the importance of these. In this connection, there was an important insight around the belief that students do not in fact evaluate services by comparison with other universities but by comparison with their other real-life service experiences. So how, for example, do our services compare with those experienced by students when they shop in the local supermarket, or go to a GP surgery, or go online to Amazon?

There was a further query about our ability to provide a personalised service in an homogenised environment.

4 Physical and virtual spaces

The group wondered why libraries, as places, seem to be the favoured location for super-converged services. It was felt that they generally offer attractive, customer-focussed, neutral spaces with long opening hours where students are already accustomed to congregating, and that they are often on established student 'pathways' across campuses.

It was suggested that our organisation of physical space is often based on what makes staff feel comfortable, not on how customers want to access services. For example, it was doubted whether there is any validity to the commonly held belief among staff of student welfare services that students will not access their services through an open, multi-purpose service desk. Conversely, it was recognised that a single common service desk might not meet the needs of every single group of customers, some of whom might not feel happy accessing services in an environment geared predominantly to the average undergraduate (mature overseas students on executive MBA programmes were mentioned).

The group noted an issue about the relationship between the place where the institution's own converged services are offered and the place where the student union offers services.

It was felt that there is a need to provide a virtual space for customers that is every bit as attractive and imaginative as the physical space, and that

this is essential in enhancing the availability of services and making sure that all customer groups have an acceptable way of accessing them.

The need for a single problem-reporting and monitoring/CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system was stressed, and it was recognised that it is easy to underestimate the amount of knowledge needed by staff if they are to provide a fully rounded service. This is not just a matter of possessing more factual information but of having a technology-enabled map of the information/organisational universe of the institution. There was much interest among the group in the portal-based dashboard developed at Kingston University to assist staff on combined service desks in finding the information they need. A general point was that we need to maximise the amount of information readily available to customers in order to minimise the volume of information that staff need to keep in their own heads.

5 Staffing the super-converged service

It was recognised that staffing the super-converged service presents large challenges in terms of skills, training, delivery models, job descriptions, job grades, and line management. However, the group was clear that at the heart of all this is a need to focus on the development of shared values and a shared culture. A number of tools were suggested to help with this, such as cultural web analysis and customer value discovery workshops. The value of joint training and shared social activities was stressed. An output of a successful convergence programme might be shared values, stories and vocabulary.

In terms of service delivery models, the group raised issues around the balance between expertise on the front desk and in the back room, about triage methods and about the use of students and roaming support. We wondered if we should look at other service delivery models, such as in local councils.

There was much discussion about the skills that would be needed among the people operating and managing super-converged services. Should we be recruiting more people whose capabilities lie primarily in customer service? Is there a danger of customer-facing staff being undervalued as 'jacks of all trades'? Where will the directors of these new services be found in the future? What are we doing in the library profession to develop such people, especially those currently at 'deputy' level? What are we doing to develop the

multi-skilled professionals who will be needed at all levels in the future? Should we be doing more to link up with fellow professionals in those areas coming together in super-converged services? Are our conferences and other professional gatherings too inward-looking?

There was some concern about the position of the post of chief librarian in super-converged services. It was noted that only two members of the group still had the word 'librarian' in their titles, and that there was evidence from other institutions of the chief librarian falling down the organisational hierarchy. Is the librarian taking over or getting lost? However, the group generally took a positive view, believing that super-convergence offers new and exciting opportunities, as is ever the case in life and higher education.

News from member libraries

Leeds Metropolitan University

'LITTLE BOOK OF INFORMATION SKILLS'

The library has launched a new title in its 'Little books' series: 'The little book of information skills'. This is an innovative way of presenting information and engaging students in this crucial area, which is one of the university's assessment, learning and teaching priorities this year. The 'Little book' is aimed at first-year undergraduate students, and helps to address the university's priority of enhancing the first-year experience. It follows the seven steps a fictional student takes to find information in the library, based on an assignment brief of a presentation on global warming. The book gives examples of how the student conducts her research by following the steps of SCONUL's 'Seven pillars of information literacy'. The format of the book is especially accessible and portable and it contains hints and tips as well as a step-by-step approach to good practice in information skills.

If you would like a sample copy please contact Chris Kay (c.kay@leedsmet.ac.uk).

TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

The university is celebrating the success of the library in the Times Higher Education student experience survey, where students placed us in joint second position in the category 'Good library and library opening hours'. The scoring places us on a par with the universities of Cambridge, Hertfordshire and Loughborough and just one place behind Oxford! This is a significant achievement for the university and provides important national recognition for all colleagues in the library team.

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD

Libraries and Learning Innovation has achieved the government's Customer Service Excellence Award (the replacement for Charter Mark, which the service has held since 2004). The assessor highlighted a number of key strengths:

- Very good understanding of the needs of customers, including 'hard to reach' customers, including well-developed services for

students with disabilities and international students

- Good levels of customer satisfaction, with the service ranking highly in comparison to those at other universities
- Good leadership corporately and from senior staff for the delivery of 'student centred' services
- Comprehensive systems in place for monitoring and reviewing performance regarding service delivery outcomes and the timeliness of delivery.

STAFFING NEWS

Dilys Young, service manager: service development and i-Help, left Leeds Met on 15 March to take up the post of assistant director: academic services at Northumbria University. Dilys has been at Leeds Met for almost five years, initially as campus library manager at Civic Quarter and latterly as service manager: service development and i-Help. In that time she has overseen the development of self-services using RFID, full-year 24-hour opening and the i-Help project.

EXTENDED 24x7 SERVICES

The university has signed up to the NorMAN out-of-hours IT support service, which means that students will be able to receive help and advice by telephone or e-mail when the library is open on a self-service basis. As we are now in our second full year of 24x7 opening hours, this significantly extends the support we offer.

Helen Loughran
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Liverpool John Moores University

CONVERGENCE – LAUNCH OF NEW DEPARTMENT

Liverpool John Moores University is now implementing its 'student experience review' (SERIG). One of the recommendations of this review was to develop a whole new student support service model, which includes the full convergence of library and information services (LIS) and of student services, to form a new department to be known as 'library and student support'. The LIS and student services management teams are currently planning for these huge changes. The model is based around the concept of all student-facing services being managed and delivered by a single university support department, with no need for the student to have an understanding of either the structural organisation underlying the service delivery or the way in which the

university defines his or her need. The model presents one point of enquiry for people entering the university's learning resource centres (LRCs), staffed by dedicated customer services staff. The new department will consist of all library and IT support services as well as student support services, such as enrolment and assignment hand-in processes, as well as being an appointment and referral point for welfare, financial advice, careers and counselling.

The new library and student support department will be operational by September 2009 and is using the opportunity of recent LRC refurbishment works to make some major changes to the way in which student support services are delivered at LJMU. (For more information see the project blog at <http://aldhamrobarts.blogspot.com/>.)

An extensive programme of staff training and development is under way, addressing the changes that will affect all staff, including 'getting to know you' events, where both LIS and student services have been brought together to find out about each other's departments, and 'managing yourself through change' events. Specific skills training and social events will follow these introductory sessions.

RFID

RFID technology is being introduced at LJMU in order to support the university's key objective of enhancing the student experience by introducing more self-service facilities. The aim of the RFID technology is to enhance the student experience in accessing material in the LRCs 24x7, by providing efficient, quick, easy-to-use self-service issue and return of stock.

Introduction of RFID technology will be achieved in two phases. Phase 1 is the implementation of RFID at the Aldham Robarts LRC. This is being put in place for September 2009 and coincides with major refurbishment work in the LRC. An automatic book-sorter is being installed along with new self-check machines. Stock management and integration of the online payment system is also being planned. Phase 2 is the implementation of RFID at Avril Robarts LRC and I. M. Marsh LRC, and this is being planned for September 2010.

LEARNING 2.0 @LJMU

A recent initiative within LIS at LJMU has been the development of a staff-development programme called 'Learning 2.0 @LJMU' (for more on

this see my article on this in this issue of SCONUL Focus). The programme has been designed for LIS staff to meet some learning technology and Web 2.0 skills gaps, and includes familiarisation with technology-enhanced learning initiatives within the university. The main objectives of the programme are to:

- enhance the support available for learners within the LRCs
- encourage innovative ways of working amongst LIS staff.

'Learning 2.0 @LJMU' is a hands-on, interactive learning programme that provides an opportunity to explore Web 2.0 tools and the impact these tools are having on teaching and learning. The programme was developed collaboratively amongst LIS staff and the LDU and commenced in January 2009, with all 140 LIS staff taking part.

Delivered within the Blackboard VLE, 'Learning 2.0 @LJMU' introduces staff to all aspects of Web 2.0 technologies and asks participants to reflect upon how platforms such as blogs, wikis, social networking and so on can be applied within their environment. The programme makes use of e-portfolios and staff were divided into 'learning groups' and were required to complete and submit an e-portfolio at the end of the programme to demonstrate their progress, knowledge and understanding. The first rollout of the programme ran from January to April 2009.

FETCHIT AND THE GOOGLE EFFECT

During the summer of 2008, LIS launched the new gateway to electronic resources, the 'electronic library'. In addition to a new interface replacing the old list of electronic journals and databases, the newly rebranded FindIt, FetchIt and FindRef services, our link resolver and federated search tools, were implemented.

Work was also undertaken on the FetchIt database so that it interacts with Google Scholar and is able to provide LJMU students with easier access to subscribed electronic journals. As a result of all of this work, there has been a marked increase (more than 50% in some cases) in the number of full-text requests being made through the FetchIt and FindRef services (see Figure 1).

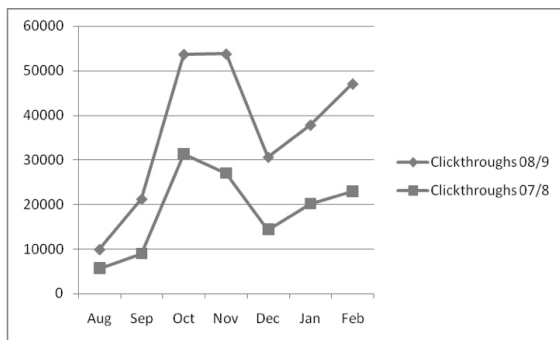


Figure 1. Numbers of articles linked to via FetchIt/FindRef

E-THESES

Following a decision to subscribe to the electronic theses online service (EThOS), an e-theses project team was set up in summer 2008 to examine the adoption of the electronic submission of theses at LJMU. The team is comprised of relevant members of learning and information services, the postgraduate registrar and the intellectual property and commercialisation manager.

The university has a digital repository called 'digital collections' which utilises the DigiTool software from Ex-Libris (see <http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/lea/digitalcollections>). Self-deposit has been set up within the repository and DigiTool has now been configured to enable harvesting of e-thesis metadata in UKETD_DC format by the EThOS service. This information has been shared with the DigiTool community and with EThOS.

A pilot project is now under way but the collection does not appear within the repository at the time of writing. The project team are now working on developing a website which will address the submission and deposit of e-theses, including all relevant agreements and policies. A report on the pilot project will be submitted to the university's research degrees committee in June 2009 and it is then planned to submit the changes to the university's regulations ready for adoption of mandatory deposit of e-theses in September 2009.

Leo Appleton
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Newcastle University

The end of 2008 was overshadowed for everyone in the library by the death of Tom Graham, who had been University Librarian and Keeper of the Pybus Collection since 1997. Tom had been afflicted for most of the year with stomach cancer, and although he bore his long course of treatment

with great courage and strength, he died on 30 November after a short final illness.

However, under Tom's leadership, and through the efforts of an excellent team of staff, a great deal was achieved during that period.

Tom's obituary appears in this issue of *SCONUL Focus*.

SERVICE ENVIRONMENTS AND LEARNING SPACES

During the summer, the entrance and reception areas of the Robinson Library were completely remodelled and refurbished. A much more open and welcoming environment has been created, with self-services brought more to the fore while retaining prominent, but smaller, staffed service points. Alongside the service area, a new social learning space called the OpenSpace has been introduced, building on the success of YourSpace and the Learning Lounge, which were set up in other parts of the building in 2008 with the support of funding from the Wolfson Foundation. The library's range of new learning spaces has been extremely popular with students, and has excited a lot of interest from elsewhere in the university. They are now being used as models of good practice in planning for new facilities for students outside the library, as part of a programme of strategic development of the university's estate.

ANOTHER WOLFSON FOUNDATION SUCCESS

A bid to the third round of the RLUK (Research Libraries UK)/Wolfson libraries fund was approved in December 2008, with £124,000 awarded for the development of the library's special collections and archives stores. Along with matching funding from the library's endowments, the Wolfson award will enable us to construct a new store in the Robinson Library, fully compliant with British Standard BS5454:2000, and to make significant improvements to environmental controls in the existing store room. The construction work is due to take place during summer 2009.

UK RESEARCH RESERVE

Having applied successfully to join Phase 1 of UKRR in its final stages, a project team worked in double-quick time to plan the removal and recycling of around 750 linear metres of journal backruns. Journal titles were selected for the project almost exclusively on the basis that they had been replaced by secure electronic backfiles in the STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). This enabled the team to work quickly and to secure approval readily from academic stakeholders. The space vacated

in the Robinson Library enabled a major shift and rationalisation of stock during the summer vacation – during the exercise, almost every book in the library was moved to a new location!

SCHOOLS LIAISON PROJECT

At the beginning of 2008, a new post of education officer was created to lead the development of links and a programme of activities with local schools. Sara Bird, a qualified and practising teacher, was appointed, and she has developed a number of successful initiatives with colleagues in special collections and archives and the academic liaison team. The number of school visits to the library has increased enormously, with over 1,400 school students coming to us during the last year. Sara has also worked closely with teachers in local schools and has developed a range of project-based resources from the library's archives and special collections, including the highly successful 'Archives Alive' website, which uses historical material relating to cholera epidemics in the region.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE (IIP)

Last year began with the award of a fifth Charter Mark for the library, and ended with a reaccreditation of our IIP standard. Having worked extensively on a new learning and development strategy during the year, the library's learning and development group successfully led the reapplication process. The assessor reported that the library had fully complied with all the IIP criteria, and commended the library particularly on the clarity of its mission and purpose, and on the strong commitment of the staff to providing high-quality services to its customers.

Wayne Connolly

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University of Reading

COLLECTIONS PROJECT 2009-2013

We have recently begun an ambitious five-year Collections Project, re-profiling Library collections to better meet our users' current and future needs, and address space shortages. It includes the acquisition of an off-campus store and the ultimate closure of our Bulmershe Library site, besides revision of much of our existing stock. Our plans are outlined on our website at: www.reading.ac.uk/library/collections-project

Pictured is Claire Cannings, Cataloguing and Liaison Support Assistant at Bulmershe Library,



with the first volumes identified as destined for our yet-to-be-built off-campus store.

BLACKBOARD QUESTION POOL

In August 2008 we made available a pool of 160 library/information skills questions on our university's virtual learning environment, Blackboard, which academic staff can use or adapt in their own courses. The Blackboard Question Pool project was supported by a grant from the University of Reading's Teaching and Learning Development Fund. This enabled key staff to spend time on the project by buying extra support staff time to cover their information desk duties.

NEW SPECIAL COLLECTIONS WEBPAGES

Our celebrated Special Collections Services now have excellent new webpages. Find them from the University Library's pages or directly at www.reading.ac.uk/special-collections

Rachel Redrup

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Roehampton University

SILENT STUDY AREA

March 2009 sees the completion of the refurbishment of part of the Library 3rd floor as a silent study area. The space has been given a complete repaint, a new green carpet and most importantly, given our location on the approach to Heathrow and the proximity of the student bar, secondary glazing. We have also bought new curved carrels to answer the critique that we don't give silent

workers enough individual work space. Around the side of the larger outer space are some small bookable rooms with PCs. The whole area has been prominently labelled with red warning signs to make it very clear that the area is designated for silent study only.



Carrels are from Space Oasis.

PINK COUNTER AND COLOURED SHIRTS

Last summer, to free space for more self issue machines, we got a new pink counter, known as Enquiry Central – The Pink Desk. This is designed to be very visible from the library entrance. Our Learning Advisors, pictured, are modelling the uniform polo shirts worn by front line staff. The shirts are clearly marked with the University logo and the words ‘Library Staff’ across the back. . This is proving to be successful in making staff visible to customers particularly when roving on the floors.



The pink counter is from Space Oasis and the shirts are supplied by hotline.co.uk

If you would like more information about any of these items do please contact Michela Wilkins, Head of Library and IT Facilities and Business Services, m.wilkins@roehampton.ac.uk

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Royal Holloway, University of London

Library Services has a new management team in place as of the 19 January 2009:

John Tuck took up the post of Director of Library Services in August 2008. Previously he had been Head of British Collections at the British Library (2002-2008) and Deputy to the Director of University Library Services and to Bodley’s Librarian in the University of Oxford (1998-2002). For twenty years before that he occupied a number of posts at the John Rylands University Library, University of Manchester, from SCONUL trainee to joint Deputy Librarian.

Coral Black joins the team as Associate Director (Planning and Administration) from Senate House Library, University of London where she was Head of Public Services. Prior to this Coral worked in a number of roles at Liverpool John Moores, University of Central Lancashire and Edge Hill University.

The new Associate Director (Academic Support), Matthew Brooke, was previously the Library Services Manager at Royal Holloway, and has led several large improvement projects to Library Services including the refurbishment of part of Founder’s Library, and the introduction of self-service in the Founder’s and Bedford Libraries. Matthew also worked very closely on the recent social learning space in the Bedford Library. Previously, Matthew managed the Founder’s library, and had been a liaison librarian for several departments including English, Music and History.

Finally, Tim Wales joins us as Associate Director (E-Strategy) from the Open University Library where he was the Learning & Teaching Librarian Team Leader for the Faculty of Maths, Computing & Technology and, previously, the Open University Business School. Tim’s career has also seen him work in the City as a researcher for an investment bank and at various University of London libraries, having started out in the information profession as a trade journalist in Lowestoft.

The first challenge of the new team and all library staff at Royal Holloway has been the completion of tlc@bedford, a new social learning space now entering its second term. For further details see the article in this issue and the [tlc@bedford](http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=klouRhI_VpA) YouTube video at: http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=klouRhI_VpA



Royal Holloway Library's new management team (left to right) Coral Black; Matthew Brooke; Tim Wales and John Tuck

Tim Wales
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University of Sussex

At the end of September 2008, Dorothy Sheridan retired from her post as Head of Special Collections and Research Services after nearly 35 years with the University having received an honorary professorship in acknowledgement of her contribution to the university. We are delighted to announce that Jane Harvell, formerly Research Liaison Manager at Sussex has been appointed to the post and took up her new role at the start of 2009. Joanna Ball, currently sub-librarian at Trinity College Cambridge will be joining us in early May as Research Liaison Manager.

Elsewhere in the Library we have launched a number of new initiatives on the technical front. Our Twitter account (<http://twitter.com/sussex-library>) has already attracted a number of 'followers' from as far away as New Zealand. Our new Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Brighton-United-Kingdom/University-of-Sussex-Library/43322833281?ref=mf>) is also gaining a respectable following, which we hope to further improve as we set to marketing it. Finally, we recently launched Aquabrowser as our 'beta-catalogue' (<http://beta.library.sussex.ac.uk/ABL/>): aimed to run in parallel with the main library catalogue, it is proving extremely popular with our users and we are adding more functionality for trial on an on-going basis.

Sally Faith
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Advice for authors

SCONUL Focus is the journal of SCONUL, the Society of College, National and University Libraries. It aims to bring together articles, reports and news stories from practitioners in order to generate debate and promote good practice in the national libraries and the university and higher education college sector.

Contributions are welcomed from colleagues in all fields and at all levels: we merely request that the items contributed are concise, informative, practical and (above all!) worth reading.

Although we do not make strict stipulations about length we do recommend authors to consult a recent issue of *SCONUL Focus* to see if their approach seems in keeping with other published pieces.

SCONUL Focus is published in both paper and electronic versions. The electronic version is on open access via the SCONUL Web site. Any author who does not wish to have their article made available via the Web should let the Editor know.

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A copy of *SCONUL Focus* can be supplied on request to a member of the Editorial Board or from SCONUL's office at 102 Euston Street, London NW1 2HA, email: sconul@sconul.ac.uk. An online version can be found via www.sconul.ac.uk.

Items should be submitted (preferably) via email or on disk to your contact on the Editorial Board or Antony Brewerton (antony.brewerton@warwick.ac.uk).

As well as text, we are also keen to publish images and would especially like to include author photos where possible. Please either send prints or digital photographs (resolution 300 dpi or above) to your contact on the Editorial Board.

It is helpful if authors follow our house style when submitting their articles:

- Spelling in '-ise' etc. is preferred to '-ize'.
- Capitalisation is ruthlessly minimal. In individual libraries it is usual to refer to 'the Library', 'the University', 'the College' etc. Please resist this in our newsletter: unless there is any ambiguity use 'the library' etc.
- Spell out acronyms at their first occurrence. Avoid 'HE' for 'higher education', which we prefer to write in full (our overseas readers may be unfamiliar with the abbreviation HE).
- Please use single quotation marks, not double.
- Web addresses should be written in full and –where possible– be underlined for purposes of clarity.
- References should appear as numbered footnotes at the end of the article, in the following forms (we prefer not to reverse surnames and initials)
 - 1 A.N.Author, *Title of book*, Place: Publisher, 2000, pp 23-6
 - 2 P.B.Writer, 'Title of chapter or article', in Q.V.Editor, ed., *Interesting articles about libraries*, Place: Publisher, 2000, pp 262-3
 - 3 B.M.Researcher, 'Title of article', *Journal of pseudodocumentalism*, 70 (2), 1989, pp 117-20

Anyone wishing to discuss possible articles or needing more information should contact:

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We look forward to hearing from you.

