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# SCONUL Focus

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#### Contents

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- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 3  | Widening your networking  |
| 4  | The future of librarianship:<br><i>Lorna Dodd</i>   |
| 8  | From librarian to lecturer:<br><i>Helen Fallon, Mairead McQuaid</i>   |
| 12 | Subject liaison at Lincoln<br><i>Philippa Dyson</i>   |
| 15 | A new ERA? Marketing and delivering a user-education event for academic staff<br><i>Darren Taylor</i>   |
| 19 | Making more of your coffee time - just add hot water<br><i>Susan O'Sullivan</i>   |
| 21 | Evaluating the Cephalonia method of library induction<br><i>Lisa Peters, Judith Brown, Eric Davies, Sue Hultum, Pam Thomas, Marion Thompson and Anne Williams</i> |
| 23 | Catalyst for change: everyday learning<br><i>Alan Seatwo</i>  |
| 26 | The Irish Working Group on Information Literacy: a cross-sectoral approach<br><i>Terry O'Brien, Philip Russell</i>  |
| 30 | Supporting research - why you should give more thought to CCM<br><i>Sally Curry</i>   |
| 34 | Collaborative collection management of monographs: the White Rose experience<br><i>Christopher M. Senior</i>  |
| 37 | In 2007 should we be loaning journals?<br><i>Steve Lee</i>  |
| 40 | Digitisation at the University of Lincoln<br><i>Faye Cleminson</i>  |
| 42 | Institutional repository 'GTI': establishing and populating a research repository for the University of Wolverhampton<br><i>Frances Hal, John Rule</i>            |
| 47 | Sussex Research Online<br><i>Adrian Hale</i>  |
| 50 | 'What tangled webs ...': redesigning the University of Warwick Library website<br><i>Simon Speight, Hannah Perkins</i>  |
| 54 | From years of experience ...building a better annual report for the library<br><i>Sally Faith</i>   |
| 55 | Introducing England's newest university - the University of Cumbria<br><i>Margaret Weaver</i>   |
| 58 | Fanfare for the Conservatoire<br><i>Robert Allan</i>  |
| 59 | Work-based learning at Newman College of Higher Education<br><i>Chris Porter</i>  |
| 62 | Masterclasses at UCE Birmingham library services<br><i>Janice Bell</i>  |
| 64 | Grant funding for Irish academic libraries - some opportunities<br><i>Terry O'Brien, Kieran Cronin, Ted Lynch</i>   |
| 70 | Skills for today's information professional<br><i>Lis Parcell</i>   |

72	Developing the workforce: the introduction of behavioural competencies at the University of Huddersfield <i>Sue White</i>
74	A week in the life of Bodley's Librarian <i>Sarah E. Thomas</i>
78	News from SCONUL
79	The SCONUL top concerns survey 2007 <i>Christopher West</i>
86	CURL/SCONUL digest of scholarly communication news <i>Frederick J. Friend</i>
92	'Shifting boundaries': SCONUL Conference 2007 <i>Reviewed by Antony Brewerton</i>
106	SCONUL Transparency Event <i>Reviewed by Carole Pickaver</i>
108	The USTLG spring meeting <i>Fiona Bowtell, Kara Jones</i>
109	Value-added collections: the Oxford Libraries Staff Conference <i>Gillian Beattie</i>
112	Digital repositories: dealing with the digital deluge <i>Reviewed by Neil Jacobs</i>
113	LILAC 2007 conference report <i>David Matthews, Emily Shields, Rosie Jones</i>
115	New Publications from LISU
115	News from member libraries
122	Advice for authors

### Editorial information

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## ERRATUM

In issue 40 of *SCONUL Focus* we ran the article 'Redefining services to distance learners' by Karen Tyers. We inadvertently represented Karen's reference to Edgehill University as Edgehill College. We have now corrected the online version of the issue but would just like to take this opportunity to apologise for any confusion or inconvenience caused.

Antony Brewerton  
*SCONUL Focus* Editorial Board

*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.

Opinions expressed in *SCONUL Focus* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of *SCONUL*.

## Widening your networking



The above photo is not an attempt to display two of my less appealing characteristics: rampant egotism and bad spelling. No. This author photo (as we editors call them) is used to highlight the fact that this issue contains a review of the recent - and highly successful - *SCONUL* Conference, which included a visit to Birmingham's Ikon Gallery. (Thank you to SitMui in the *SCONUL* Office for 'forcing' me to pose.)

Part of the Conference review comes from self-styled Conference virgins Clare Langman and Trish Fouracres. Any other such novices should be pleased to see the (welcome) return of our series 'Skills for today's information professional' with Lis Parcell's tips on making the most of conferences.

Conferences are important for keeping up-to-date with developments and networking. They are - for many of us - a key part of our professional activity. I was recently on an interview panel and one question we asked was what the candidates saw as the benefits of professional activity. For me, the most interesting answers covered change management: an awareness that there isn't just one way of doing things and the importance of learning from others. We are good at doing this at a national level. But what about internationally? We regularly get visitors from Europe, Africa and Australia visiting our Learning Grid at Warwick. But how many of us step outside our shores to see what other libraries are doing?

*SCONUL* has tried to rectify this with its recent programme of international tours. The Australian tour was reported on in issue 37 of *Focus*. A successful tour of South Africa has just been completed and a Canadian programme is currently being put together for September/October 2008.

But what can *SCONUL Focus* do to foster increased international understanding? The next issue of *Focus* will tackle this. Alongside a review of *SCONUL's* South African visit we are planning to run a host of articles from *SCONUL's* sister bodies worldwide to give a flavour of developments across the globe plus other pieces covering international issues.

Anyone wishing to add relevant stories or articles is invited to contact a me or another member of the Editorial Board.

We look forward to widening our focus.

Antony Brewerton  
*SCONUL Focus* Editorial Board

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# The future of librarianship:

## moving out of the library and into the faculty

### How problem-based learning is transforming the traditional role

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This article discusses how the trend towards new approaches in teaching and learning such as problem-based learning are radically impacting on librarians.

#### INTRODUCTION

As we all know, the role of the librarian is changing at a rapid rate and there has been a lot written about the 'blended librarian'. In addition to our traditional work we are now expected to have proficient IT skills so that we can exploit the multitude of subject databases and web resources available. New technologies and services mean that we also need to be adept in the promotion of resources to our users. In addition to all of this, a major part of our role is to teach users how to navigate their way around the new and ever-changing information landscape. In fact, it could be argued that the teaching role of the librarian is one of the most significant changes in the profession. Librarians are increasingly moving out of the library building and into classrooms and lecture theatres. Undeniably, the rise of information literacy over that past fifteen years clearly illustrates this shift in academic librarianship.

In the future this could continue to evolve in a way that integrates librarians fully into the academic community. Librarianship is not the only profession undergoing a period of change. Third-level education is also experiencing a shift, particularly in its approach to teaching and learning. In Ireland, the gap between second- and third-level education seems to be growing and many institutions are taking steps to address this. Coupled with a more competitive market within higher education, institutions are looking for more inno-

vative ways to approach teaching that will engage students, not only providing knowledge but also developing skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. One of these new approaches is problem-based learning (PBL). From a librarian's perspective, PBL engages students with information in a way that radically impacts on how they use the library.

### **WHAT IS PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING?**

PBL is an approach to teaching that centres on the students, encouraging them to take responsibility for their own education. Instead of traditional lectures where students are presented with information and then shown an example from practice, PBL begins with a problem. Students are divided into small groups, each with a role such as 'leader', 'time-keeper' or 'scribe'. Each group is assigned a member of staff who acts as group facilitator. The group is then presented with a problem from practice. For example, medical students may be presented with a patient in a doctor's office complaining of specific symptoms. Students discuss what they believe the 'problem' is about. They go through a brainstorming process where they identify what information the 'problem' provides them with, what information they already know that can be applied to the 'problem' and what information they do not know that they may need. By doing this they identify what are called 'learning issues'. After this initial session, students then search for information in order to satisfy their 'learning issues'. This means they must undergo independent, self-directed information seeking. They then return to the group to share information they found and apply it to the 'problem'. Key to all of this is the role of the group facilitator. Staff no longer deliver information to students but allow them to find their own way through the 'problem'. They guide students, ensuring they are focused on relevant 'learning issues' that will help them meet learning objectives. When PBL works successfully staff intervene very little and reading lists are rarely provided.

The PBL process equips students with many skills and opportunities, such as a peer learning environment, socialisation, communications and team-working skills, critical-thinking skills, problem-solving skills, the ability to integrate new knowledge and information-literacy skills. Many studies have shown that PBL has a significant impact on the way in which students use the library and develop their information-literacy skills.<sup>1</sup> In comparison to their traditional

curriculum counterparts, PBL students use the library more often and for longer periods of time. They ask more complex questions at information desks, use a wider range of resources, use online databases and journals from a much earlier stage in their academic career and are more discerning regarding all types of information, particularly the internet.<sup>2</sup>

### **BACKGROUND**

During the academic year 2004–05 I undertook a masters degree in library and information studies for which I had to write a minor thesis. When choosing a topic I decided to draw from personal experience and conduct a case study of the Veterinary Medicine Library in University College Dublin, where I had been working for the previous few years. The undergraduate veterinary medicine curriculum in Ireland had undergone a major review in the mid-1990s and as a result, PBL had been introduced into the first two years.<sup>3</sup> Within the library, we were all aware that PBL was having a significant impact; however, as often happens, this was anecdotal and there was no real evidence. My research covered three main areas: the impact PBL was having on students' information-literacy skills, the use of library resources (both physical and virtual) and the role of the librarian. Most of my findings supported those of other studies carried out around the world. Significantly, within PBL, the role of the librarian was shifting dramatically.

### **THE LIBRARIAN AND PBL**

When PBL was first introduced, the library and its resources became a fundamental part of the teaching and learning process. Because students were no longer expected to use just one 'core' textbook there was an immediate emphasis on the entire range of available information resources. The lack of reading lists in PBL meant that academics had to actively engage with the librarian in order to ensure appropriate resources were available. This meant that the librarian needed to have a full understanding of what students needed to know and which resources were most appropriate.

A key feature of PBL in the veterinary school is the continuing consultation between librarian and faculty. This consultation resulted in the librarian being invited to join the PBL module as a group facilitator. In turn, becoming a group facilitator has integrated the librarian's role into the academic community and has enabled the librarian to develop and adjust information literacy instruc-

tion (ILI) in a way that better suits the needs of the students.

Undertaking the role of group facilitator is a significant departure from that of the traditional librarian. The librarian is not only performing in a support or administrative role but is now also involved in delivering part of the academic programme. Inviting the librarian to become group facilitator happens for two significant reasons. First, PBL brings the library to the forefront of academic life, drawing attention to the skills, expertise, resources and services that the librarian can offer. Secondly, because group facilitators in PBL are not required to have any specialist subject knowledge but to guide students through the problem, librarians are often viewed as suitable facilitators.<sup>4</sup> Although, there is some debate about this in the literature, it is common to see librarians taking on the role of facilitator and this is often necessary in order to meet human-resource demands and to maintain a collaborative relationship between library and faculty.<sup>5</sup>

In the veterinary school, the development of a collaborative relationship between the library and the faculty resulted in a greater level of consultation and a much closer link between academics and librarian. As a group facilitator, the librarian is now present at faculty meetings, planning and evaluating the PBL module. When interviewed for my research, the librarian commented on a greater level of consultation and co-operation that may not otherwise have existed without PBL. This took the form of discussions with the librarian when PBL was first introduced in order to ensure that the library could support PBL, continually referring to the librarian regarding resources to support each of the 'problems' and developing the students' information-literacy skills so that students can fully participate in the PBL process.

PBL fundamentally changes the way in which students find and use information.<sup>6</sup> The lack of reading lists means that they become self-directed learners who need to pass through a series of steps in order to participate effectively in the PBL process. First, students have to identify what information they need. Then they need to identify the most appropriate resources in which to find that information and evaluate it in order to determine if it is reliable and relevant. They then must apply the information to the problem and integrate it into their existing knowledge in a meaningful way. Most significantly, this has to be achieved in a timely manner, so that the students are prepared for the next PBL session.<sup>7</sup>

Notably, when I was gathering data for my research, both the librarian and academic staff commented on how ILI is now integrated into the curriculum, as a consequence of PBL. Taking such an active role in the PBL module and having continuing consultation with faculty resulted in a joint decision to integrate ILI. The role of group facilitator made it possible for the librarian to observe students' needs and the resources they used. Alongside this, for the first time the librarian had a real insight into what kind of sessions and instruction would be most useful. For example, the librarian observed that students were more likely to use the internet for PBL. Therefore, ILI sessions were adjusted to include a greater emphasis on how to effectively search for reliable information on the world wide web. This resulted in ILI no longer being delivered as part of pre-semester induction but as an integral part of the PBL module. This instruction is now delivered during the first 'problem' so that it is received at the point of need and is more relevant and in context with what students are doing.

Faculty perceptions of the librarian have also shifted as a result of PBL. Staff observed the important role the librarian plays in the academic process. They realised that the librarian provides vital support, teaching students best practices such as selecting appropriate resources and verifying information by checking other sources. Because of the critical role that the library plays in PBL, it is commonplace for the librarian to become a partner in the academic process.<sup>8,9</sup> In the veterinary school, the introduction of PBL led to the effective integration of the librarian into the academic community in a way that had never happened before. The librarian is now involved in planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the academic curriculum, and these crucial developments have led to a much closer relationship between the library and faculty.

#### **MOVING BEYOND THE VETERINARY SCHOOL**

Once I had completed my masters in library and information studies I took up the post of liaison librarian for the school of nursing, midwifery and health systems. Within the first month of undertaking this new role I discovered that there was an academic in the school who was planning to introduce PBL into a postgraduate module. We met and discussed our respective interests and I was subsequently invited to participate. What was most significant about this invitation was the level of participation offered. I was involved from

the very beginning right through to the evaluation stage.

The first stage was to write the problems for the module. This was a fascinating process and it was extremely enlightening to be part of the curriculum design. Having involvement in writing the problems had several benefits, not just for me as the librarian but also for the academic. First, I had access to the specific learning outcomes for each problem. This enabled me to gain an understanding of what resources students were expected to use. For one problem, it had been anticipated that students would use a resource that wasn't held in the library at all. Without library involvement at this stage, students would have been unable to find the information and would not have achieved their learning outcomes. Secondly, I was able to suggest how some problems could be modified in order to allow students to develop their information-literacy skills. For example, we designed one problem in a way that required students to retrieve varying opinions on a topic. Consequently, students had to evaluate the information found in order to determine its usefulness.

The librarian's being involved at such an early stage also enabled the effective planning of ILI so as to deliver the most appropriate session at the point of need, making it as relevant and useful as possible. In addition to all of this, the academic commented on how beneficial it was to have the librarian involved. She expressed how academics can often be very linear because they are subject-driven. Having a librarian involved meant the problems became much more creative and innovative, forcing her to 'think outside the box'.

I was also involved in discussions regarding assessment. Although I didn't make any decision on assessment criteria, I was present at discussions about assessment. This provided a full understanding of what was expected from the students in terms of the quality, variety and quantity of material. Therefore ILI sessions were geared towards specific assessment needs. As assessment is often a driver for learning, this fully engaged the students.

Being involved in so much of the planning and development meant that it was natural for me to also take on the role of group facilitator and I reaped all the benefits experienced by the veterinary librarian. In addition, involvement in the planning stages provided a deeper understanding of the learning outcomes, which meant I became a more effective facilitator.

To evaluate the usefulness and success of the module we held a focus group. Facilitating this presented immediate feedback regarding students' information-seeking experiences and the usefulness of the ILI sessions. Interestingly, the feedback was in tune with other data relating to the undergraduate veterinary students. In addition, similar to the veterinary librarian, I continue to work closely with academics to develop this module. Furthermore, the library is now becoming involved in similar modules across the university in areas as diverse as diagnostic imaging and English.

## CONCLUSION

Although the literature concerning libraries and PBL is relatively small, there is a definite trend towards the integration of the librarian into the academic community. As trends in teaching and learning continue to shift towards more student-centred approaches there is a corresponding movement towards a developing and rewarding partnership between the library and faculty. This must be regarded as a positive development, even if it impacts on the librarian's role in a fundamental way. The worlds of information and higher education will continue to change and shift unpredictably. However, it seems that there remains a vital role for the librarian. Moreover, from experience and from what the literature shows us, these changes have resulted in a deeper understanding, acknowledgement, recognition and rewards for libraries and librarians and the crucial role they play in the academic community.

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## From librarian to lecturer:

**experiences of introducing an accredited information literacy module to a part-time undergraduate degree**



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### INTRODUCTION

This article describes the design and delivery of an accredited module in information literacy to part-time adult students on a BA degree in local and community studies, offered by the department of adult and community education of the National University of Ireland (NUI) at both its Maynooth and Kilkenny campuses.

Following brief background information about the degree, we explain why an independent module was considered desirable and present the desired learning outcomes, giving brief details of content, method of delivery, marking system and student feedback. The article concludes with a reflection on our experience.

### BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAMME

The BA in local and community studies is a part-time modular degree programme. Modules are delivered in the evening and on occasion as one-week summer schools. Modules come in two varieties: a 5-credit module involving 24 contact hours and a 10-credit module involving 48 contact hours. In order to attain an honours BA degree, a student must obtain 180 credits, with a diploma being offered on obtaining 90 credits.

The degree offers two strands of study – a local studies strand and a community studies strand.



On completion of four introductory modules, students decide whether to major in local or community studies. This decision affects their subsequent choice of modules. There are some modules open to both strands throughout the programme.

#### **WHY AN ACCREDITED MODULE IN INFORMATION LITERACY?**

Providing training in information literacy within this formal degree programme presented challenges not experienced in the traditional linear undergraduate degree programme, where there is a continuum from year to year and information literacy can be embedded progressively into each year of the programme. The structure of this degree, where students select from a choice of over 40 modules across the social sciences, means that any attempt to embed information literacy into a particular module will disenfranchise students not taking that particular module. Following consultation with the department of adult and community education, it was agreed that a fully accredited standalone information literacy module was needed.

Many of the students are in full-time employment and/or have other significant commitments. In order to be classed as mature they have to be aged 23 or over by 1 January in the year of admission. The age range is from the late-twenties through and past retirement age. In the box below are some comments that give a profile of the rich variety of students the course attracts.

Teresa Mullen, the chair of Kilkenny Co. Council, mother of seven, grandmother and BA (community studies) graduate in 2002, comments:

'It was the first opening I got in my life back into education ... I had left school at thirteen ... if it hadn't been here in Kilkenny I wouldn't be part of it, it was that simple. And it all started from there ... elected to the County Council, Chairperson ... sure, if I had seen it on TV five years ago I would have said it was a daft script!'

Willie Smyth, a farmer from County Tipperary, enrolled for the part-time BA in local studies at Kilkenny in 1998, graduating in 2002. He is currently completing his doctorate with the department of history at NUI Maynooth: 'Having completed my degree, on an impulse I applied to the University to do a Masters in modern history and was later upgraded to a PhD ... The experience is certainly one to be

savoured but should come with a warning – it's addictive.'

Pat Tynan graduated with a BA in local studies in 2002, took the higher diploma in education at the main campus in Maynooth, and now teaches full-time in addition to his other interests:

'The BA offered by the NUIM Kilkenny Campus offered me the opportunity to achieve a degree. For one who did not have the opportunity to go on to University this course opened a door that had seemed to be permanently closed ... So for me the course was very successful and has offered me exciting, challenging and rewarding new career opportunities.'

Students come to either the Kilkenny or the Maynooth campus to attend lectures. Outside lecture time, they spend little time on campus, most living significant distances from their place of study. Thus, they need a way to use library resources without having to physically come to the library. Alongside this, a number of the students have not been in formal education for a significant amount of time or indeed may have had little access to formal education. Developments such as e-books and e-journals and the technologies to access these resources are generally unfamiliar to them.

While students undertake a basic IT module in their first semester (or get an exemption through passing a competency test) this focuses on basic Word and Excel skills rather than on information literacy. As part of the common study skills programme offered to new students, workshops giving a basic introduction to the library and its resources are provided. However, this is at a very introductory level and focuses on using the library catalogue and gaining familiarity with the physical layout of the library. Students, particularly those at more advanced stages in their courses, need a much higher level of information literacy skills. Following consultation with the department of adult and community education, a module was designed and presented to Academic Council, where it was approved.

It was agreed that the focus of the module should be on electronic resources, thus addressing the issue of students being unable to visit the library in person.

## THE MODULE

The module aims to:

- teach students how to find and evaluate information sources via a range of electronic tools, including library catalogues, electronic journals, electronic books, databases and the internet
- teach students how to design effective search strategies
- provide training on the skill of compiling an annotated bibliography, including correct citation, writing a short abstract and structuring a bibliography
- provide an introduction to the Moodle virtual learning environment
- increase students' awareness of electronic information sources
- provide information skills for lifelong learning.

## LEARNING METHOD

The module is run over 24 hours, of which 18 are evening-class contact. Classes are delivered in 3-hour blocks, the first part being a lecture. This is followed by a practical session where students get an opportunity, through Moodle quizzes, to put into practice what they have just learned.

Six of the module hours are carried out online, where students complete and submit assignments remotely via Moodle.

## ASSIGNMENT

As with all the modules on this degree programme, there is no formal examination. Rather students are asked to compile an annotated bibliography on their thesis topic or another topic agreed with the librarian. This should:

- be on a specific rather than a general topic
- have some Irish context
- include a comprehensive introduction covering topics such as the reason for the choice of subject, the scope of the bibliography and the range of electronic resources consulted
- have a minimum of 25 items listed
- follow the Harvard or the Irish Historical citation style
- have annotations (abstracts) of approximately four lines
- give some indication of the resources consulted to identify items included.

The breakdown of marks is 80% assigned to the bibliography, 10% for quizzes carried out in Moodle and 10% for a review of a database of the student's choice.

## CHANGES/DEVELOPMENTS

The module, which first ran in 2004, has proved very popular with students, particularly those in the final stages of their degree programme who are preparing their minor thesis. Approximately 60 people have completed the module to date. Initially the module was offered to students in the final stages of the BA, but it is now being offered to those at less advanced stages. Feedback from students indicated that they would benefit by undertaking this module earlier in their course of study. In this way they could apply the skills acquired to other modules in their course.

Building on student and librarian experience/ feedback, it has been modified/ developed in a number of ways.

More support is provided to the students, through the provision of lecture presentations, direct links to the library catalogue, databases and other e-content via Moodle. Developments in Irish databases, including the acquisition of *Irish Newspapers Online* and the development of the *Irish History Online* website, have meant that the range of electronic sources available to those who do local studies rather than community studies has increased significantly. The initial lack of electronic resources for the former group had led them to perceive themselves as disadvantaged.

The introduction and development of e-books – many of which are relevant to both strands of the programme – has necessitated new input into the module.

## EVALUATION

Standard departmental evaluation forms are completed by students and returned to the course administrator. Overall, student feedback is very positive and helps feed into the further development of the module.

In the box below are some comments from students' evaluation forms.

*This module opened up a whole world of information that I was not aware of.*

*The sharing of views and the practical hands-on experience was excellent.*

*What I've learned about finding information will help me in my life outside college.*

*The information gained was not so dense as to leave one mind-boggled!*

Feedback from the external examiner, an academic from the United Kingdom, is also very positive and encouraging. He perceives the module as an exciting new development in this undergraduate programme.

We ourselves would like to evaluate how effectively we are using technology, particularly the Moodle virtual learning environment (VLE), and have asked the university's education technologist to assist us in this before we next deliver the module.

#### **LIBRARIANS' EXPERIENCE AND REFLECTION**

While both of us have had experience of delivering information literacy sessions, we found that the experience of designing and delivering an accredited module presented challenges we had not encountered in situations where there is no formal accreditation. One challenge is to make academics and others aware of the difference between information and IT skills. The fact that one of us is a member of the course board for the programme helped in this.

Another challenge is navigating new relationships. Now instead of being the helpful librarian at the end of the telephone/e-mail or engaged in the reference query, we are lecturers and examiners imposing deadlines and standards. We ourselves have had to acquire new knowledge about how the academic system works, including marking/grading systems, exam boards, external examiners, repeat submissions and so forth. Part of the process is providing individual feedback on results. We both have had to deal with disappointed students who questioned the fairness of their marks. We quickly became aware that marking systems need to be very explicit and the process completely transparent. While an external examiner reviews the marks, we are ultimately responsible and accountable. In effect we moved from being

librarians to becoming lecturers, examiners, mentors and advisors without the real knowledge of where to draw the line in each role.

Increasingly working in a Moodle environment, students expect to have virtually 24-hour contact with us, anticipating instant feedback on their queries, which are submitted either via e-mail or through the moodle forum. We have had to deal with and manage these expectations.

The marking/grading system in place in the university is, in our opinion, somewhat vague and possibly open to interpretation. Perhaps it is designed for a more standard essay/examination type of environment. For this particular module we feel that a more explicit marking structure, allocating specific marks to each section of the bibliography and with deductions for incorrect or absent elements of citations, would provide a useful tool when correcting students' assignments. This would also provide the students with a clear indication of where they have lost marks and why. We hope to have this marking structure in place before the module is next presented.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This module is still in its early stages of development. It will continue to be adapted as new electronic resources are developed, and as new needs emerge from student feedback. Our own professional and personal development in the role of librarian/lecturer will no doubt also inform the development of what we see as a very exciting and innovative module.

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# Subject liaison at Lincoln



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## INTRODUCTION

It is intended in this article to outline the model of academic support at the University of Lincoln, and to describe as a case study the support arrangements for the faculty in which the model is most developed.

## BACKGROUND

The University of Lincoln has been through many changes in the last five years or so. Its headquarters was originally in Hull. It established a presence in Lincoln in 1996, and in 2003 it closed its Hull Cottingham Road campus and relocated its headquarters to Lincoln. It now has smaller campuses in the Derek Crothall Building in the centre of Hull, at Riseholme Park in the north of Lincoln and at Holbeach Technology Park near Spalding.

The department of library and learning resources in Lincoln occupied a learning resource centre from 1997 to 2004. This building was shared with the faculty of media and humanities and contained a double-height TV studio and media-production facilities. In 2004 the department moved into a former warehouse converted into a university library.

The origins of the University of Lincoln academic support model lie in a 1997 departmental restructure which established the role of learning adviser. In 2001 the department was restructured again. The major functional teams were learning advisers, acquisitions and reader services. The departmental structure also included a management team, consisting of a head of department and two managers, and an administrative team.

The role of learning adviser was described in a case study in the book *Centred on learning*.<sup>1</sup> Two developments have impacted on the model since 2003 when the book was published: the establish-

ment of the role of senior academic librarian (formerly manager) in 2004, with the renaming of the role of information and learning adviser (formerly learning adviser) to become academic subject librarian (or ASL for short); and the departmental restructure of 2006, which led to greater emphasis on faculty teams. This will be explained shortly.

## THE ACADEMIC SUBJECT LIBRARIAN ROLE

The main purposes of the ASL role, as outlined in the 2006 job description, are:

- To provide effective support for, and work closely with, university faculties to ensure that their library needs are met
- To be proactive and develop best practice models of support, through knowledge of experiences elsewhere in the sector that are appropriate to university faculties
- To be champion within the faculties for the teaching and learning development office (concerned with the enhancement of the quality of learning and teaching across the university).

The principal accountabilities include:

- To provide specialist knowledge, in and support for, the learning, teaching and research activities of a university curriculum area
- To establish a relationship with a university faculty and develop knowledge of the associated curriculum areas, including developments in teaching, learning and assessment to inform the provision of resources and services
- To contribute to the embedding of excellence, innovation and professional development throughout the university's learning and teaching activity.

## SUBJECT COVERAGE

In 1997 the intention was to provide one learning adviser per subject (around 32 at the time). This was never likely to be achieved and the numbers stabilised in the high teens. The 2001 restructure allocated one learning adviser to support each academic department. The 2006 restructure reduced the ASL numbers by two (from 16 to 14). Thus the faculty structure and associated ASLs before and after the 2006 restructure were as follows:

Art, architecture and design – before: 3; after: 3  
Business and law – before: 5; after: 3

Health, life and social sciences – before: 5; after: 4  
Media and humanities – before: 3; after: 3  
Technology – before: vacant for extended period;  
after: 1

It might be worth mentioning that the reduction in posts was achieved without the need for redundancies. Two ASLs found jobs elsewhere in the university. Other changes were made through ASLs moving between teams.

#### **FACULTY TEAMS**

Introduced with the 2006 restructure was the concept of faculty teams. As can be seen in the above list, three faculty teams have three ASLs, one (with a strong presence at our Hull campus) has four, and technology had one until that faculty merged with the faculty of media and humanities early in 2007, at which point the ASL joined the media and humanities team, giving that faculty a team of four.

One advantage of weakening the link between ASLs and specific academic departments was to protect the position of any ASL supporting a weakening or disappearing department. A recent example was our International Institute for Education Leadership (IIEL), which was relocated in the faculty of media and humanities in 2006 and which has now disappeared as an independent entity altogether. Support for the IIEL was once one ASL's sole responsibility but by the time of its disappearance she had also taken on support for psychology, and since the 2006 restructure she has taken on other subjects as well.

The ASLs in the two teams whose numbers were reduced in 2006 have retained their earlier alignment with a specific academic department and between them they cover the departments who 'lost' their ASLs in the restructure. The ethos of support by the team has developed to deal with this. A simple example is attendance at departmental meetings, which tend to occur on Wednesday afternoons. The team members will spread themselves as best they can to ensure maximum attendance.

At the end of the first year of operation since the restructure, the arrangement appears to be working well. Some academic departments who 'lost' their ASL were initially unhappy but they appear to have got over it. To date, thanks to the professionalism and competence of the ASLs concerned, quality has been maintained and in some cases even improved. Our evaluation mechanisms

include feedback from the faculties through subject committees, student panels, student surveys and the like.

The workload of fewer ASLs covering the same span of academic support is monitored closely. Following the 2006 restructure we are developing the concept of faculty teams to include the reader services team, each member of which is assigned to a faculty team to work with the relevant ASLs in order to share the workload. The reader service team helps with obvious things like checking reading lists, but can also support the ASLs in the development of subject web pages; they can attend subject committee meetings with an ASL when appropriate, and can help to staff the subject support desks. The benefits are intended to flow both ways, giving the reader services team a greater understanding of the academic experience than they would have through merely staffing the library desk. In practice this working together varies in intensity depending on the time of year and the business of the main desk, which is the reader services team's first priority. Nevertheless, the principle has been established.

In addition to direct subject support, there is cross-departmental activity covering all teams through groups focussing on support for researchers, customer services, marketing and systems development.

#### **SENIOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS**

The final building block of the academic support model was the renaming of the two manager posts as 'senior academic librarians' (SALs) by the then director in 2004. Previously academic liaison was the responsibility of one manager, which allowed for only a relatively superficial relationship with the faculties by the post-holder. The split between the two managers allowed the possibility of faculty liaison at a senior level to become a more effective relationship. The SALs line-manage the ASLs in the faculty teams for which they have responsibility.

#### **THE FACULTY OF HEALTH, LIFE AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

The support for the faculty of health, life and social sciences (HL&SS) is the most developed model within the department of library and learning resources. A faculty library liaison committee exists, chaired by the relevant SAL, as a consequence of which the SAL is a member of the faculty executive committee.

The six departments in the faculty are:

- biological sciences
- forensic and biomedical sciences
- school of health and social care
- policy studies
- psychology
- sport, coaching and exercise science.

There is also a centre for clinical and academic workforce innovation (CCAWI).

Four ASLs support the six departments and CCAWI with responsibilities divided as follows:

- biological sciences, psychology, and sport, coaching and exercise science
- social care
- policy studies and forensic science
- health, biomedical science, and CCAWI.

The reorganisation of responsibilities was agreed among the ASLs themselves and represents a fairly equitable division by student numbers.

The ASLs liaise with academic staff, covering areas such as the provision of information resources, the development of the virtual learning environment, administering noticeboards and also the delivery of information skills sessions to students. In addition three members of the reader services team work with the ASLs to form the faculty team. Regular meetings of the faculty team, including the reader services team, are held to monitor progress throughout the year.

The SALs are members of the main committees of the faculties with which they work, covering teaching and learning, research and quality (as members of which they are sometimes called on to participate in validation processes as panel members).

#### **THE FACULTY LIBRARY LIAISON COMMITTEE**

Since 2005, the faculty of HL&SS has had a faculty library liaison committee. This came into being at the suggestion of the dean of faculty, following the establishment of a university library committee (since discontinued, with re-establishment imminent). The committee chair is the relevant SAL. The dean is a member of the committee as are representatives from each academic department, the ASLs in the faculty team and student representatives (of which there were three in 2006/07, though only one managed to attend meetings).

The committee meets four times a year. Its terms of reference are to establish and develop a forum for discussion leading to improvement in the effectiveness of library and learning resources (L&LR) services in support of the faculty, and to report to the faculty executive and faculty board on decisions made regarding L&LR services provided in support of staff and students in HL&SS, including opening hours and access; L&LR resources; the development of L&LR services across all the campuses where HL&SS has a presence; exchange of information; and other matters of mutual interest or benefit which may arise. The committee is a sub-committee of the faculty board.

In the last year, the committee has discussed the national student survey, reference management software, funding, statistics on the usage of e-resources, preparation for the Research Assessment Exercise, an extension to IT access at one of our campuses, NHS funding, preparation for the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment and feedback from the student present.

Other developments which L&LR has undertaken on behalf of the faculty have been the acquisition of ScienceDirect, mostly funded from faculty funds, and a pilot project to develop an institutional repository with RAE outputs from the faculty. The latter has provided valuable information used in the rollout of the RAE repository across the university.

Why does this work so well? A major contributory factor has been the approach of the dean of faculty, which is inclusive, receptive and supportive.

#### **THE FUTURE**

Academic support in the future is likely to be underpinned by a new university library committee, which will report to the university's core executive. The director is also keen to replicate the experience of the faculty of HL&SS by establishing library liaison committees in the other faculties (a feat which was attempted some years ago with one other faculty without success).

Internally within the department, we will seek to develop the faculty teams, in order to increase the support that the ASLs will require from other teams in the department. The university is developing a strategic plan for 2007/12. Part of the departmental contribution to the strategic plan will be to develop the staff to meet the challenges that they will face.

The recent past at the University of Lincoln has been characterised by almost constant change, which is not likely to cease in the near future. The department of library and learning resources seeks to ensure that our support models are robust and flexible enough to deal with it. Continuously strengthening our academic support model should help us to achieve this.

#### REFERENCE

- 1 E. Oyston (ed.), *Centred on learning: academic case studies on learning centre development*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003

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## A new ERA? Marketing and delivering a user- education event for academic staff



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#### BACKGROUND TO ERA EVENTS AT UCE BIRMINGHAM

Since 2001, our academic support team has organised electronic resources awareness events (ERAs) at Kenrick Library, targeted specifically at academic staff. The implicit aims of these events have been to increase academics' awareness and understanding of library-provided electronic resources and to encourage the cascading of awareness and understanding onto their students.

The format of ERA events has varied from a programme of informal drop-in sessions, held over the course of a day, to a single long lunchtime or a series of specific sessions held from 12 to 2pm over a week. Typically, the total number of attendees over the course of an entire week-long event has been very low (31 in 2004, 30 in 2005) in terms of the potential audience of 700+ staff. It was increasingly felt by library staff that the efforts outweighed the benefits.

The team agreed that, for late 2006, a fresh approach was needed to improve the market penetration of the ERA event. An open invitation already sent to heads of schools, offering individual programmes tailored to the specific needs of their academic staff, had met with no response. The team believed what was needed was a more focused programme, following some of the pat-

terns of earlier years' events, while re-invigorating the format.

#### **INNOVATIONS INTRODUCED AND THE NEW FORMAT**

##### **The project manager**

We had recently introduced a new initiative to designate a member of the academic support team as a functional project manager on larger shared tasks. For the ERA event for late 2006 this duty fell to the author, and involved leading the preparation and delivery of the event in partnership with our electronic services librarian. In addition to this innovation in the organisation of ERA, several other elements of the event were approached afresh.

##### **Target audiences**

While the annual ERA event has historically been considered our main vehicle for user-education of academics and staff in other central services, we also wanted to make library staff's CPD (Continuing Professional Development) an objective of the event, opening up the invitation to encourage the participation of library assistants and pre-professional staff and to allow for cross-training of professionals who staff enquiry and reference service points.

#### **FORMAT AND CONTENT OF THE SESSIONS AND SELECTION OF VENUE**

##### **Format**

We offered a scheduled programme of more structured sessions and demonstrations focusing on particular services and subject areas. This programmed approach would also maximise library staff's time, requiring only one or (at most) two hours' time from each presenter, in addition to the continued presence and support of the project manager and electronic services librarian. A full schedule of the demonstrations and presenters was provided in an invitation (pictured) so that potential attendees could arrange to speak to a named member of library staff or attend a session of particular interest to them.

##### **Content**

We wanted to make this year's event a must-see for as many staff as possible, so we asked presenters to emphasise alerts, RSS and other current awareness features, to ensure that 'old hands' who were familiar with the basic functionality of the services would not only get a refresher but also learn something new. The December timing of the event also provided us with another avenue

of communication for our imminent switchover from Classic ATHENS to ATHENS DA.

We decided on a mix of the familiar:

- *TalisList* and our own digital library, UCEEL, as well as a session advising academic staff on using electronic materials under the Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) digital licence
- key subject-specific databases – where we have a great deal of knowledge readily available through our academic support team, such as Westlaw, Ovid's suite of services, ABI/Inform and our databases for the property, construction and planning area

alongside the less familiar:

- multi-disciplinary services such as Web of Science, zetoc and our reference services, Oxford Reference Online and xreferplus which, because of their cross-disciplinary nature, tend to be less frequently demonstrated to staff and students.

##### **A neutral venue**

Although the Perry Barr campus is not large, we had experienced a resistance from academic staff to leave their buildings and visit the Kenrick Library to attend events. We therefore booked a neutral venue – the staff and student development department's flexible learning centre. This is an attractive new suite in a faculty building with interactive whiteboard, small round tables and a complement of wireless laptops for trainees.

#### **TIMING AND PUBLICITY FOR THE EVENT**

Over the years, the scheduling of ERA events has been moved around the academic calendar to try to cater for the largest possible numbers of attendees, but it has proved difficult to identify whether the optimum timing for such an event is during term-time (when staff are on campus, but may well be too busy with students) or vacations (when some staff are absent, but those remaining to prepare classes or conduct research will have reduced contact time). The event was scheduled on weekdays 12–2pm from Thursday 14 to Wednesday 20 December, overlapping the last week of autumn term and the start of the winter vacation.

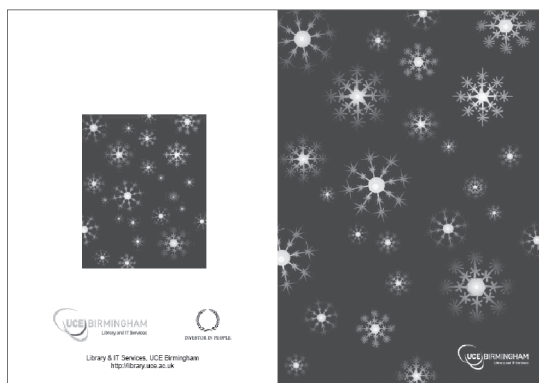
With regard to publicity, mass e-mailing of staff felt impersonal and unwelcoming. In the past, responses had increased when printed flyers or



posters were put in internal mailings, but this had only been attempted for *small* target audiences, such as for new staff only. An internal mailing to the staff for the whole of the Perry Barr site (close on 750) was a considerably larger undertaking. It had also been noted previously that freebies had made a positive impact and they were felt to be a useful tool in drawing in attendees. The idea of a seasonal (strictly non-denominational) celebration of electronic resources now formed the basis of the publicity, with all academic staff receiving a gift or goodie bag including an invitation and freebies.

Commercially produced gift bags proved prohibitively costly, but an effective and inexpensive solution was to use the university's standard white A4 envelope, printed with an original design in a seasonal red and white. This was commissioned from an external design consultant who had been used on other library projects. An address label was applied, but no hints as to the contents or the nature of the mailing were given on the envelopes, to encourage recipients to open them. Inside these intriguingly lumpy envelopes was a selection of appropriate freebies generously sent by our service providers: BEI (British Education Index) pencils and pads for education lecturers; Ovid's fantastic/gruesome organ-shaped stress-busters for health academics; *Grove's* crayons for the creatives; and, of course, posters and user guides for the resources appropriate for all, such as Web of Science, Oxford Reference Online and so on.

Also included in these envelopes was a welcoming invitation with a design matching that on the envelope. Attached to each invitation was a tear-off confirmation slip intended to help us predict numbers and even anticipate the research interests of likely attendees at each session.



The signage for the event followed the same design themes, to add a professional finishing touch to the event. In addition to the print

mailshot the invitation was downloadable<sup>1</sup> and placed on our news web page and intranet site and in our staff newsletter. Similarly, a standard piece of copy was produced, allowing faculty and subject librarians to publicise the event via e-mails and boards of studies.

### WHAT DID WE LEARN? (INCLUDING THE FINDINGS FROM ATTENDEES' FEEDBACK)

Attendance remained as low as in previous years (just 29 attendees across the 10 sessions), and a significant proportion of those attendees were library, rather than academic, staff. Brief feedback forms were collected at the end of each session, with numbers of responses to each question varying slightly, up to a maximum of 25 responses, some of which came from library staff rather than academics.

When asked to suggest how the event could be improved, the perennial problem of timing was still in evidence: 'Try different times of the year.' When asked specifically about the timing of the event, just under a third of respondents thought they would find it useful if the library ran the event annually in December, with a further 41% saying it would be useful once a term (rather than just once a year): unsurprisingly, amongst those staff attending there is a perceived need for training in library resources. Just 14% expressed the view that other times of year were preferable to December, with November, January and February suggested. The small numbers of attendees were commented upon without any prompting: 'Shame more academic staff were not present'; 'More attendance by academic staff could help with getting the message over to students.'

A couple of responses indicated early on that organising the sessions into a scheduled programme with defined content, rather than as the drop-in

Get into the holiday season early this year & come along to one of the Library's ERA (Electronic Resources Awareness) sessions in SCOL's Flexible Learning Centre (E227). There'll be refreshments available and chances for you to get all the latest on electronic resources in a relaxed atmosphere.

Take a look at the programme on offer below and return the form (opposite) or e-mail Mark Brown, Electronic Services Librarian (mark.brown@uce.ac.uk) to book a place on 1 or more sessions. Spaces are strictly limited, so book early to avoid disappointment! All respondents will be entered into our seasonal Prize Draw!

In the meantime enjoy a gift courtesy of one of our many electronic service providers!

\*There may be web access to some of the supplier's promotional material that do not correspond to the address used by the University to access these services. See <http://library.uce.ac.uk/era/erasubjects.htm> for a list of our current subscriptions.

ERA Programme December 2006		
Day	12 to 1 pm	1pm to 2pm
Thursday 14th December	Reference Tools: Kieffer / Oxford Reference Online Leeds Garnett / Corbett Taylor	Resources for Business Job-Py-Smith
Friday 15th December	ZETOC (British Library) / Web of Science Mark Brown / Franco Fich	TalisList Carol Price / Heidi Brindley
Monday 18th December	UCEDL iSkills (Library Monthly Journal) Peter Eddy	Resources for Health Christina Fairhead
Tuesday 19th December	UCEDL Digital Library Bibi Dodd	CLA Explanation License Bibi Dodd
Wednesday 20th December	Web developments in Law: LMS/ EASL/ JORUM Phil Gier	Resources for Property, Construction & Planning Corbett Taylor

Please return this page via internal post to be entered into our Prize Draw!

I would like to book a place on the following session(s)  
(Tick all boxes that apply):

Day	12 to 1 pm	1pm to 2pm
Thurs. 14th December	Xofaw/ORO <input type="checkbox"/>	Resources for Business <input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 15th December	ZETOC/iSkills <input type="checkbox"/>	TalisList <input type="checkbox"/>
Mon 18th December	UCEDL iSkills <input type="checkbox"/>	Resources for Health <input type="checkbox"/>
Tues 19th December	UCEDL <input type="checkbox"/>	CLA Digitalisation Licence <input type="checkbox"/>
Wed 20th December	Web developments in Law: LMS/ EASL/ JORUM <input type="checkbox"/>	Resources for Property, Construction & Planning <input type="checkbox"/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department / School: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return via internal post to:  
 Mark Brown  
 Electronic Services Librarian, Kerrick Library

format of old, had actually partly worked against us. A mix of structured sessions and open drop-ins may be the way forward.

Feedback followed the pattern of previous years: attendees responded very favourably to the sessions, reporting them 'a useful introduction/update' to electronic resources; 24 respondents (96%) felt that the event had expanded their knowledge of library services. As in previous years, those who had attended appreciated contact with library staff and their expertise, coming away with high opinions of the event: 36% gave it the top score of 10 out of 10; 48% gave it a 9; the remaining 16% rated it an 8. Similar high scores were reported for the range of resources, the way they were demonstrated and the extents to which attendees' expectations were met. When asked to identify one thing that they would follow up or use at work, attendees reportedly found value across the whole range of the sessions offered, encouraging us that we had selected the session content correctly.

No positive impact from the mailing and gifts alone could be identified in terms of raising numbers of attendees. More respondents reported that they had found out about the event via their faculty librarian (40%) or e-mail (28%) than via the mailshot and gifts (16%) – although the e-mails were sent out *prior* to their receiving their 'gift bag' and invitation. In addition:

- 68% said e-mail was one way they would like to be kept informed about new library services, while 28% saw their faculty librarian as another means of communication.
- 20% included web pages as one means of finding out about new library services.
- 20% felt that internal print mail – which would include our mailshot – was another way they would like to receive details of new library services.

Despite our disappointment with the low attendance figures, the small numbers of attendees were seen by attendees as a strength: 'Small groups, so you can look at areas which are specific to your needs' provided the opportunity 'to ask questions' and offered 'good support'. Indeed the small numbers resulted in the creation of an informal, sociable, user-oriented setting: 'Friendly staff had 'tailored the course to meet specific needs of audience'.

#### **DAWN OF A NEW ERA?**

While the marketing side of the project was felt to be successful in raising the profile of the library's services, the user-education objectives of the event were only achieved on a very small scale. Infor-

mal feedback suggested that academic staff were engaged by the innovative publicity but the low number of attendees suggests that they remained unconvinced that attendance was important. Our main conclusions are as follows:

#### **Publicity**

While the final publicity materials were recognised as being of a very high standard, the process of commissioning designs, getting quotes, having envelopes and invitations produced and gift packs assembled was time- and staff-intensive. Delays in design and production meant that the mailshot was an all-consuming business. We made a decision to send an interim e-mail to all staff ('Watch your post-tray ... for the full programme and details of how to book your place'), so that they were primed for the arrival of the print publicity and their gifts. Though the planning for this December event began back in July, even longer lead-times in the planning process would be recommended for future events involving third-party-produced publicity materials. We considered sending supplementary publicity in the form of daily e-mails during the week the event was running, though feelings were that they might be perceived as 'nuisance' e-mails. Daily e-mails should be considered for future events, but with one eye on making them appear as friendly and non-coercive as possible.

#### **Changes to the event**

While we had made changes to the organisation, format and timing of the event, none of these factors made a significant impact in terms of numbers of attendees over that of previous years, which had involved relatively smaller-scale efforts. Perhaps a more fundamental question needs to be answered: 'Is an objective of delivering user-education to large numbers of academic staff a valid objective?' Should we continue offering user-education to academic staff or would resources be better deployed delivering to other audiences? A larger-scale survey of academic staff across UCE Birmingham may be needed to identify the perceived needs for user education across the body of academic staff as a whole.

#### **Hooking into 'mandatory' academic activities**

Despite the considerable efforts taken, many academic staff chose not to attend, possibly because they did not perceive the programme as contributing to the success of their core activities of teaching and research, nor to the two mandatory programs rolling out across the university: delivering courses via the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) and providing personal development

planning (PDP) frameworks for students. Future user-education events need to state explicitly, both in the publicity and during the sessions, the ways in which electronic services can be directly integrated into the delivery of high-quality PDP and Moodle courses. Equally, our programmes need to be integrated into institution-wide VLE/PDP support events and structures such as 'Moodle week' to form a true partnership between the VLE and the library's electronic resources in the future.

*With thanks to Enid Pryce-Jones (deputy director of library & learning resources) and Mark Brown (electronic services librarian).*

#### REFERENCE

- 1 [http://library.uce.ac.uk/ERA\\_mailshot.pdf](http://library.uce.ac.uk/ERA_mailshot.pdf)

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# Making more of your coffee time – just add hot water

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#### INTRODUCTION

In January 2004 we at Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (BIAD) libraries began to develop 'Making more of your coffee time – just add hot water', combining the chance for academic colleagues to learn more about what the library has to offer with the chance to enjoy some library-supplied refreshments.

Several thoughts and projects had influenced this idea, including:

- John Ridgway – our faculty librarian – during BIAD site meetings had commented that if we promote library services to academic staff, academic staff are likely to promote our services to students.
- BBCi launched a new way of learning: BBC Online courses promoted on TV through 'Make the most of your lunchtime' – picturing an employee at her workstation, eating sandwiches, working through an online course etc., and this way of learning offered (according to the publicity): (a) an opportunity to develop skills and increase understanding from the privacy of your own PC, (b) a way of learning online at your own pace, and (c) a start in an area that interests you.
- The 2003 CILIP/Emerald public relations and publicity awards promotional campaign winner 'BLT' (Books @ Lunch Time) highlighted just how successful this approach could be.

We identified the following aims:

- to target UCE Birmingham's academic staff (Birmingham Institute of Art and Design is part of the University of Central England, Birmingham)
- to train them in a non-threatening environment – at their PC (if requested)
- to offer tailored information-skills and information-retrieval training, addressing specific requirements (e.g. information required / appropriate pace and pitch)
- to provide an opportunity to promote the library's services and create highlights, such as an update on what's available
- to improve communication, asking 'How are we doing? Is there anything you've been using that we don't???' , taking comments on board and creating a rapport
- to identify basic things such as:
  - o Where is the kettle?
  - o What is to be discussed (tailored to specific needs)?
  - o Where to meet and when.

We created a 'Making more of your coffee time' flyer and coaster (see Figures 1 to 3 for the 2006 versions). We were able to win financial support from Swets and Sainsbury's agreed to provide the coffee and biscuits. Pacific Partnership (a local firm) designed the flyer and Boris Barker (IT technician demonstrator at BIAD) and Malcolm Read (our Digital Print Services Manager) helped design the coaster.

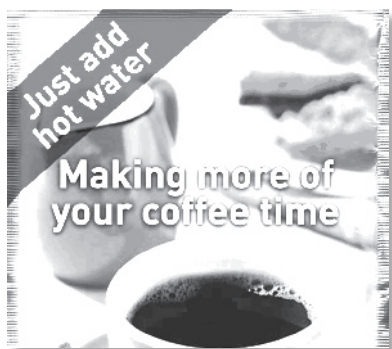


Figure 1. The flyer (front design)

## Making more of your coffee time - just add hot water

Library and IT Services are offering an opportunity for you to receive an update of what's available. An opportunity tailored to your needs plus free coffee, free biscuits and a free Library and IT Services coaster.

When and where? It's up to you - in the  
Library or at your workstation.

We can contact you to discuss details and any particular areas of interest you may have - please provide your

Name:

Email:

Tel no.:

Kettle location:

Figure 2. The flyer (reverse)



Figure 3. Coaster design – using 3 colours on a clear acrylic disc

We decided to launch a pilot project based at the Bournville library. This library supports the Bournville Centre for Visual Arts and is housed in Ruskin Hall, a listed building (opened in 1903) located in the Bournville Village Trust conservation area. The library covers general aspects of art and design, supporting the Foundation Diploma programme, the BA (Hons) Art and Design by Negotiated Study and an MA Visual Arts course.

This pilot project lasted approximately 12 months. Flyers were used as invites but also to maintain our profile. They were periodically placed in staff pigeon holes and on tables in the staffroom and were given out at library events, such as the 'Bournville Library Fangtastic Halloween Givea-

way' where staff were recipients of a Halloween trick or treat bag of goodies whose gifts included our 'Making more of your coffee time' coaster and flyer, some sweets and a pair of luminous fangs.

#### RESULTS

The project was very well received. Comments included 'We'll have to arrange a coffee – soon'; 'I really like this idea'; 'What fun!'; 'I didn't know about this ...'; and 'Thank you.' Generally there was an increase in liaisons with staff, more questions were asked – and meetings tended to occur, very informally, in the library.

The project is best evaluated qualitatively. It's very difficult to measure its 'success' quantitatively – we feel it was successful. Relationships, rapport and communications have been strengthened.

This project will now be rolled out to all UCE Birmingham libraries, once again with financial support from Swets.

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## Evaluating the Cephalaria method of library induction

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*l-r Eric, Pam, Lisa, Marion, Judith, Anne*

Having read the article in *SCONUL Focus* 32 on the Cephalaria method,<sup>1</sup> learning resources at the University of Chester decided to implement it for library induction in 2005. The Cephalaria method promotes an interactive and humorous approach to library induction. Students are given questions to ask about different library services on pieces of card that are colour-coded (for different categories of questions); the questions are then in turn answered by library staff.

In 2006, the Cephalaria method was used again for library induction, but this time with one extra element. Deputy director Angela Walsh suggested carrying out an evaluation, and her suggestion was followed up by the subject teams for education, business and management and law. Nearly 500 students completed the questionnaire. They were asked five questions:

- 1 Did you find the session useful?
- 2 Did you like the interactive nature of the questions?
- 3 Was there too much information?

- 4 Would you like the opportunity of further help with resources? [not used for law students]
- 5 Any other comments?

The questionnaire was deliberately designed to be short as we didn't want to overwhelm the students by getting them to complete a long one, especially as they already had to complete a questionnaire about induction week. Question 4 was excluded for law students because, unlike education and business and management students, all law students have a number of sessions in the first year introducing them to legal resources.

The overall response was very positive. Over 99% found the session useful and 94% liked the interactive nature of the questions, though 9% thought there was too much information. It was perhaps a little disappointing to learn that the session had failed to convince students of the importance of developing information literacy skills: nearly two-thirds of those questioned did not want further help with library resources. Whether this was because they were not sufficiently aware of the range of print and electronic resources the library possesses or because they believed that they already had the requisite skills is unclear. We need to make further efforts to persuade students of the need to develop and improve their information skills.

Many students wrote additional comments, both positive and negative. A number commented very positively on the interactive nature of the session – 'more interesting than just a talk', 'a genius way of involving us', 'a fantastic way to learn and have fun' and 'more exciting and easier to remember compared to just handing out sheets with information on'. A small number said that they would have preferred a tour whilst others said that they preferred the Cephalonia session to a tour. Some students complained that the session took too long and repeated information that they already knew. This complaint may have been due to the nature of the induction programme, as combined students are obliged to attend all sessions timetabled for both of their subjects, for example, business and law students would have to attend the library induction session for business and a library induction for law. This is clearly not beneficial for either the student or the library and needs to be addressed. A number of students complained about having to pay for printing – a decision beyond learning resources' control.

A justifiable complaint from some students was the lack of a handout or similar to remind them of the questions and answers of the session. Usually, the library survival guide (which contained all the information covered) would have been given to students at the end of the session. Last year, unfortunately, the printing of the guide was delayed and so it did not appear until the end of induction week, by which time most of the library induction sessions had taken place. When it became clear that the library survival guide was not going to appear in time, some staff printed the slides as a handout for students.

Library staff generally enjoyed using the Cephalonia method, preferring it to herding groups of students through the library. As the questions were designed to be comical, staff were able to inject some humour, which was appreciated. Staff ran their sessions slightly differently: for example, the law librarian asked students to give their name and where they came from before they read their question as a mini ice-breaker, and the business and management team chose to promote some of the business databases. The teams agreed that Cephalonia worked well with different-sized groups, the exception being very small groups, as the same individuals asked all the questions.

The one aspect of the Cephalonia method that troubled staff was how to get students to read out the prepared questions, bearing in mind that some students could be shy and unwilling to speak out (we did have some students commenting on the questionnaire that they would not have liked to read a question out). Again, the staff took different approaches to distributing the questions. The education team asked students as they entered if they would be willing to read a question; the business and management team also asked students as they entered if they would be willing to read a question and then asked for volunteers once the students were seated, offering chocolate as a reward; whilst the law librarian (working on the principle that lawyers aren't shy) left the questions on seats and told students that they could pass their question on to a neighbour if they didn't want to read it out. All these different approaches worked, as enough students were brave enough to ask the questions.

We have enjoyed using the Cephalonia method in our library induction and are pleased that our questionnaire showed that our students liked this approach. The questionnaire replies did point out some areas that we need to improve, most notably giving students something to take away

that summarises the session. We clearly have a problem with combined students that we need to work with the induction planning team to solve. Finally, it is interesting to note that some students still want and expect a library tour!

#### REFERENCE

- 1 N. Morgan and L. Davies, 'Innovative library induction – introducing the 'Cephalonia method', *SCONUL Focus*, 32, 2004, pp 4–8

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# Catalyst for change: everyday learning

**An overview of an innovative approach to promote information literacy and learning opportunities within voluntary and community groups in Liverpool**



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This article seeks to give a flavour of the outreach knowledge transfer activities within Edge Hill University's learning services. It explains how an innovative approach to promoting information literacy and learning opportunities helped form new relationships between information, education and the voluntary and community sector in the region. These activities also provided opportunities for information professionals to develop further, which both enhances our role and to some extent reinforces our vitality.

#### BACKGROUND

In 2005 Edge Hill was awarded the status of Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. In the same year the university also secured funding from the Higher Education Innovative Fund (HEIF) for an integrated programme of eight projects covering five activity areas and aiming to address regional needs in all three sectors of the economy – private, public and voluntary and community. HEIF funding was awarded to encourage higher education institutions to share their knowledge and expertise in a mutually beneficial way, thus resulting in improvements in outcomes, efficiency and/or quality. This government initiative was referred to as 'Knowledge Transfer' and is defined as 'transferring good ideas, research results and skills between universities, other research organisations, business and the wider community

to enable innovative new products and services to be developed'.<sup>1</sup>

Learning services, a large, converged central support service that includes library, study skills support and e-learning development, was closely involved with the bid for HEIF funding from the outset and led one of the projects. The learning services approach to facilitating and supporting learning has long recognised that learning takes place every day, whether at home, volunteering, visiting relatives or relaxing.<sup>2</sup> Our involvement with the HEIF project has allowed us to embrace this notion in the promotion of information literacy and learning opportunities to voluntary and community groups. As a result, the Community Knowledge Transfer Service was established to support individual and organisational development in the voluntary and community sector, thus widening access to learning for all our communities.

The project aims to achieve this by developing, promoting and delivering:

- 1 learning and development services for people and organisations in the voluntary and community sector
- 2 innovative and non-traditional approaches to learning – including e-learning – to employers, communities and individuals
- 3 learning for disadvantaged individuals and communities.

The role of the information specialist within the project is to:

- provide training and information support to Edge Hill and external community organisations
- develop clients' knowledge and skills via e-learning and other teaching methods in order to enhance their own working practices.

While the role of information specialist combined with educator is not unusual, an academic library extending educational and information support to voluntary and community groups is, we believe, rare, if not unique.

There can be no doubt that librarians play important roles within education institutions: managing printed and digital materials, offering user education and information skills education. The ongoing development of their roles has resulted in an approach that blends information and content management skills with study

and learning skills and increased technology competence (especially in the area of e-learning).

#### **COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING**

For the Community Knowledge Transfer Service we have adopted an approach where learning has been used a tool both for survival and for improving situations and conditions in communities.<sup>3</sup> In my role as knowledge management specialist I frequently work with community groups as a development worker, that is, supporting them in developing their services or products.

#### **My approach to this work**

This includes acting as a broker and facilitator: I meet with clients to identify development needs and concerns and listen for gaps in their knowledge and information about an issue that is concerning them. I may suggest resources, persons or data bases to secure information for the group. In addition, I assist the group in developing their own information-gathering process by suggesting site visits to one or several locations, to confirm new knowledge and to gather additional perceptions about the issue. Eventually, I assist the group to develop a process for connecting the new knowledge into an action plan. In all of these roles I facilitate group learning, in becoming aware of issues, in identifying various sources of information and data, in discussing, observing and reconstructing the concern or issue, and then in designing strategies for implementation or use of the new knowledge.

This approach has been applied in developing a range of development solutions: undertaking research, seminars, workshops, projects and life-long learning programmes. Examples of work I have been involved with include supporting research on equality standards and community cohesion and designing and developing e-learning for community groups, community arts and culture activities and a citizenship training programme.

#### **Example: community works skills**

One example of my approach to knowledge transfer activity is my involvement with a Merseyside Open College Network accredited course: Introduction to Community Works Skills. This course ran from January to July 2006 (on average one day per week) and led to level 2 accreditation with the Open College Network. The course was offered to learners from two of the most deprived areas in Liverpool and was



designed for people who are new to or looking to enter community work, or for those with experience wishing to achieve an accreditation. The skills provided by the course were not only essential skills for community development work, they were also transferable to other careers such as recruiting and supporting volunteers, fundraising, presentation skills, campaigning, equal opportunities work, resolving conflict and group work. My role in the programme was to introduce information skills as part of 'skills for life': using ICT for learning and providing teaching and learning advice and support to trainers.

The six-month-long course was offered to staff from seven community organisations in Liverpool's Toxteth and Norris Green areas and, as a result, 28 received Merseyside Open College Network (MOCN) awards and 13 were awarded National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 2.

Christina is a volunteer of a community organisation supporting domestic violence victims:

*'I am dyslexic and this course gave me the confidence that I didn't have. Not only did I learn the community works skills in the course, but I also learnt the skills where to find information to support my work. I am surprised how much a community development worker can use from the census. I used to think only academics know where to find these things.'*

Lorraine was interested in getting involved with community work and was amazed at how much information was available. While she was studying on the course, she applied for a job and is now working as a centre manager in a community organisation. She recalled,

*'I enjoyed the Information Skills Training session a lot, it made me aware that I would not necessarily know every subject but at least I learned where and how to find information. I no longer felt helpless when I was asked something I don't know. I felt as if I was given a key to an information gateway. Not only am I confident to search for information for my work, I have also known where to find reliable internet sites selling good holidays!'*

#### **KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE**

This article has aimed to explain how the abovementioned approach to promoting information literacy and learning opportunities

has helped to form new relationships between information, education and the wider community outside of the university. Feedback from clients to date indicates that this flexible way of learning has helped community groups understand how learning can be achieved within and beyond the traditional classroom environment. Since the project started in June 2005, over 277 people and 23 organisations have benefited from training and development facilitated by the project. On top of this, the project has also supported organisations in putting together bids that have raised £37,700 from various funding sources – a small amount for the university sector but potentially transformational for small community groups.

The activities I have undertaken with knowledge transfer have certainly developed my own skills and knowledge considerably. My role incorporates four different aspects required by community groups – development worker, educator, information manager and expert adviser. As a *community development worker*, I assist groups in learning, in identifying development needs, identifying various sources of information and data; in discussing, observing and reconstructing concerns or issues; and then in designing strategies for implementation or use of the new knowledge. As an *educator*, I play an active role in the development of information skills in the voluntary sector by promoting information literacy through seminars, workshops, community projects and life long learning programmes. As a result, staff and volunteers from community groups are increasingly aware that information skills are as important as other community work skill sets such as campaigning and fund raising. As an *information manager* I help groups select and evaluate both print and online materials and develop skills in evaluating web-based materials that can then be used by staff and volunteers in the organisation. As an *expert advisor*, I work with community centre managers to develop intranets; train staff to use technology and online resources; and advise staff and volunteers on the availability and value of print and electronic resources that are particularly geared to the work of the community.

#### **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The Community Knowledge Transfer project will continue to support individual and organisational development in the voluntary and community sector. Within the university the project is seeking to strengthen links with other departments to further support their work with voluntary and

community groups and will encourage widening access to learning for all our communities.

Outside the university the project will continue developing, promoting and delivering learning and related services for people and organisations in the voluntary and community sector. We see the Community Knowledge Transfer Service as an advocate for innovative and non-traditional approaches to learning – including e-learning – to employers, communities and individuals, seeking to demonstrate how information contributes to enhancing work practices that subsequently help to improve people's quality of life.

By changing community groups' perceptions of information literacy and learning, client feedback has strongly indicated that the project is also changing for the better their perceptions of universities in general and of Edge Hill University in particular. As a catalyst for change, knowledge transfer works on many levels indeed.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Malcolm Wicks, Minister of State for Science and Innovation, *Science and innovation: making the most of UK Research*, December 2006, p 3
- 2 See L.A. Hart, *Human brain, human learning*, New York: Longman, 1983; R. Kegan, *The evolving self: problem and process in human development*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982; A.B. Moore and R. Brooks, 'Learning communities and community development: describing the process', *Learning communities: international journal of adult and vocational learning*, 1 (2000), pp 1–15.
- 3 See Moore and Brooks, 'Learning communities'.

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# The Irish Working Group on Information Literacy: a cross-sectoral approach

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## BACKGROUND

At its 2006 AGM, the Library Association of Ireland (LAI) passed the following motion:

*'That this Annual General Meeting calls on the incoming Executive Board to work with other agencies to adopt a standard for Information Skills; lobby to ensure government is made aware of the need for, and value of Information Skills; lobby government to recognise and affirm the role of Libraries in the delivery and maintenance of Information Skills'*  
(proposed by the Executive Board of the LAI).

Following this, a call was sent to all library sectors seeking out members either working in or interested in the area of information skills / information literacy (IL). Members were asked whether they would be willing to contribute by participating in a working group on this topic. Membership of the working group was open to everyone, the sole stipulations being that any officers of the group must be members of the LAI, and have interest and enthusiasm!

The Working Group on Information Literacy (WGIL) was consequently established by the LAI in January 2006.

## WORKING GROUP ON INFORMATION LITERACY (WGIL)

Subsequently, at a preliminary meeting between the LAI liaison and some initial members, it was agreed to establish a chairperson and secretary for the working group. Membership of the group was eventually completed and now comprises ten members from across the range of LIS (Library and Information Services) sectors in Ireland. These include academic, special, schools, public, health and university sectors, and also a representative from the Department of Library & Information Studies (DepLIS), University College Dublin (UCD).

From the outset, one of the key objectives established was that the work of the WGIL would be approached on a *cross-sectoral* basis. This was, and is, seen by the group as being central to our work. In order to ensure credibility and inclusiveness, the group considers it vital that all elements within the Irish library community are represented and have an opportunity to make contributions.

The group recognises the diversity of the different sectors in working to achieve the common goal of an information literate society. It also recognises that some areas are more evolved than others and that there is unlikely to be a 'one size fits all' model. The group acknowledges the work of practitioners throughout the library and information sectors and the many common issues and problems encountered. The group also agreed that it was vital that members look beyond their own (work) areas of interest – the remit of the group is grounded in the LAI, not the individual sectors in which we work. Certainly the experiences of our respective sectors should be brought to bear on the group, but in essence the group is an LAI group.

### WHY THE NEED FOR A WGIL?

'... skills of critical thinking, research and evaluation are increasingly required to make sense of the world'.  
(Horizon Report (UK), 2007<sup>1</sup>)

In today's knowledge society, information is available in multiple formats and of varying quality; many of the Google generation believe that information = web. Therefore it is essential, more than ever, that our citizens have the ability to retrieve, evaluate and use information critically and effectively. The establishment of a WGIL and the recognition by the LAI of the need for standards

in IL is an acknowledgement of this. IL remains hugely topical in LIS sectors and, according to Webber, is 'receiving increasing attention worldwide'.<sup>2</sup> There is a significant body of work on IL in library literature. It has become a core feature of what libraries 'do'. In forming a national WGIL, the LAI recognises IL as:

- a recognisable skill
- a core competency
- a transferable skill
- an employable skill
- central to independent learning
- fundamental to critical thinking
- an essential element of lifelong learning.

### ROLE

The aim of the group, as decided upon by the members from the outset, is:

'To recommend strategies for the development of information skills at both a theoretical and practical level in the Library and Information Services sector in Ireland'

In addition to this, the members agreed that the group should:

- generate recommendations for the LAI to take information literacy forward on a national basis
- examine international best practice and standards
- produce a sectoral-based report on the current status of information literacy
- raise awareness and heighten the profile of information literacy, potentially by hosting a national seminar.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

- To recommend appropriate guidelines for the practical development of information skills education across the Irish library and information services sector
- To recommend strategies for promoting and raising awareness of information skills in the library and information services sector in Ireland
- To suggest further development opportunities for research and action on information skills education in Ireland
- To recommend actions for the strategic positioning of information skills within the context of lifelong learning in a learning and

knowledge society, on the national governmental agenda.

### **SOME IL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

Over the course of the work of the group, a number of key issues and concerns emerged. Some of these could be described as local (in that they are unique to the Irish LIS sector) and others as perhaps universal, commonly recognisable to those working as IL practitioners. From a local perspective, there may be difficulties in relation to:

- the cross-sectoral nature of the project: notwithstanding the notable work of COLICO (the Committee on Library Co-operation in Ireland) and others, there isn't a major tradition of project-based multi-sectoral work in Irish libraries
- unevenness of the playing field – some library sectors are much more evolved than others in terms of IL activity
- schools libraries: this sector is chronically underdeveloped in Ireland
- language and terminology: use (or not) of the phrase 'information literacy' continues to be problematic. The LAI, in calling for standards and so on (AGM, 2005), used the term 'information skills'. Others, such as JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee), use 'i-Skills'. This lack of consistency continues to create confusion particularly outside academic library circles and the use of a phrase involving the word 'literacy' would still seem to carry some form of stigma or at least misunderstanding in certain circles. Although use of the term 'IL' is preferred by many practitioners, whether it has been fully embraced is somewhat questionable.
- the fact that Ireland has become increasingly multi-cultural in the last few years: the added difficulty of the delivery of IL initiatives to non-English speaking students should not be underestimated, and there are significant cultural and linguistic issues to consider
- the agreement of many commentators that basic literacy skills are relatively poor amongst many students leaving secondary education in Ireland, which makes selling the concept of IL even more difficult.

More generally, there are challenges associated with IL design and delivery in terms of the following:

- semesterisation and modularised models of education: these have further decreased the time available to librarians to deliver IL
- Web 2.0. (or Library 2.0 or Student 2.0 ...): we live in a world of user-created content, shared information, social networking, blogs, RSS, vlogs, podcasts, wikis, tags, mash-ups, instant messaging. This has major implications for IL. The ability of librarians to engage with users using these tools is becoming more critical and is presenting major relevancy challenges. Peter Godwin describes the Web 2.0 environment as one in which 'users ... create their own information landscapes individually or in groups'<sup>3</sup>
- technology: VLEs (Virtual Learning Environments) and MLEs (Managed Learning Environments) are the norm and many students now expect to find all their information requirements in these systems
- library staff – many are still concerned about their role as 'teachers': do they have the expertise, the confidence, the skills-sets? Other issues remain in relation to payment, job definition and demarcation, pedagogy, teaching skills, expectations and so on
- assessment, accreditation and evaluation of IL: should IL be compulsory, and how can we integrate it into already congested curricula?
- academic staff: are they (sufficiently) interested, do they see the need for academic champions, do they recognise the value of our role? Is IL the sole property of librarians?

### **ACTIVITY TO DATE**

The group has:

- met quarterly (about 8 times) since its inception, in addition to working via e-mail and phone
- finalised membership of the WGIL and clarified objectives, role and terms of reference
- agreed the main deliverables of the group as being to:
  - o produce a set of recommendations to the LAI as per the terms of reference
  - o produce a cross-sectoral report
  - o arrange a national conference or seminar
- reviewed international definitions of IL and recommend adopting the CILIP (2004) definition of IL as a working definition: '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'.<sup>4</sup>

- reviewed existing international standards for developing IL programmes and recommend adoption of the Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy (ANZIIL) information literacy framework (2004). Following no little amount of debate, the group chose the ANZIIL model as the most suitable framework for developing information literacy education, finding it practical, user-friendly and flexible
- presented an update on the activities of the group to the executive board of the LAI<sup>5</sup> and sought formal recognition from the LAI as a sub-group
- attended seminars: IL seminar in Dublin City University (2006) and LILAC conference (2007), Manchester, UK. It is hoped to present a conference paper at LILAC 2008.
- disseminated information through various LIS channels such as e-Leabharlann (LAI electronic newsletter) and posted information and contact details to the Health Science Libraries Group website<sup>6</sup> and significant content to the national website of the LAI<sup>7</sup>
- in terms of advocacy, received a presentation from Ellen Breen (Dublin City University), Chair of the CONUL (Consortium of National and University Libraries) advisory committee on information literacy
- made a presentation to the academic and special libraries section of the LAI at its 2007 AGM
- submitted an article to *SCONUL Focus* for publication (accepted if you are reading this!)
- arranged to meet with the school library services (JSCP) group in September 2007 (junior certificate school programme demonstration library project).

#### ONGOING WORK

The WGIL has been in existence now since January 2006 and it is anticipated that the end of 2007 will complete the current work of the group. The completion of the final report and recommendations is seen very much by the group as the end of phase I of this project. What happens next is very much a matter for the group members themselves (phase II, anyone?) and for the LAI (national policy, anyone?). Without pre-empting the final conclusions of the group, it seems likely that more work is required. Research or quantitative study, beyond the scope of this small voluntary group, is most likely to be necessary.

In the meantime, and with an indicative date for the completion of group's report and recommen-

dations as the end of 2007, we continue to look at working towards:

- a set of recommendations on information literacy as per the terms of reference of the group
- further and ongoing dissemination of the work and scope of the group through library and sectoral channels
- facilitating or hosting a national cross-sectoral seminar on IL
- developing a database / comprehensive list of key stakeholders with an interest or involvement in information literacy
- exploring the possibility of the WGIL becoming a full sub-group within the LAI
- providing a forum for discussion and debate; clarifying the relationship with the CONUL IL Group; and looking to affiliate the group with other similar or like-minded groups in the UK and internationally, such as the CILIP CSG (Community Services Group) IL group (UK)
- supporting further IL research
- welcoming contributions from other groups or interested parties
- advocacy – continuing to highlight the role of IL, raising awareness and heightening the profile of IL in Irish library sectors
- developing a presence or 'community of practice' on the Irish National Digital Learning Repository (NDLR)<sup>8</sup>
- establishing guidelines and a broad template for writing a sectoral report: work on this is ongoing and it is hoped that the final report will be completed and formally presented to the LAI by early 2008.

#### FURTHER IL WEBLINKS

Library Association of Ireland:

<http://www.libraryassociation.ie>

Lifeskills Project:

<http://www.lifeskills.ie>

CILIP IL sub-group:

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterest-groups/bysubject/informationliteracy>

International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) IL resources directory:

<http://www.infolitglobal.info/>

The information literacy website (UK):

<http://www.informationliteracy.org.uk/>

Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy (ANZIIL):

<http://www.anziil.org/>

## REFERENCES

- 1 [http://www.nmc.org/pdf/2007\\_Horizon\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nmc.org/pdf/2007_Horizon_Report.pdf)
- 2 Sheila Webber, 'Editorial', *Journal of information literacy*, 1 (1), January 2007, p.ii, <http://ojs.lboro.ac.uk/ojs/index.php/JIL/article/view/Editorial-V1-I1-2007/1>
- 3 Quote from Peter Godwin in 'Information literacy and the internet generation', *Library + information update*, 6 (3), March 2007, pp 36-9
- 4 See Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, <http://www.cilip.org.uk/professionalguidance/informationliteracy/definition/>
- 5 The group was also invited to give a paper at the LAI/CILIP annual joint conference (April 2007) but due to unavailability we were unable to do so.
- 6 See <http://www.hslg.ie/infolit>
- 7 See <http://www.libraryassociation.ie/>
- 8 See <http://www.ndlr.ie/>

All Web sites accessed: 15/08/07

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# Supporting research – why you should give more thought to CCM



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We are frequently told of the importance of research to the UK. Support for research has been a prominent feature of government policy for several years and, as one of its first acts, the Brown government created the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), to 'Sustain and develop a world-class research base',<sup>1</sup> and to 'deliver the Government's long-term vision to make Britain one of the best places in the world for science, research and innovation'.<sup>2</sup>

The government provides significant amounts of funding to support this research effort. 'Each year the Research Councils invest around £2.8 billion in research covering the full spectrum of academic disciplines from the medical and biological sciences to astronomy, physics, chemistry and engineering, social sciences, economics, and the arts and humanities'<sup>3</sup> and the Funding Councils also allocate around a further £1.6 billion to research.

It is vital, then, that academic and other research libraries, which together effectively make up a distributed UK-wide research collection, are able to support this research effort – not just adequately but to the same level of excellence as is expected of UK research itself.

That objective is no doubt what all research libraries aspire to but they all face pressures that limit their ability to realise it as fully as they would wish. The pressures come from two main directions:

- financial – arising from the reduction in purchasing power of library budgets against the

rise in costs of acquisitions, both digital and print; the continuing growth of published material; the costs of care of collections and staffing costs

- space – at the same time, pressure on library space; expanding collections; libraries at or near capacity; demands to accommodate new learning styles; and pressure on ‘low use’ buildings where institutions can see alternative and more rewarding use of the space.

As a result, library managers are having to make hard decisions, and acquisition, maintenance and care of collections may all feel the effects. There is a risk that decisions on de-duplication and even disposals may have an impact not only on the resources of the individual library but also on the UK research collection as a whole. No single library can expect to hold all the research materials needed by all its users and the impact of individual libraries’ decisions may have an impact on researchers both within and far beyond the institution itself. Not even the British Library can guarantee to provide access from its own stocks to every resource that is needed for the research of all its users.

Collaboration between libraries can help to overcome some of these problems and improve support for researchers through:

- identification of areas for purchase in the light of the focuses of other libraries
- acceptance of transfers to enhance local stock
- making considered de-selection and storage more efficient and transparent
- consortial purchase of expensive or rare items.

#### **COLLABORATIVE COLLECTION MANAGEMENT (CCM)**

Some long-standing collaborative arrangements for collection management are already in place in the UK, such as the inter library loan systems and the public libraries’ joint fiction reserves. Services such as Copac provide a way of sharing resources, as do regional initiatives such as InformM25. But CCM is a solution which, so far, has only been tried selectively in the UK and which has not been used to the full. However, the earlier momentum created by the Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP)<sup>4</sup> between 1999 and 2002 has been lost and many projects have languished once funding and project status ended.

It is against this background that the Research Information Network (RIN) and CURL (Consortium of Research Libraries) have come together to support the development and use of CCM across the UK by creating and funding the post of CCM programme adviser.

The main objectives of this joint programme are:

- **advocacy:** raising the profile of CCM with relevant stakeholders, including researchers, librarians, institutional managers and funders
- **UK distributed research collection:** to embed the concept that libraries are part of a UK distributed research collection and that CCM is a standard part of collection management processes
- **CCM website:** to develop an interactive website which will gather and display information on current and previous CCM activities so that these can be learned from and built upon; the website will also be used provide a range of additional information about collaborative working
- **UK CCM framework:** to create a UK framework for CCM activities, without unnecessary bureaucracy, which will encourage libraries to adopt a sustainable model of CCM
- **support for CoFoR:** the CoCoREES (Collaborative Collection Management Project for Russian and East European Studies) and CURL-CoFoR (Collaboration for Research) projects were influential in raising the practical profile of long-term CCM activity; this programme will provide support for CoFoR to develop further the comprehensive CCM model or toolkit it created and to make the project as self-sustaining as possible
- **HEFCE’s strategically important subjects<sup>5</sup>:** whilst working broadly with a range of developments across the UK, the CCM programme will also look to provide support in the subject areas identified by HEFCE (the higher education funding council for England), and by the research councils, as being strategically important.

This is a large undertaking which cannot be achieved overnight, and the initial task has been to identify the core elements of CCM.

This is an overview of some of the initial work I have undertaken as CCM programme adviser.

#### *Review of previous CCM projects*

This included, but was not limited to, the many projects that were initiated under the RSLP (research support libraries programme) and that demonstrate the variety of activities which can be described as 'collaborative collection management'. The objective was to identify the core of CCM and also to analyse what lies behind the sustainability of some of these projects and the comparatively short-lived success of others.

The projects investigated were hugely variable in:

- scale: local, regional, national
- number of organisations involved: this covered every combination from two or three to as many as all those within a specific subject interest across the UK, while the UK research reserve (UKRR) could potentially involve every academic library in the country
- focus: some were based on a subject, such as CoCoREES<sup>6</sup> (Russian and East European studies) and ACLAIIR<sup>7</sup> (Latin American and Iberian studies); others on format, such as SCoRe<sup>8</sup> (company reports), FLARE<sup>9</sup> (journals and official gazettes) and the nascent IAML<sup>10</sup> project (to locate and describe collections of concert programmes).

They were equally varied in their choice of service provided, for example:

- a web subject gateway: Mapping Asia<sup>11</sup>
- a subject-based periodicals database: Arlis<sup>12</sup> (visual arts) and Archway<sup>13</sup> (archaeology)
- improved quality of bibliographic records: EGIL<sup>14</sup> (Icelandic and Old Norse)
- the development of a thesaurus: FLAG<sup>15</sup> (foreign law)
- a toolkit to help non-specialist librarians manage their collections: BackStage<sup>16</sup> (performing arts)
- the creation of an acquisitions 'desiderata' list and complete toolkit on how to manage a CCM programme: CoCoREES and CoFoR. (Russian and East European studies).

The core aims of these various activities, however, can be put into three main categories:

- support for UK research:
  - o improved local collections
  - o retention of unique materials
  - o improved access to resources
  - o better resource discovery for researchers

- o improved links between libraries and researchers

- improvement of collections:
  - o better collection development based on informed decision-making
  - o managed acquisition of materials through transfers from libraries reducing their holdings
  - o opportunities for consortial purchase
  - o improved bibliographic records
- enhancement of library staff knowledge and skills:
  - o sharing expertise
  - o support for less-experienced library staff.

The active life span of these CCM projects has been mixed. In reviewing them it became apparent that good indicators of potential success and sustainability (that is, the creation of a useful resource or service which continues to be maintained beyond its funded period) were:

- development of a unique and valued product or service
- a focus on a small subject area, part of a subject area or a specific format
- ensuring maintenance and administration requirements are kept to a minimum
- the support of a committed user group
- access to some continuing financial and other support: this was not, generally, external funding but usually came from within the group, often in the provision of services in kind (for example, some staff time or the hosting of a website), as well as group contribution of financial support.

#### *Advocacy*

Wider adoption of CCM depends critically upon advocacy and I have undertaken a range of activities under this heading:

- clarification of the meaning of CCM: it was important to create a definition of the term, which was agreed as:
  - 'CCM is the collaborative approach, both locally and nationally, to securing long term retention, management and development of the distributed UK Research Collection and preserving access to these resources.'
- creation of the CCM logo





- setting up the CCM website: this is under development and will appear at <http://www.cocoman.ac.uk>; it will be a major referral point for information on collaborative collection management but, until it is available, information is being placed on the research information network (RIN) website at <http://www.rin.ac.uk/ccm-menu>
- organisation of an expert workshop on CCM: experts in a range of CCM activities from across the UK and from different sectors were invited to the workshop which was held in London in July 2007 – following a series of presentations demonstrating several successful CCM projects, a lively discussion was held which identified, amongst other things, the need for a central point of information on CCM, which will be provided through the CCM website, but until this has been completed more details of the workshop, presentations and discussion are available at <http://www.rin.ac.uk/ccm-workshop>
- further awareness-raising: this has been done through a short item in the RIN Newsletter (Spring 2007)<sup>17</sup> and through seeking out and attendance at conferences and other events of relevant groups
- seeking out further advice through the RIN consultative groups and other sources about advocacy to the research community.

#### *Conclusion*

Now is the ideal time to raise the profile of CCM again. With the emphasis placed on research in the UK, there is an increasing need for a national, strategic approach to the management of research resources.

The shared services initiative<sup>18</sup> of HEFCE (Higher Education funding Council for England) encourages the sharing of services and collaborative work, both across and outside the higher education sector. For example, following HEFCE's recent review of land-based studies, one of the key recommendations was 'to explore the potential for more collaboration between providers'.<sup>19</sup>

The pre-existing pressures on libraries and the advent of the UKRR, which has helped lead to a radical change in attitudes to sharing responsibility for collection management and the collaborative disposal of materials to a central store, has opened the way for further collaborative activities.

CCM can ensure that unique materials are not lost to the nation whilst allowing libraries to manage their collections to reflect local needs; it can help to build centres of information and expertise and even support the acquisition of important materials through collaborative resourcing.

Through the CCM programme, we intend to use this opportunity to move collaborative collection management into greater use and actively to continue realising the managed benefits of the UK's distributed research collection to researchers and the UK knowledge economy.

If you have any questions or comments about any of these issues, please get in touch with (contact details above).

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# Collaborative collection management of monographs: the White Rose experience



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## BACKGROUND

Despite the number of library construction and extension projects across the UK it is clear that most academic research libraries still face considerable pressure on available space, a situation which is only marginally eased by the availability, and adoption, of electronic digitised resources. The fierce competition for shelf and floor space is, in part, due to the continued large-scale acquisition of traditional print publications, but is also increasingly influenced by libraries developing new facilities to support evolving forms of teaching and research. This climate means that it is now commonplace, even in well-established 'traditional' research collections, for librarians to consider the editing and disposal of very low-use book stock in order to cater to their other service demands.

Arts and humanities research monographs are generally regarded as one of the most difficult collection management areas to address, and are a major contributor to the ongoing space issue. In comparison to the use of e-journals (and withdrawal of parallel print-based periodicals), books currently have only limited potential as 'virtual' collections due to both the low availability of digitised research e-books and the absence of an established viewing technology or platform that can match the flexibility of the traditional printed book. Also of relevance is the acknowledged lengthy academic 'shelf-life' of humanities monographs, as well as the corresponding long-term

requirement to store arts books as compared to the shorter shelf-life of monographs in 'scientific' disciplines. In brief, traditional printed monographs still have a future, and research libraries will still have to manage their extensive physical collections.

The librarians of the 'White Rose Consortium' (WRC) of the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York, together with the British Library (BL) at Boston Spa, entered into a localised, Yorkshire-based partnership to explore this situation. Initial discussions focussed on seeking solutions whereby low-use monographs could be safely withdrawn from individual university library collections without compromising the activities of researchers, and ideally in a manner that would ultimately improve access to such texts on a national scale.

The White Rose and BL partners rejected initial proposals to develop a regional consortium store for low-use monographs, due primarily to the time and funding constraints associated with constructing new buildings and their ongoing costs. However, it was decided to investigate the feasibility of a process that would use the British Library's existing holdings as the basis of a 'national collection', by allowing the transfer of specific texts and the disposal of duplicated volumes from individual academic libraries. This activity ultimately developed into the 'Collaborative Collection Management' (CCM) project.

## CCM PILOT PROJECT: AIMS

The CCM project aimed to test the practicality of withdrawing from WRC libraries, and then transferring to the British Library, research level materials in two categories:

- monographs no longer required by the academic institution but requiring preservation within the national collection because they were either not held by the BL (or were not available as a copy for loan)
- additional copies of monographs no longer required by the academic institution but heavily used at the BL.

A practical mechanism was to be developed and tested that would enable WRC libraries to dispose of very low-use monographs to help ease storage pressures, and that would also ensure that locally withdrawn copies would continue to be available to academic researchers in the 'national collection', via the British Library. The intention was to deter-

mine whether such a mechanism was feasible for a national roll-out in the wider UK academic community.

The mechanism evolved by the CCM project team can be summarised as follows:

- 1 Each WRC library identified individual research-standard monographs for potential disposal (using internal criteria of low use, physical condition, duplication etc.).
- 2 All titles were checked against the BLIC (British Library integrated catalogue) and with COPAC (Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives) to identify duplicated holdings elsewhere in the UK.
- 3 Where books were not in BLIC, a list of these items was offered to the BL by each individual WRC library.
- 4 Staff at the BL assessed each title in the list against its existing collections.
- 5 The BL identified those items it required, returning the annotated list to the individual WRC library.
- 6 Required monographs were transferred to the BL and added to stock (including cataloguing on BLIC) within an agreed time-scale. Contingency was also provided to transfer accompanying online catalogue records to the BL.
- 7 All remaining monographs in the list that had been rejected by the BL were disposed of by WRC libraries according to local procedures.

Throughout 2005 the CCM project team developed, documented and assessed the results gleaned from the above process.

#### **CCM PILOT PROJECT: RESULTS**

A 'CCM final report'<sup>1</sup> was published, which concluded that the basic mechanism was viable and issued recommendations to develop the process into a national scheme.

In scale the pilot project processed a modest number of monographs (a total of 2,323 titles from all three WRC libraries). However, this sample was sufficiently large to make some general conclusions:

- The methodology was feasible, although it required some adaptation to further streamline the process.
- The structuring of results as individual 'case studies' for each CCM partner was helpful, as it allowed an investigation of the mecha-

nism associated with differing types of stock and processes used within each local institution.

- Some material was successfully transferred to the BL (9% of the total).
- The activity allowed the BL to identify gaps in its own collections.
- The BL would not be required to absorb large quantities of material for the main subject areas used in the pilot (theology, linguistics, European languages).
- Significant quantities of monographs could be safely disposed of by the WRC libraries without compromising availability to researchers.
- The WRC libraries were able to reassure researchers that copies of texts would continue to be available in the long term.
- Throughput measurements were made of all the tasks in the CCM procedure, to assist future staffing and resources.
- Basic indicative costs for the process were calculated.
- Useful comparisons of the CCM operation, results and subject applicability were made with the parallel 'CoFoR'<sup>2</sup> (Collaboration for Research) scheme.
- The project encouraged the BL to bring forward the retro-conversion and integration into the BLIC of the card catalogue of the NCB (non-current book) store of 1950–1980 monographs; these records will be integrated by 2008 and will be a key requirement of further practical activity.

It is intended that the second phase of CCM activity will build on the above findings and will be guided by the parallel collaborative collection scheme currently being explored via the UKRR (United Kingdom Research Reserve) project.<sup>3</sup> The UKRR developed from the 'CHEMS report'<sup>4</sup> (from the Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service) which, though initially concentrating on periodicals,<sup>5</sup> may ultimately develop a parallel process for monographs that will necessarily explore many of the specialised 'book'-related issues already raised within the CCM pilot project.

#### **CCM PHASE 2: THE FUTURE**

Subject to securing appropriate levels of funding, phase 2 of the White Rose/BL CCM project aims to test the revised methodology on a larger scale in different disciplines, to ensure that printed monographs that are withdrawn from individual libraries will continue to be accessible to the UK

research community.<sup>6</sup> The project team intend to undertake the following:

- Testing and refining of a revised methodology, in anticipation of the launch of a final agreement which can be adopted by the wider UK academic community.
- Continuing to focus on the 'difficult' and important subject areas of arts and humanities monographs.
- Selecting different subject areas than those in the pilot, to provide more comprehensive comparative testing.
- Developing a series of costed models, through case studies, to inform and guide the HEI (Higher Education Institutions) community in the best local practice to be adopted within a national scheme.
- Engaging with the academic and research community, promoting the issues and seeking cooperation and advice in successfully developing the scheme.

The CCM pilot concentrated on the development of an operational mechanism; phase 2 plans to broaden this activity into a number of wider political and strategic issues.

CCM phase 2 will take account of national and local concerns in library collections management, including support for differing researcher needs. Investigation will be made into how a parent institution determines the size and form of its library collections, and how the individual library reacts to these drivers, especially in the assessment of monograph collections for potential discard. The project will explore the effects of 'collection acquisition policies' on CCM activity (e.g. just-in-time versus just-in-case models) and will compare different collection management scenarios including: doing nothing, building library extensions, construction of stores, local collection discard targets (including those required to support zero collection growth and the impact of other CCM schemes).

It is anticipated that phase 2 of the CCM project could provide several key benefits:

- Assisting in the development of a strategic approach to national research support by ensuring that UK scholars retain access to any titles withdrawn from individual libraries via the 'national collection'.
- Enhancing the visibility of these publications to the whole research community.

- Contributing to the ongoing debate over the 'national collection'.
- Easing local institutional space and storage issues by releasing substantial numbers of additional monographs for disposal.
- Engaging and involving the academic and research community in the library collection management process.

At present the CCM project is in preparation for phase 2, including drafting a full revision of the procedural manual in accordance with the recommendations from the pilot's final report and incorporating findings from parallel activities such as UKRR (UK Research Reserve). The three university library partners are also preparing new subject areas for potential testing, and liaising with relevant academics and researchers.

It is clear that important questions must be explored before the successful launch of any national collaborative collection management scheme for research monographs. However, significant groundwork has already been laid by the CCM project team, and it is anticipated that, with the continued commitment and cooperation between partners guided by parallel activities across the sector, there is the potential to obtain further positive results in this important area.

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## In 2007 should we be loaning journals?



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### BACKGROUND

Those of you who read my article earlier in the year ('How many books should we be loaning to our academic staff, researchers, and students???' in issue 40 of *SCONUL Focus*) will know that in preparation for a talk I did for University, College and Research Group (UC & R) Wales at the end of 2006, entitled 'Building an individual library service for each user',<sup>1</sup> I did some research amongst a cross-section of academic colleagues in order to find out what problems they encountered in their work, especially where the problems concerned the learning and resources centre (LRC) staff, sources and services. I asked them to describe confidentially the top ten problems they faced in their jobs. Their replies were extremely interesting and a summary of the some of the lists can be found on the slides for the above presentation (see note 1).

Several things came out of these lists that I felt I should follow up. I have already dealt with the number of loans to staff and students in issue 40; this article will concern itself with another suggestion from one of the lists: that we should loan journals.

### SHOULD WE LOAN JOURNALS?

As before, I do not know who made the decision not to loan journals here at Glamorgan; it was made and a policy was created before I came here, some 16 years ago. I do not suppose anyone has in all that time even thought about whether this should be changed in the light of the situation that exists in 2007.

I thought about this issue and spoke to colleagues who were around before I was and it appears that

the top ten main reasons for not loaning journals in the past were:

- 1 These were the only copies that anyone could use and so if an academic or student came to the library to see them they needed to be there. A single article could be photocopied easily and cheaply so loan was not needed.
- 2 Customers would not normally need all of it like they might a book.
- 3 If articles were recommended by a lecturer with a group of 30 students then the first student to get to the library would get to borrow it whilst the rest would miss out.
- 4 If customers lost or damaged a journal edition whilst it was on loan then this edition would not be able to be bound, or binding would be delayed whilst a replacement copy or photocopy was acquired. Similarly if parts were just out on loan then binding would be delayed waiting for them to be returned.
- 5 If journals were loaned LRC staff would need to check them thoroughly on return to make sure that articles had not been cut out.
- 6 Illustrations are more likely to be removed if journals are loaned.
- 7 Journals often have many parts and supplements. This makes it more difficult to have one barcode for a whole item. Similarly with cataloguing records: it would take a lot more staff time to accession and catalogue each bit for loan.
- 8 If we were loaning them there would be pressure to keep large back-runs in stock or in a store.
- 9 If each part is catalogued it would make the catalogue much larger and unwieldy.
- 10 Journals go out of print much more quickly than books and so it can be very difficult, if not impossible, to get replacements if issues are damaged or lost.

Whilst we have had the policy for at least 30 years (apparently academic libraries just did not loan journals in the 1970s, for all the reasons above), there have always been exceptions to the rule. We would manually sign out individual issues to staff and researchers for a very limited time to take issues to their department to photocopy, so that it would be on their departmental budget. Similarly we would manually sign out journals to students, staff, and researchers when colour photocopying became available but there was no colour copier in the LRC. Once again the loan would be for a matter of hours, not days.

These two exceptions illustrated to me that there is no real inherent library reason that we could not loan journals if we wanted to. The problems are mainly to do with resources, both people and financial.

#### **DO THE REASONS NOT TO LOAN STILL HOLD UP IN 2007?**

The first reason listed above, and the most important one, no longer matters in many cases as in 2007 we usually have electronic access to titles. (Where the hard-copy journal is still the only copy and the only way of accessing the journal, there may still be a reason not to loan it.) Reasons 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 10 above also no longer apply, as the problems can be solved with access to an electronic copy. Illustrations can be used direct from the electronic version much more easily (with copyright clearance) than they would have been if they were using the hard copy. Missing copies and articles can be replaced using a printout from an electronic version (once again with copyright permission).

This just leaves reasons 5, 7 and 9, i.e. staff would need to check things thoroughly on return and it would take a lot more staff time and catalogue space to catalogue-accession each item for loan.

I would argue that it would take very little time to check items on return, if indeed this is needed at all. Journals in stock under the current no-loan system often have articles cut out of them, and we do not know until a student tells us. I would argue that if customers could borrow journals there would, hopefully, be less chance of articles being cut out of them. Students would also tell us, as they do now, if articles were missing from a journal when they went to borrow it. This way we are more likely to pick up the problem and arrange the replacement than with the current system.

So it struck me that in 2007 there are no substantial reasons why we should not loan journals except for where the hard-copy journal in question is the *only* copy available anywhere. Also loaning journals may require more staff time for accessioning, cataloguing and loaning the journals stock, although once a system was put in place this need not be excessive or to require extra staff. This is because there should be a way of buying the items shelf-ready with labels and catalogue records and barcodes, as we do with books. (I am not sure if any library suppliers offer such a service but if they do not I am sure they would if the price was right.) Thus for moderate extra expendi-

ture we could provide an extra service, which might in the long term actually save staff time.

### **WHY WOULD WE WANT TO LOAN JOURNALS IN 2007?**

Well, first because an academic staff member asked me to consider it. But also because in 2007 we have many more disabled students who could borrow the journals in order to scan parts into their special software. Also in 2007 many students, especially in a university like ours (which has more than the normal percentage of students from poor backgrounds), internet access at home is not guaranteed and the requirement to pay fees and so on can mean that people do not have money for photocopying, for example.

As these might be good reasons to loan journals I therefore decided I needed to do some research to find out what the situation was across higher education in 2007.

### **RESEARCH ABOUT PRACTICE AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

Against this background I wrote to colleagues on lis-link and asked them to let me know if they loaned journals or not, and any conditions they attached to such loans. I had 55 replies. Of these 36 said they did not loan journals (except in exceptional circumstances similar to ours, as above). The other 19 institutions did loan journals, although the loan conditions varied.

(If anyone would like a copy of the spreadsheet containing the results of this research and any conditions attached to loans please e-mail me as above and I will happily send them a copy.)

### **THE OUTCOME AT GLAMORGAN**

Armed with this information I went to our information services meeting and argued the case for a change of policy to allow us to loan journals unless they were only available in hardback.

Due to the facts that two-thirds of the academic libraries that replied to my survey still did not loan journals and that the third of them that do often impose conditions on their loans, I was unable to convince my information librarian colleagues that this was a change we should make at Glamorgan, now. Feedback from our purchasing and cataloguing departments also suggested that we would not be able to afford the staff time needed to set this up, certainly at the current time.

I therefore had to contact my academic colleague and explain that although I had tried we were unable to change our policy at the current time.

I think that, as time goes on, if hard-copy journals continue to be published and supplied, there could well come a time where the arguments I have advanced above will become more persuasive and other higher education libraries will decide to look again at the practice, especially in the light of disability discrimination legislation as it applies to higher education. The problem is that in order to convince others that there is a need to change current practice one needs to be able to show that there is a groundswell moving that way, so that we get to a tipping point. Whilst I think the need to loan journals may grow, I have to be honest and say that I cannot see this getting to the top of many management teams' priority lists in the near future, and so the tipping point may never come.

### **REFERENCE**

- 1 See <http://www.swan.ac.uk/lis/ucrwales/eng/pastevents.htm> for the PowerPoint presentation

Web sites accessed 2 August 2007

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# Digitisation at the University of Lincoln



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The introduction of the Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) trial licence agreement for photocopying and scanning, in 2005, gave higher education libraries the opportunity to make available to their students digitised extracts of books and journals owned by the library, and copyright-cleared items obtained from the British Library. In general, the trial licence was welcomed by the sector as a means of extending access to resources (see Anne Petrie's article in *Scnul Focus*, 2006<sup>1</sup>).

At the University of Lincoln (UL), we signed up to the licence and, building on an earlier pilot in which we used material obtained from the Heron service, many of our students now have access to relevant digital extracts, through our virtual learning environment (VLE). This article will describe some of the steps we have taken to develop this service, and also the outcomes of my current research investigating the student experience of using these materials. In addition, the debate between some UL academics and library staff around the issue of digitisation and 'spoon feeding' will be outlined.

In common with much of the sector, we are faced with ever-increasing demands on our services and resources, and we are obliged to make difficult spending choices. In our recent library survey, it was identified that the availability of essential texts was a major concern for students, and it is apparent that many have experienced the 'not quite enough multiple copies' syndrome that Powis<sup>2</sup> and Chenlin<sup>3</sup> have described. However, we have also recently expanded our research portfolio, which has resulted in the need for a broader library provision. The need to address conflicting demands such as these has led us to consider a variety of strategies, including digitisation.

We piloted the use of digitised extracts in 2004, when we used the Heron service to supply extracts from key texts for a unit of our media production degree. This helped to solve the problem of providing key readings (many from out of print items) for 100 students. As part of the pilot, we carried out a survey, using questionnaires, to find out how students had used Heron, and also how they rated the experience. We also analysed student bibliographies, to establish how often they referred to this material and the extent to which they referred to other, non-Heron material. Our results showed that 89% of the students said that they had read the Heron digitised material provided for them, and that 48% of the 374 references cited in bibliographies were from this material. From this, we concluded that students will make extensive use of digital extracts, when they are available.

Following the introduction of the trial licence in 2005, we have extended our use of digitised material, thereby increasing access to essential material and lessening the demand on multiple copies. At present, we create the digitised documents in-house, by using multifunction printers that create basic PDF documents. The documents are stored on a central system together with the CLA audit forms, and are made accessible to students via unit notice boards on the university's VLE. So far, 11 of our 14 academic subject librarians have taken the opportunity to use digitisation to support their subjects. 366 items have been digitised, in subject areas ranging from traditional book-based courses such as history and law to forensic science, drama and media production.

In general, most of the feedback from academics and students regarding digitisation has been positive; however, in the subject area that I support, some academics have expressed concerns related to three issues. The issues are that the need to print extracts means that the cost would be transferred from the university to the student; that students would not use digitised extracts because they preferred books; and that by making specific chapters available, we would be 'spoon feeding' students. As we believed that it was important to investigate any potential negative impact on the student experience, I have undertaken to research this area as part of the university's teacher fellow scheme.

The aim of my teacher fellow project is to understand the students' experience in their use of digitised material. This will include how they use the material and any impact digitisation may have on



their learning. The central methodology will be to organise focus groups where the student experience can be identified and recorded. Interviews will also take place with academic staff who have opted to use digitised extracts to support their teaching, to collate any observations they may have on their students' use of this material. Finally, in order to assess whether there is any significant evidence of 'spoon feeding', the bibliographies of submitted assessments will be examined. The items listed will be divided into digitised extracts and other material; the latter will include non-digitised reading list material and additional resources located by the students. The analysis of the bibliographies will be used as evidence to test the notion of student behaviour and 'spoon feeding' in that it will indicate the extents to which students continue to locate items independently or rely on what they have been given to read. It will not, however, be linked to student achievement, as it is not the aim of this study to make such a correlation.

The assumption made by some academics is that students will not use any other material if they are led to readily available resources (i.e. material that is "a click away"). This can be related to transmissive modes of teaching where students are encouraged into a surface approach to learning. However, an alternative academic opinion is that providing such material to students will encourage them to read. This will enable them to be prepared for interaction in seminar-session activities, where the reading material is debated and the critical thinking abilities of students are advanced. McFall identifies that when the students have completed the reading and gained the knowledge from it then activities can result in higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy of learning.<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, I hope to gather evidence, through my teacher fellow project, that will inform our understanding of both the student and the academic perspectives regarding the use of digitised extracts. We will then be able to develop this important new service in a way that takes into account pedagogical, as well as resource, aspects.

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- 4 R. McFall, 'Electronic textbooks that transform how textbooks are used', *The Electronic Library*, 23 (1), 2005, pp 72-81

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# Institutional repository 'GTI': establishing and populating a research repository for the University of Wolverhampton



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## INTRODUCTION

University libraries have an increasingly important role to play in supporting open access publishing and dissemination of research outputs.<sup>1</sup> In particular, many libraries are playing a leading role in establishing and managing institutional repositories. Institutional repositories are, most often, Open Access Initiative (OAI)-compliant databases of a university or other research institution's intellectual output, most typically research papers, although many other forms of digital media can also be stored and disseminated. Their main function is to provide improved access to the full text of research articles and improve retrieval of relevant research.

The University of Wolverhampton is a medium-sized institution with approximately 23,000 students and 500 academic staff. Although it is a teaching-intensive university, developing research and knowledge-transfer capacity is a strategic

priority and four research institutes have been established, with further research activity going on in the academic schools and research centres.

In September 2005, the Digital Repositories for the University of Wolverhampton (DRUW) project was established to undertake an options appraisal for a digital repository. The goal was to support access to the various knowledge products of the university, including learning objects, research outputs and corporate records. With the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in mind, in January 2006, the DRUW project team recommended the implementation of an institutional repository for research outputs such as journal articles and theses. The university executive approved funding for a two-year project to start in August 2006, and this became the Wolverhampton Intellectual Repository and E-theses (WIRE) project.<sup>2</sup>

One of the benefits of WIRE's origins as a university-wide project is the existence of the WIRE steering group, whose members were handpicked for their positions of influence as well as their knowledge and expertise. This steering group has been extremely valuable in providing authoritative input from senior staff from both academic and support departments. We are also fortunate that the Director of Learning Resources at the time supported the creation of a half-time repository librarian post.

As WIRE approaches its first birthday, we have been reflecting on our experience of establishing an institutional repository using a hosted service, and on the challenges and the benefits being reaped by the university and its researchers.

## BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF USING A HOSTED SERVICE

Although good-quality institutional repository software such as DSpace or Eprints is freely available, the cost of purchasing hardware to run and back up the service and of providing staff to customise and install the software and maintain the system is significant. For a teaching-intensive institution, or a small research-intensive institution with a modest volume of research output, such an investment is difficult to justify and this has worked against the growth of institutional repositories. Working closely with IT services colleagues, we calculated a first-year cost of £80,243 for custom-building a service, £65,914 for establishing a DSpace or Eprints service and just £28,805 for BioMed Central's 'Open Repository'-hosted DSpace service.<sup>3</sup> This would drop

to £18,805 in subsequent years.<sup>4</sup> Thus there was a significant cost advantage in going for a hosted service.

As well as the relatively low cost, the hosted service relieved us of the need for our own servers and IT staff to customise the software and maintain the servers and network. It also allowed us to get the repository up and running quickly. Customisation of the Open Repository web interface to conform to the university's website house style took some time and effort but, despite this, the majority of staff time has gone into mediated deposit rather than customising the software, and this has helped us make a flying start with populating the repository.

There are nonetheless some disadvantages to a hosted system, primarily the fact that we inevitably have less control over the software and its development than we would if we hosted it ourselves. Although we can make development requests, such requests must of necessity be considered alongside the requests of other customers and the priorities of the company.

#### **MARKETING AND PROMOTING WIRE**

From the start of the WIRE project, it was recognised that the repository could only be successful if the academic staff were willing to engage with it. Since the dedicated repository librarian post was only half-time, it was also recognised that it was essential to engage the subject liaison librarians at an early stage, so that they were in a position to discuss and promote it within their schools. As such the first priority was to carry out a number of training presentations to staff in the various learning centres.

Initial publicity also included a competition to suggest a name for the new repository, with the best suggestion winning a book-token prize for the entrant. Entries included the tongue-in-cheek 'Collected Repository of Academic Publications' (excluded on the grounds of its unsuitable acronym!) as well as the name we finally went for (suggested by Lisa Rowley from our IT Services department). A logo, publicity flyers and invitations to the launch were then professionally designed through the university's design studio, which was an investment worth making since the results were eye-catching and well received.

The initial plan was for a formal launch in the late autumn 2006, once the repository had 100 items. However, this was altered in favour of a

'soft launch' through the autumn term, focussing instead on a gradual profile-raising campaign via the subject liaison librarians. The official launch was then held in January, with a lunchtime event timed for maximum availability of academic staff. Key individuals were targeted with invitations, including senior university staff, heads of schools, research institutes and research centres and research-active academics. One advantage of a later launch was that by this point there was a substantial amount in the repository (around 160 full-text open access items) to be demonstrated. Equally important alongside the official launch has been attendance at school and departmental events, such as events for new researchers.

Two other important allies during the promotion of WIRE have been the university press office and web team. Several news items were featured in the university newsletter<sup>5</sup> and on the university home page, while links were added to the research web pages, amongst others.<sup>6</sup>

Last but not least, the final strand of the promotional work has been to ensure that WIRE is accurately represented on external directories of repositories, such as that on the SHERPA website<sup>7</sup> and OAIster.<sup>8</sup> OAIster in particular, as a means of accessing content from multiple repositories, has been included in training sessions. Many subject librarians now routinely use OAIster to search repositories and encourage academics to do the same, which has proved a good way of promoting open access. WIRE material is also being harvested by search engines such as Google Scholar, although with a noticeable lag time.

#### **POPULATING WIRE**

Culture change amongst the academic community is one of the greatest challenges faced by any repository project. As such, a repository librarian needs influencing and interpersonal skills as much as technical or cataloguing expertise. However, with around 500 academic staff to win over, we have had to prioritise. Our initial strategy rested on targeting our efforts and exploiting existing relationships.

A key factor in the initial population of WIRE was the involvement of early adopters, such as CELT (the university's Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching) who were able to provide a large number of papers published in their annual 'Learning and Teaching Projects' publication. Certain key individual academics were also prolific in giving material to the repository, in particular

if they were previously accustomed to making their material available via personal websites. Some schools have also taken the route of having a nominated central coordinator within the school who can gather material and send it to WIRE.

We felt that the greatest selling point for WIRE to academic staff was the increased likelihood of citations brought about by open access. This seems to us to have been confirmed, but the mediated deposit service that we have provided, plus the opportunity to improve students' access to research and easy embedding in Virtual Learning Environments, are also significant selling points for many of our academic colleagues.

Nonetheless, it was recognised that WIRE would not grow at the necessary pace if project staff waited for material to come to them. Accordingly, our repository librarian spent time checking departmental websites for any existing content suitable for WIRE, and searched databases and search engines such as Google Scholar for published articles by the university's academics. The academics were then contacted for permission to deposit their material in WIRE.

In the case of journal articles, the ROMEO database<sup>9</sup> of publishers' copyright policies was extensively used to check what material could be made open access. However, a relatively low proportion of material could be cleared this way due to the complications discussed below. In the case of items such as book chapters, whose publishers are not included in ROMEO in any case, the university's copyright coordinator was able to contact some publishers directly. However, such direct copyright clearance is a time-consuming task, and there is no guarantee of a quick response from publishers. There is also no guarantee that permission will be granted, although a positive response is more likely for material that is no longer in print.

At the time of writing, all items are being added to WIRE via mediated deposit, rather than asking academics to self-archive. This was a deliberate decision, recognising the demands on the time of research-active staff in the run-up to the RAE and the need for content to be added quickly and with good-quality metadata. However, the existence of DOIs (digital object identifiers) has made the process easier as they allow at least limited metadata fields to be pulled into WIRE automatically. The metadata being used is simple Dublin Core, although some refinements have needed to be introduced as our experience grows: for example,

we now systematically use eISSNs instead of print ISSN numbers wherever they exist, and we use DOIs to link to the original published version in preference to any other URL. Although long-term preservation has not yet been an issue, we have opted to use standard file types wherever possible (pdfs for documents, jpps for still images) to aid any future migration of files that may be necessary.

When setting up WIRE, we decided with the steering group to structure the communities and collections around the organisational structure of the university in terms of schools, research centres, institutes and groups. This was a pragmatic decision based on the fact that we did not expect external users to be browsing WIRE's collections (since they were more likely to find our items via external search engines). Although this was artificial, keeping to the organisational structure of the university did allow for a clear, non-subjective approach to grouping material.

#### **USAGE TO DATE**

By the end of June 2007, WIRE contained 428 open access papers and theses. Over the period January to June 2007, 15,919 repository records were viewed and 11,515 full-text files were downloaded. To put this into context, research output at the university amounts to about 300–400 articles per year and about 30–40 doctoral theses.

#### **CHALLENGES**

The rapid growth of WIRE has not been achieved without encountering significant challenges. Some of the major ones have been:

##### *Staffing, management and 'day job' pressure*

Although we are fortunate in having one dedicated member of staff, the repository librarian's is a half-time post due to the available funding rather than the quantity of work, and other members of the project team are juggling the repository with a variety of other responsibilities. Although the WIRE project's aims and objectives were laid down in an initial project plan, it has been necessary to regularly reconsider and restate the project team's priorities to make sure that the most important work is carried out. Management has also been complicated, with the repository librarian sitting outside the line management of the project manager, which has again made clear communication of workload priorities, delays and achievements essential. Good project-management methodologies, such as clear roles for the

project team, regular progress reports and shared access to electronic files, have all helped.

#### *Repository policies*

At the project's outset, it soon became apparent that a clear written policy was needed, for internal use within the project team as much as for external use. One of the first clarifications made was that WIRE, for reasons of quality and version control, could only accept peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters and doctoral theses. This has now been refined to any published material (i.e. anything with an ISBN or ISSN), thereby including material such as working paper series. However, there has been divided opinion amongst academics on what material should be included, with some keen to use WIRE to disseminate unpublished workshop papers, for example. Although the project team, in consultation with the university's research committee, have decided not to expand the policy at present, the value of non-published materials means that the question will likely be re-opened at some future date.

#### *Copyright issues*

Inevitably, not all publishers allow material to be deposited, or they apply conditions to that deposit. Embargo periods delay our ability to make material open access, but more difficult are prohibitions about using the publisher's pdf. When an author has retained a copy of his or her post-print (i.e. the manuscript after the peer review process), this is an effective alternative, but many authors can supply only pre-prints or have no version aside from the published one. Older material in particular may be supplied in print format, for example as reprints, which means that separate permission must be sought for scanning. Although the ROMEO database has greatly simplified the process of checking copyright, there are also many smaller journal publishers, plus all non-journal publishers, who are not included and who need to be contacted directly.

In practice, this has meant that not all material we have been offered has been submitted to WIRE, and there is a backlog of material that requires some form of copyright clearance to be usable.

#### *Supporting the RAE*

The RAE was initially an important driver behind senior management support for the establishment of a repository, and has remained significant although the stance taken by the Higher Educa-

tion Funding Council for England (HEFCE) on the role of institutional repositories has changed in the run-up to the 2008 exercise. It was initially hoped that the repository would be a direct means of submitting material to the assessment panels. This is no longer the case because, for journal articles at least, HEFCE has negotiated with publishers for assessment panels to have access via the article's DOI. Nonetheless, WIRE still has an important role to play since the university is obliged to scan all journal articles without DOIs and supply these to the assessors, and so WIRE will be used to store this material while it is being collated. WIRE is also seen as having a more general role to play in supporting the research profile of the institution's staff.

Although the RAE has been a positive force in aligning WIRE with the priorities of the university's researchers, there have also been disadvantages. HEFCE's RAE middleware, in which the institutional submission is collated, does not interoperate with WIRE, leading to the time-consuming necessity of re-keying data. The RAE has also led to a subtle tension between the original conception of WIRE as an open access repository versus the introduction to the workflow of material that is connected to the RAE but may never see the light of day due to copyright restrictions.

#### *'Dark archiving'*

One piece of functionality we would like is a 'dark archive' in which to place items which, for copyright or other reasons, cannot be made available on open access. In some cases, we need to store items for purposes relating to the RAE whilst in other cases the desire for a 'dark archive' reflects our need to record the administrative information around submitted material, for example items awaiting scanning or copyright clearance, or items which have had copyright clearance refused.

#### *Non-text material*

A small number of images have already been added to WIRE, and non-text material relating to art and design is an area that we intend to expand considerably. In terms of metadata, for still images at least, we have found that the same Dublin Core fields being used for text material have been adequate for retrieval purposes. However, there are some issues unique to non-textual materials. The copyright can be complex, with potentially several layers of rights: for example, the copyright belonging to the original artist, plus the photographer who took the picture of the artwork and the

publisher who may have published that picture in an exhibition catalogue. As such, permission may need to be obtained from more than one source before the material can be made available. In addition, we found that moving-image files in particular may be very large, in the region of 100–200 MB, which has implications for the amount of storage needed. Decisions must also be made about what file formats should be accepted, bearing in mind the multitude of available formats and media players which are in use.

#### *Self versus mediated archiving*

For the present, staff from learning and information services (LIS) are adding material to the repository but we recognise that, in future, this might not be sustainable. Longer term, we plan to promote self-archiving, with training given to academic staff and community administrators to help them develop appropriate metadata tagging skills. However, there would continue to be review by LIS staff with cataloguing experience to ensure that standards are maintained and retrievability is maximised.

#### *The mandate question*

During the time that we have been working on WIRE, there has been a debate in repository circles about the potential benefits of mandatory deposit. This is established practice in some Scandinavian institutions and in the UK a number of research-funding bodies have mandated deposition of articles derived from research that they have funded. Southampton and Brunel Universities, which both have mature and well-populated repositories, have taken this a step further and have mandated deposition in their own institutional repositories. While we view this as a desirable long-term goal, we feel that until a repository is well established, with a majority of academics making voluntary use of it, the potential threat of alienating academic staff outweighs the benefits. It has become clear in conversations with a number of academic colleagues that mandating can be perceived as coercion and an attack on academic freedom. As we approach the time when we wish to win hearts and minds over to self-archiving, we do not feel that a mandate for articles would be a helpful development.

Although the university has not mandated the submission of research articles, the situation is different with regard to e-theses. From September 2007, students will be expected to submit an electronic copy of their doctoral thesis as well as

a hard copy to the examiner, with the electronic copies to be submitted to WIRE in place of the hard copies that were previously sent to the learning centres.

#### **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

The WIRE project has been an exciting, challenging and high-profile opportunity for LIS to show how we can support research at this university. Aided by the involvement of key influential figures and the official support of university committees, we are proud of the progress we have made. The progress has been reflected in the quantity of material in WIRE, the usage figures and the positive feedback we have received. Although there are many challenges to be surmounted, we have at least been able to identify and understand those issues, which is the first step towards dealing with them.

As an institution, we are currently in the process of applying for SHERPA affiliate membership,<sup>10</sup> both to show our commitment to open access and to participate in the wider repository community. We are also tackling the question of how to take WIRE from the status of project to fully embedded operation within LIS as well as in the university as a whole.

#### **REFERENCES**

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- 2 WIRE is at <http://wlv.openrepository.com/wlv/>
- 3 These are 2006 prices and all include the cost of a half-time repository librarian's post. The Open Repository price is for the 'Silver' option with 4.5 gigabyte storage capacity.
- 4 All of these figures include the cost and on-costs of the half-time repository librarian's post, but exclude the costs of project and line managers' staff time.
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'WIRE proving popular' (<http://asp.wlv.ac.uk/Level4.asp?UserType=11&Level4=4100>)

- 6 University of Wolverhampton: Research: see <http://www.wlv.ac.uk/Default.aspx?page=6848>
- 7 SHERPA: Repositories and service providers: see <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/repositories/>
- 8 OAster: see <http://www.oaister.org>
- 9 SHERPA ROMEO: see <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php>
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All Web sites accessed 29 August 2007.

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# Sussex Research Online



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Sussex Research Online is an open access digital repository containing research outputs from staff at the University of Sussex. This article provides an overview of the current state of the institutional repository, how it was set up and future plans for the service. Since its beginning in 2006, Sussex Research Online has had rapid success. We are confident that the strategy we have adopted will ensure sustained growth for the future.

Sussex Research Online is available at <http://eprints.sussex.ac.uk/>

## STAFF

The project was conducted in the technical services department of the library:

Project executive (2006 – July 2007): Debby Shorley, Librarian

Head of technical services: Adrian Hale

Project manager: Chris Keene, technical development manager

Project officer: Patrick Fitzgerald (April 2006 – March 2007)

Administrative support: Josh Brown, Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) support administrator.

From August 2007 the head of technical services has overall responsibility for management of the service.

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

Sussex Research Online runs on the Eprints software developed by the University of Southampton. At the time of writing we are using version 2 and plan to move to version 3 in the months to follow.

## STATISTICS

- 681 live records
- 211 full text documents

- 26% of items self-deposited
- 74% of items deposited on behalf of researchers
- 531 articles
- 17 books
- 127 book sections
- 6 conference items.

As of July 2007, 17,384 full-text documents had been downloaded since September 2006. 95% of visitors find us through Google or Google Scholar. The most popular article so far has been 'Foreign investment environment in Dongguan Municipality of Southern China', which has been downloaded 2,000 times. These figures have to be treated with caution, and they are by no means a perfect measure, but they are indicative of which areas of research might be considered of current interest. They certainly show that the Institutional Repository (IR) is successfully publicising Sussex research, and most areas of the globe seem to be well represented in the download statistics.

#### **HOW WE ACHIEVED OUR SUCCESS: THE PROJECT**

##### Milestones

- Autumn 2005
  - Plans for an institutional repository at Sussex are submitted to the university's senior management group and are approved.
  - Funds are allocated for a 1-year project officer post, hardware and communication.
- January 2006
  - Eprints software selected for IR.
  - Test repository set up.
- April 2006
  - Project officer appointed.
- May 2006
  - Project plan established using Prince2 methodology.
- Summer 2006
  - Education and geography departments become early adopters.
  - Software adapted to local requirements.
  - Web pages created for technical support and advocacy.
- Autumn 2006
  - IR goes live as Sussex Research Online.

- April 2007
  - Project phase complete.

#### **STRATEGY**

##### **A selective approach**

Rather than trying to bring in as many items as possible during the life of the initial project, the aim has been to cultivate a mindset among researchers that would be positive and supportive of the IR. Submitting research outputs to the IR should become part of the research life cycle. In the long term there should be sustainable growth without a high degree of intervention from library staff. To achieve this goal the aim has been to seek out the 'research output' of Sussex researchers rather than trawling for a wide selection of documents, such as newsletters, PowerPoint presentations and departmental reports.

Before the IR was launched a publications database had been set up at Sussex to support the RAE submission. Following the finalisation of data in the publications database it is planned to import records for items not already in the IR. Although many records may lack full text, this will provide another means of identifying potential material for open access deposit.

##### **Aiming for an open access repository**

An IR with a preponderance of records lacking full text could be seen as an elaborate publications database with some full text added on. Our aim is to provide access to full text. However, in promoting the IR the strategy is to demonstrate that it presents as full a picture as possible of research at Sussex. Therefore, records that do not link to full text are not excluded. This means that at the moment there may be a preponderance of non-full text material. However, as more research material is published in Open Access (OA) journals, and as publishers become more amenable to allowing deposit in IRs, it is expected that the balance will shift to full text.

##### **Communication and advocacy**

In autumn 2006 the project officer met informally with heads of departments and attended departmental and school meetings. Articles promoting the IR were published in the university and school newsletters. Bill Hubbard (SHERPA [Securing a Hybrid Environment for Research Preservation and Access] Manager, University of Nottingham) was invited to give a presentation, 'Opening access to research, or what the institutional repository can do for you', at a research seminar hosted by the library in December 2006.



The main challenge in developing the IR has been to transform support in principle on the part of researchers into active involvement. We have sought to build up links with individual researchers. In December 2006 the project officer began a process of contacting individual researchers about specific items of recently published research. These items were identified by searching for recently published research material by Sussex researchers in Web of Knowledge, PubMed and other abstracting and indexing services. A short e-mail was then sent to each researcher referring to the item published and inviting the researchers to send a copy as an attachment by reply to the e-mail or to deposit it themselves. (This idea was derived from the HUSCAP project in Japan [Hokkaido University Collection of Scholarly and Academic Papers]). During July 2007 two postgraduate students from Sussex have been employed to continue this work and to contact directly researchers who have not yet deposited in the IR.

### **Self-deposit**

The strategy is to encourage self-deposit on the part of the researcher by making the procedures as straightforward as possible. Input from the early adopters was useful in helping to simplify and customise the deposit process. Eprints has been integrated with the university's authentication systems so that researchers can use their normal user ID and password to log in to the IR. This means that all research staff at Sussex automatically have an account on the IR. Help pages are provided which also include short video clips on how to log in and how to input records (see <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/ir/>).

In order not to discourage depositing, a mediated service – whereby library or administrative staff would upload material on a researcher's behalf – has been offered as an alternative. There is a risk in doing this. However, it is expected that the mediated service will become less used as depositing in the IR becomes more integrated into the workflow of research staff at Sussex.

As part of the strategy of integrating the IR into the normal working environment of researchers we have provided the facility to import and export material into other formats, specifically Endnote and BibTeX, and to use the IR to create a web list of publications in their staff profile web pages.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

There are several ways in which Sussex Research Online may develop in the next few years:

- Implementation of Eprints3 will improve the submission interface and should make self-deposit even easier.
- The IR may be able to provide bibliometric support for promoting and developing research at Sussex, particularly supporting preparation for the next RAE, which is likely to place emphasis on bibliometrics.
- Further integration into other campus services, such as the university portal Sussex Direct and researchers' web profiles.
- Electronic dissertations and theses.
- Sharing data from Sussex Research Online with national and international services and repositories.

*My thanks to Chris Keene (Project manager for Sussex Research Online) for his invaluable help in preparing this article.*

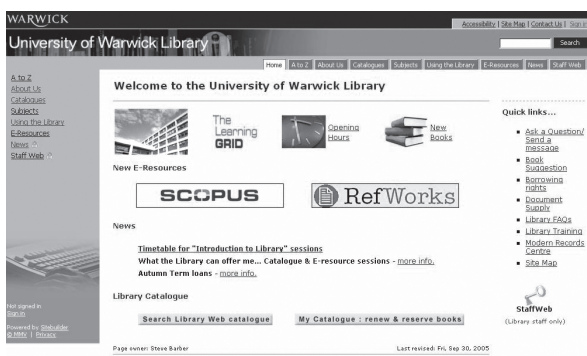
# 'What tangled webs ...': redesigning the University of Warwick Library website



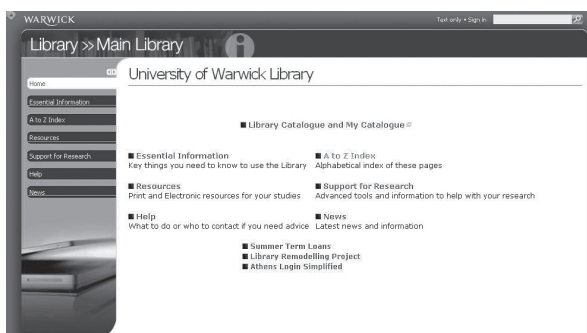
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Before



After

## BACKGROUND

Good practice dictates that websites should be regularly updated, with a major redesign every two years. By 2006 the existing University of

Warwick library website was over two years old. It had become very large and unwieldy, with no overall editorial control and a marked lack of consistency across the various sections, making it confusing and difficult to navigate. A radical rethink was necessary. A move to rebrand the library service provided an ideal opportunity to rationalise the web content and bring a consistent look and feel to the whole library service.

## METHODOLOGY

To ensure the design of the new site was led by academic staff and students (not purely by the perceptions of library staff), a small usability study was conducted. This was based on materials developed by MIT Libraries, who kindly gave permission for us to adapt their work.<sup>1</sup>

Volunteers were asked to use the existing university library website to find specific information. Some questions were relatively straightforward; others required a more advanced understanding of the website. Individual tests were observed by the 'web group', limited to the same three members of staff to ensure consistency. Volunteers were asked to 'think out loud' so that detailed notes on their use of the website could be made. Seventeen volunteers, drawn from three different university departments, took part. The majority were undergraduates, with some participation from postgraduates and staff. Each test lasted up to one hour, with a maximum of five minutes allowed for each question. A £10 Amazon gift voucher was given to all participants, as previous experience had shown that an incentive was an important factor in recruiting volunteers. To avoid the pressures of term one and the exam period in the summer term, the tests were arranged for March.

On completion, the findings were written up and presented to the full web group, together with a series of recommendations. In addition, the group also examined other university library websites to observe the approach taken by similar institutions. These two strands informed the subsequent direction of the project.

## AIMS

The main aims were:

- To cut down on the amount of information provided, ensuring all content was succinct, relevant and useful
- To present information more logically

- To rationalise content, removing duplication and focusing on effective linking
- To improve readability by writing content from a user's perspective, cutting out jargon and keeping language and style simple
- To remove confusing graphics and create a clean, simple look
- To ensure content was a maximum of three clicks away, wherever practical.

### **DOING THE WORK**

Early agreement on a workable site structure was essential. It was important to divide the content into logical sections, arranged under intuitive headings. Drawing on the research conducted by the web group, considerable effort was devoted to the creation and fine-tuning of a structure. However, it was definitely time well spent. Whilst individual content can be easily altered at any stage, the structure, once fixed, is much harder to change without major disruption.

The initial layout, particularly of the homepage, went through several iterations, with in-depth discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each. Important though this process is, there comes a point when a decision has to be taken. The critical element is to design a structure that covers all the main categories but is flexible enough to allow future amendments to content. Informed by the usability study, the main homepage was deliberately left very simple, with no use of graphics.

To ensure minimum disruption to users, the work was carried out over the summer vacation. The new site was set to go live in early September, so that any teething problems could be resolved before the start of the autumn term. This represented a tight deadline, giving three months in which to have a fully functioning site up and running.

The majority of the redevelopment work was undertaken by just two individuals (the authors). This ensured a high degree of consistency, resulting in a cohesive website rather than a series of individual pages loosely tied together. However, reliance on two members of staff created a huge workload when added to normal day-to-day tasks. This resulted in very long working days – sometimes as much as 13 hours. Although unsatisfactory in some ways, such devolved decision-making meant that work could progress more quickly than if everything had been discussed by committee – an essential point given the time-constraints on the project.

A complete copy of the original website was made, to ensure that the content continued to be accessible while the work was carried out. This made experimentation possible without disruption to users and ensured that amendments could still be made until just before the new site was launched. Existing content was fitted into the new structure and then radically rewritten. In one case, four long pages were reduced to one short page, whilst keeping all the relevant content! This was largely achieved through rigorous editing, short, simple sentences and fuller use of links to avoid duplication of material.

The various subject pages presented a particular challenge, as very similar information was required on each, with only minor differences. The solution adopted was to create a template to standardise wording and layout of content. The idea was that a student on a multidisciplinary course could look at the webpages for different subjects but still see a familiar layout. For example, staff contact details would always be the bottom right-hand link.

The impact of the rebranding of library services on the project was significant. The colour scheme and 'top level' homepage were not finalised until very late in the summer. The effects of this had to be dealt with at the very last minute, adding to the pressures surrounding the launch.

Prior to the launch, a morning was set aside to give library staff the opportunity to look at the new site and ask any questions. This was one of several opportunities staff were given to familiarise themselves with the new layout. Unfortunately, only a small number took advantage of this, with most reserving their comments until after the launch. It was also originally intended to invite student comment on the new site; however, due to lack of time, this was not possible.

### **INITIAL REACTION**

Following the launch, the user response was overwhelmingly positive. There were relatively few questions relating to the location of information. The most common reaction was that navigation was much easier and content clearer – a positive endorsement of the key aims of the redesign. Other university departments have subsequently sought the library's advice on website redesign and complimentary feedback has also been received from other institutions.

The reaction from library staff was more critical. The most likely explanation for this is that they were the group most familiar with the structure and content of the old website and therefore found it more difficult to adapt to the new layout.

There were, inevitably, some teething problems, most noticeably a small number of missing or broken links. However, these were quickly spotted either by the web group or by eagle-eyed users. To facilitate easy reporting of errors the contact details of the web group were clearly displayed on the site for the first few weeks after the launch.

#### **FOLLOW-UP USABILITY STUDY**

To substantiate anecdotal evidence it was decided that a second usability test should be conducted. This would also help to identify any outstanding issues. The test was run during March 2007, exactly 12 months on from the first study. It closely followed the format of the original test, to allow for the meaningful comparison of findings.

Overall, the results were very positive. The majority of volunteers found the new site clear and easy to use. The proportion of people successfully finding the required information increased significantly (by as much as 34% in one case). Only one question saw a drop in the success rate, with an average improvement of 12% across the whole study. In most cases it was also noticeable that the information was found much more quickly.

Where continued difficulties were observed, it was either because volunteers were unaware that the service existed or unfamiliar with the terminology used by Warwick University. However, this is a marketing issue, rather than the result of any serious flaws in the website design.

Generally, the results supported the perception that users found the site easier to use. Although the site is constantly being modified in response to new developments and feedback, it is encouraging that for the most part it appears to meet user needs.

#### **THE FUTURE?**

The redesign project demanded a lot of time and energy, but it is important to maintain this level of commitment. The creation of a strategy to ensure the site's continued development is crucial.

Maintaining consistency is a key issue. Once the site was launched, individual library staff were given edit rights to relevant pages. However, this presents problems in maintaining the house style and ensuring that the site does not grow too big and unwieldy. To address this, a style guide was made available on the library intranet, covering all aspects of the redesign process. It is important to remember both the obvious points (font sizes, colour and so on) and more 'minor' details (such as whether times should be written as on a 12- or 24-hour clock, or whether 'e-books' is hyphenated). Whilst some colleagues felt this was pedantic, such attention to detail ensures the consistent look and feel of the site is maintained long-term. A strong lead from senior management is critical to impress on all library staff the importance of a consistent marketing message.

Despite its availability the style guide was not always adhered to. This was either because staff were unaware of the finer detail, or because they did not see its relevance to their pages. To address this, a small web editorial group (consisting of five members) was formed. As well as planning the continued development of the website, this group offers practical support and advice to staff in the creation of their pages. Each member of the group is responsible for monitoring changes to a set of pages, liaising with the author to ensure they follow the house style. This is a time-intensive task. It was originally proposed that all changes should be submitted to the web group for approval before being published, but for a number of reasons this proved impractical.

The development of a database-driven website is a future goal. Although significant amounts of duplication were removed, some information is still repeated. It is not currently possible to edit a single entry and effect that change across the entire website – each individual reference needs to be changed manually. This is particularly time-consuming where items are referenced numerous times throughout the site (for example, databases). Unfortunately, as the proprietorial software is developed in-house for use across the whole university, this is something which is outside the library's control.

The university has recently announced its intention to develop a template to be followed by all service departments. Whilst this is a logical step, the library has invested considerable time and energy in researching its users' needs and developing its site to meet them. This will need to be carefully balanced against the wider university

plans. There is a strong case that the nature and complexity of the library website, in relation to those of other service departments, makes compliance more problematic. The university appears to have recognised this need for flexibility, and current indications suggest that the library will not be required to completely redesign its site to meet the new template.

Further challenges are presented by the proliferation of departmental intranets. These are often perceived as a 'one-stop shop' for all departmental teaching and research needs. The library needs to give careful consideration to its place in this environment. Should it continue to provide a single, centralised set of pages available to all students, or should it integrate its services more closely within departmental intranets, therefore restricting access for external users?

### **CONCLUSION**

The redesign of a website is a major project which has considerable resource implications. Careful planning and consistent implementation are critical to success. Each institution will have to set its own priorities, but here are some top tips to help you get started, based on our experiences at Warwick.

#### **DON'T:**

- have too many people involved
- expect to please everyone! Sometimes it will feel like you only ever hear the negative comments
- expect people to appreciate the amount of effort involved
- include something just because it looks good
- try and do everything by committee – someone has to take control.

#### **DO:**

- leave plenty of time to do all the work – it will take longer than you think
- invite feedback, but don't be pressurised into making changes you don't feel will work – remember: you're the one with the vision of how it will all fit together
- be consistent: develop your style and stick to it.
- be ruthless and cut out unnecessary content – you will end up with a better website
- keep the user in mind at all times
- remember: simple is good and less is more
- try and keep a sense of humour and have fun – it will be hard at times!

Have a look at the before and after images of the homepage elsewhere in this article to see the difference in style and please visit the full website at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/main/>. We look forward to hearing any comments you might have!

### **REFERENCE**

- 1 Available at: <http://libstaff.mit.edu/webgroup/usability/results/index.html>

All web sites accessed 19 July 2007

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# From years of experience ... building a better annual report for the library



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At the meeting of the University of Sussex library management team (LMT) in February 2006 the ritual spleen-venting that follows the production of each year's annual report was given its routine hearing. The process had, once again, proven to be somewhat demoralising and (apparently) disproportionately time-consuming. Furthermore, we had absolutely no evidence that the end result would ever be read in detail by any of the target audience. It was decided to commission a report from the head of library administration to make a recommendation on whether the library should continue to produce the document and if so, advising on the form that it should take.

## WHERE TO START?

We took the view that a multi-pronged attack was necessary, so:

- A survey was conducted of other UK academic libraries to determine current practice in the sector.
- A review of the cost of generating the 2005/06 report was carried out based on time-related and production costs.
- Qualitative data was obtained from a number of staff who had been involved in the production of the 2005/06 report.

## THE SURVEY

Three questions were asked of university librarians and 34 libraries responded.

When asked 'Do you produce an annual report for the library, for a converged service or for neither?',

70% of respondents advised that they produce reports of some kind (10 respondents produce no annual report). Most are made available electronically and in some cases this is the only available format.

In response to 'What post, in your organisation, is responsible for producing the report?' we found that 52% of reports are co-ordinated by the head of service, 15% by the administrator, 10% by the LMT, 10% by dedicated marketing officers and, most interesting to us, 5% by the Pro Vice Chancellor!

In an attempt to determine the reason for most reports, we asked 'What do you consider the key purposes of the report?' Most respondents implied that their reports had a single objective. A few were multi-targeted. The latter sort tended to involve more co-ordinators and was generally considered to be a more substantial document. Of the 21 who produce reports the main purposes included publicity/marketing (10), accountability, planning, influencing internal decisions (7), record of achievement (7), recruitment (1), obligatory requirement (2) and fund raising (1).

## COST ANALYSIS

A comprehensive analysis of recorded hours spent on producing the annual report was made for the editorial staff and senior library managers involved. With a subsequent allowance for other staff who contributed articles or provided indirect support it was estimated that the staff cost of producing the report (excluding the contribution of the communications assistant, for whom this is part of the defined role) was **approximately £1,150**. The material cost of publishing the report was £240 for 150 copies. Of these 80 were distributed outside of the library and the remainder are retained for visitors and so on.

The report was distributed widely to senior University of Sussex staff, to heads of Library and Information Services at some other UK universities and to other institutions of direct relevance to ourselves, such as the East Sussex records office,

## QUALITATIVE SURVEY

An entirely non-scientific survey of the views of three staff members involved in differing parts of the process and at different levels was conducted. A number of key points arose from the meetings:

- Clear strategic direction was felt essential to avoid staff spending significant time on issues

and contributions that are not eventually deemed appropriate or to standard.

- A single clear goal would help to guide the process and enable more focussed decisions to be taken.
- Agreement needed to be reached in advance as to whether articles should be allowed in individual styles or whether a generic corporate style is required. The former, it was felt, allows for greater devolution of responsibility and attributed contributions; the latter requires that ideas and factual information be submitted to one individual who should collate and write the whole document.
- Specific dedicated time had to be allowed to all staff directly involved in the process to spend on the production of the report.
- Working in small periods of time snatched out of the day is reflected in the quality of the end product.
- There was a lack of confidence that the investment in producing the report was justified in view of a significant lack of tangible feedback. Only three examples of non-library feedback could be cited, and of these only one was positive!

#### THE RESULTS

A total production cost of less than £1,500 was not as high as had been anticipated. It was possible that the 'pain' of the creative process belied the actual time involved! However, perception is of recognised importance. The production of last year's report was demoralising for some of the staff involved, who worked very hard but saw little return.

#### THE FUTURE

A different approach has been agreed for the future. The report in its printed form is to be discontinued. In its place will be a magazine-style section on the library website. This will feature articles about staffing, library processes and statistics. The articles will be attributed to those who wrote them and edited for factual content and in order to follow the university's grammatical style, whilst not taking away character.

There will be around six articles at any one time, with the idea that at least one new one will appear per month and a corresponding item will be consigned to the archive. This is not intended to replace the news/announcements section but will be more strategic and generally reporting in its nature.

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# Introducing England's newest university – the University of Cumbria

<http://www.cumbria.ac.uk>

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*The Vice Chancellor, the Student Union president and the chair of the Board of Governors plant an oak tree at the Lancaster campus of the new University of Cumbria, 1 August 2007. (Similar tree plantings took place at each of the university's campuses.)*

England's newest university was launched on 1 August 2007. It has been formed from three institutions – St Martin's College, Cumbria Institute of the Arts, and the Cumbria campuses of the University of Central Lancashire.

The university has come about following recommendations by Sir Martin Harris in September 2005 (see <http://www.hefce.ac.uk>), with the full support of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Learning and Skills Council and the North West Development Agency – some 20 years after the idea was first floated.

The university has campuses in Lancaster, Ambleside, Penrith and Carlisle and sites in London and on the west coast of Cumbria – a very dispersed community. In all there will be six site libraries

and the Learning Gateway in Carlisle, managed by learning and information services and over 17,000 students, over half of them part-time and nearly 1,000 of them further education students. The university's headquarters will be in Carlisle. The university's prospectus is ready for its first intake in 2008.

#### LEARNING AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Learning and information services (offering library services, IT user support, media and learning technology services) has been busy bringing together the various sites and teams, including the amalgamation of the three Talis systems and migration to the Blackboard virtual learning environment (VLE). (Fortunately all three institutions used Talis.)

The change process has been considerable and, as you might expect, helping students and staff to understand the changes and their impact has been an important part of the process. We have not neglected ourselves, however, and the institution has provided a wide-ranging staff development programme around well-being and personal strategies to cope with change. Uppermost in our minds was being ready for 1 August but also ensuring that there was no degradation in service and that we could sustain development in year 1 of the university.

#### AMALGAMATION PROJECTS

Several project teams were established quite early on, involving every part of the service. It was quite a challenge to progress these at the same time as other parts of the institution were also changing. A scoping exercise mapped the various similarities and differences of the respective institutions, to help us come to grips with the new service profile. The entitlements to service were uppermost in our thinking – and we took the decision to enhance service wherever possible, for example adopting the most preferential/generous of the existing offerings so that students and staff generally received an even better service. The diversity of the three institutions was a helpful catalyst in bringing together the new department.

Whilst we identified 23(!) possible projects, we prioritised the following 14 that had to be completed by day 1 of the new university:

- 1 harmonisation of policies and procedures including user loan entitlements and charges, rules and regulations and code of conduct
- 2 the Talis amalgamation project – to bring together the single Library Management System into a unified format and integrate data, history, catalogue and user interface
- 3 learning resources – procurement and delivery of additional e-resources to support the new subjects in the university, including the issue of new Athens accounts
- 4 front of house services – implementation of new processes and procedures to ensure a common service delivery model from day 1
- 5 LIS (Library and Information Service) web site – updating content and implementing a new university content management system
- 6 publicity and guides – new content and new house style following university branding regulations
- 7 student induction – planning an institution-wide approach to induction, including delivery of a new digital production about the whole range of university services
- 8 smart card project: all students and staff will receive a Cumbria Card with printing and photocopying functionality and, on some campuses, meal plans; it was crucial to liaise with the student records project outside LIS to ensure business processes are aligned
- 9 IT user support, virtual helpdesk and deployment of the new university desktop; supporting the rollout of a new e-mail system and connectivity
- 10 communication – regular newsletters and Frequently Asked Questions online – for students and with staff; three versions of the IT newsletter were required to assist users at their 'home' institution, as the situation was different for each
- 11 migration of WebCT materials into Blackboard
- 12 delivery of a training programme and knowledge-based information so that staff can assist students in the university
- 13 upgrade of the video conferencing infrastructure to deliver additional networked services across the new university
- 14 revised procedures for finance, operations, administration and core systems – production of help and advice on the interim web site.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

Membership and leadership of the groups depended on primary functional responsibilities and expertise and we were very keen to involve staff from all the amalgamating institutions in the decision-making process. A big mapping exercise kick-started the project initiation, where we iden-



tified similarities and differences in our respective service portfolios. An important decision we took early on was to use the expanded LIS management team as the project monitoring team and senior staff from the amalgamating institutions joined together. The service used Prince Project Management methodology that meant that checkpoint and highlight reports were presented to management for a period of nine months. And ... it was business as usual, so we also secured the necessary resources for year 0 and delivered our strategic objectives such as launch of the institutional repository and the setting up of a new learning technology development unit. Mid-year we also had to replace all the shelving at our Lancaster campus! All staff were involved in some way in the various projects and we held several 'engagement' half-days to discuss what would happen before and after 1 August.

#### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The university has an important agenda. It is committed to improving the higher education aspirations of young people in Cumbria and to the economic regeneration of the region, working with stakeholders, employers and the further education colleges in Cumbria. The university is the lead partner of Cumbria Higher Learning. (CHL). CHL is one of 28 lifelong learning networks set up to widen access to educational opportunities across further and higher education. Libraries play a significant role in providing access to learning and by virtue of their geographical spread in Cumbria and nationally they are strategically important. Already courses are being commissioned in new subject areas and using emergent technologies. LIS is involved in the application of ICT and expertise to ensure that learning resources are embedded into course design and that pedagogically sound support is offered.

#### **REFLECTIONS**

It's been a lot of work, of course, but also a very good way to implement and critically consider how other services operate at our partner institutions so that we can draw on best practice as a department. The approach we have taken is to see this as an enhancement opportunity, and changes have been made as result. It was very beneficial to have previously established links with our partners – the amalgamating institutions were all members of NoWAL (North West Academic Libraries) and/or ALLIS (Accessing Lancashire Libraries and Information Services) and/or

Addlib Cumbria, and/or CHELPS (Cumbria Higher Education Learning Partnership Scheme).

The whole institution has been working successfully towards becoming the new institution and it has been very motivating, although at times daunting! There has been lots of support and training for staff about the change process during this time, and about how we can express our thoughts and hopes. I think it has brought us closer together as a team. Keeping in touch with students via the student union and with university staff – realising how *they* might be feeling at this time – has been very important too. Our role has been to inspire confidence and ensure service continuity.

In short it has been a once in a lifetime opportunity to create something new and to revisit what our service is all about – supporting student and staff success. We feel very positive about the future and our contribution to the objectives of the new university. The year ahead, after 1 August, promises to be just as productive and our new university status is bound to bring even more enrichment to our roles.

#### **POSTSCRIPT**

The date 1 August 2007 was also important to the University of Paisley, which merged with Bell College. The merged institution is operating under the name 'University of Paisley', pending Privy Council approval of a proposed new name: 'University of the West of Scotland'. We wish them the best of luck as a new university with a regional focus – as is the University of Cumbria.

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# Fanfare for the Conservatoire

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The refurbishment of the Conservatoire Library took place during the summer of 2006, and the library reopened that October. The extensive work included the creation of an extra floor over part of the library, making use of what had previously been just a void. To achieve this all the stock had been removed to a remote storage location and the library staff relocated to temporary offices in the Conservatoire over the summer. It was always recognized that it would be a tight schedule to complete everything by the beginning of the autumn term and as it turned out it was only possible to open the immediate counter area for return and issue of stock in late September, while considerable fitting-out work went on beyond that. However, staff and students were very understanding of the situation and very impressed when our full service resumed.



Additional funding was made available from within the university to supplement the original £600,000 from the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Without that funding, completion by October would have been doubtful. It also meant that the desired re-equipping of the library with new computers, audio equipment and furniture could take place. One of the new features on ground floor level is a seminar / group study room which can be used by students working together, but also can be used by library

staff for meetings and training, and for providing information skills sessions to groups of students. These had been difficult to undertake previously in the library, without a suitable seating area and a large screen.



The stock of the library is always expanding to meet the ever-widening repertoire and study needs of students, ranging from the Junior Department right up to research level. The way this has been handled in the space available is partly by the provision of a public compact storage system – moveable shelving that now contains all the back runs of journals together with all the study scores and full scores.

At the same time, it has been possible to bring the large collection of vocal scores of operas and choral works and so on into more prominence near the new central enquiry desk. New storage racks have meant that the collection of over 6,000 compact discs can be displayed more attractively, and the new audio room has a upgraded suite of equipment for listening and recording purposes, plus two separate cubicles for listening and viewing.

While music libraries still tend to be among the most traditional in their dependence on printed sources for performance needs, the computers for student use in the Conservatoire Library are predictably proving more and more popular for many purposes, including connecting to the two online listening services that we subscribe to. A wealth of information about music can now, of course, be reached via the internet (including New Grove online) but the book stock is still heavily used by students for their written assignments and it becomes very apparent to library staff when these are due!



The official opening of the refurbished library took place on 19 April, after various additional work had been completed. The unveiling ceremony was performed by Jeffrey Skidmore, artistic director of one of the most notable Midlands choirs, Ex Cathedra (and a regular user of the library). This occasion was also marked with a specially composed fanfare by a second-year Conservatoire composition student, Sam Bordoli, performed by three student trumpeters.



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## Work-based learning at Newman College of Higher Education



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'Embrace Leitch or lose out to FE', challenged the cover headline of a recent issue of *The Times Higher*.<sup>1</sup> Richard Brown, chief executive of the Council for Industry and Higher Education, is quoted there as saying, 'It has to be realised this is a different kind of higher education. It is the greatest challenge facing universities and business and industry in a generation.'

Although higher education institutions will respond with varying levels of enthusiasm to Leitch's clarion call to embrace the skills agenda,<sup>2</sup> what will be common to all institutions is a careful evaluation of the relative risks of welcoming or rejecting the potential growth of work-based or employer-funded programmes. Is this a source of additional income, enhancing the reputation of the institution? Or is it a red herring detracting from more established markets?

This article outlines the structural approaches taken at Newman College of Higher Education to ensure that the needs of students in work-based contexts are suitably met. Embedding robust analysis of needs at the outset of the validation process has paid dividends in managing risk and providing a more equitable and appropriate set of support arrangements.

Despite the current newsworthiness driven by the Leitch report, work-based education is not, of course, new. Many institutions have had fruitful relationships with employers for many years – the fields of education and health have a tradition of close employer involvement, as well as the kind of employer-funding arrangements that Leitch

envisages as the way forward for the sector as a whole. The recent volatility and unpredictability demonstrated by both health- and education-funded programmes demonstrates again both the value and the vulnerability of employer-funded education.

Newman's history in work-based education could be said to reach back to its foundation as a teacher training college – the involvement of partners and employers in programmes has been there from the outset.

Moving into early years education studies, and a fruitful relationship with the Warwickshire local education authority (LEA), saw us develop the programmes needed to respond to the developing needs of the early years workforce – a rapidly developing area that has moved from a largely non-graduate expectation to a growing need for masters level skills in less than ten years. This gave us our first real experience of the mixed blessing of developing programmes to meet particular employer requirements.

Continuing professional development, too, is a growing area which has built on this experience – giving us increased expertise in developing packages that deliver targeted skills and qualifications at the point of need for employers and employees.

As we have become more committed to developing foundation degrees, what has become extremely evident to us is that developing programmes in partnership with employers is more akin to the pursuit of research contracts than it is to previous models of undergraduate expansion. Relationships need to be nurtured and institutions need to be positioned to react rapidly to fill identified needs.

Working with smaller employers and more diverse sectors has additional challenges. The advantage of developing programmes with LEAs – as with the National Health Service (NHS) and other substantial bodies – is that, having identified a need, they are able to finance the resulting programmes. The expansion of foundation degrees has been a more interesting brush with the realities of marketing higher education to employers with restricted budgets, who often want training that delivers the skills they want their employees to develop but without showing the same level of enthusiasm for the accompanying academic debates that are vital to the rounded higher education experience.

Developing such relationships is hard work – and requires ongoing, constant attention. It requires specialist skills in marketing and relationship management, as both students and contracts need to be won afresh each year.

Alongside such commercial considerations, most institutions find it hard to give part-time students a feeling of 'belonging' equivalent to their full-time peers. Whatever the intention, the lived experience is all too often one of compromise and inconvenience – undermining the work involved in establishing and recruiting to these programmes. Administrative processes have the potential to make a substantial difference, for good or ill, to the overall student experience.

As in most library services, there have been occasions at Newman when we have found ourselves unexpectedly obliged to offer a service as a result of a contractual agreement we had not been aware of, and had no part in negotiating. The consequences of these failures to communicate are an undermining of institutional reputation that is difficult to recover.

At Newman we have been actively attempting to reduce these instances by increased thoroughness in the initial stages of programme validation.

The issue is that of embedding the debate on resources and needs as a vital part of institutional processes. How do you make sure that the issues – which may be unique to a particular programme – are brought out into the daylight and properly discussed and addressed?

Key to all this is an effective teasing out of these needs. Will students be on campus or off? Where and how will they be taught? What resources will they have available to them? How will they use them? Agreements with employers need to be clear and realistic. Sometimes it may be in the institutional interest to operate at a commercial disadvantage as part of a longer-term strategy, but this needs to be a deliberate policy choice, not a result of bad planning or poor market understanding.

Both as a college and as a library service we at Newman have previously found ourselves responding reactively to needs that became evident as programmes developed. The additional requirements in some cases made the difference between the viability and non-viability of individual programmes.

Revised procedures now require that all resourcing issues are thoroughly considered before the development can proceed to validation.

Early attempts at off-campus delivery led to some sessions being delivered in entirely inappropriate teaching accommodation, supported by limited resources. Now we have established a minimum standard of teaching venue to deliver education off-site and we may also require a commissioning employer or partner institution to provide access to book-stock or access to computers as part of our agreement. All of this must be agreed before the programme can be fully developed.

A small-scale internal survey revealed that many of our work-based learners do not regard the college library as their primary library but often make more use of their local public library or a work-place library. This affects not only where we offer induction and training but how we provide resources and what we tell these students about accessing services. A thorough examination of the proposed programme prior to its full development allows us to negotiate appropriate support plans in ample time.

All institutions have validation and review processes that are designed to consider the introduction of new programmes. Different names are used in different institutions, but at Newman the two central consultative bodies most relevant to course development are the academic development committee, where resource needs, institutional fit and marketing considerations are resolved, and the academic standards committee, where issues of content, structure and level are addressed.

Both of these committees work through panels, to ensure thorough discussion of each planned development. The development of panels for the academic development committee has been a direct response to the pressures of the emerging forms of programme.

The responsibility of chairing these panels has been vested in the head of library services – the librarian is seen not only as having a key interest in resource issues but also as an ‘honest broker’ not motivated by financial considerations or by vested academic interest.

A range of institutional stakeholders, including a variety of academic and support departments ranging from estates to elearning, and from library services to finance, are required to note

resource implications and to signify consent for a new programme to be fully developed. Initially these procedures were seen as very much a box-ticking exercise – people spoke of ‘collecting the signatures’ – but after a full year of operation it is now settling down into a forum for a proper conversation leading to much better-resourced developments and much more joined-up provision.

As non-traditional programmes with individual resource requirements become the norm rather than the exception, smooth administrative processes, including this kind of considered needs analysis, will be an essential of any institutional planning process. If libraries can ensure that they are drawn more deeply into these quality processes it can only be an advantage in providing a more equitable and appropriate set of support arrangements for all of our users.

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# Masterclasses at UCE Birmingham library services



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## WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH US?

In 2004 library services at the University of Central England (UCE) Birmingham was given a remit to make a positive contribution to the overall recruitment and retention of the university. Whilst this was a daunting requirement, we were pleased that it was recognised that we had a part to play in attracting and keeping our students. We felt there were two areas in particular that impact directly on recruitment and retention:

- fear of libraries (or 'library fever', as Linus from the Charlie Brown books calls it!)
- information skills.

'Library fever' is a major factor in preventing students from using our resources. Libraries have traditionally been housed in large imposing buildings which to an unconfident new student pose quite a barrier. Nevertheless they have to overcome this barrier if they are to benefit from the resources we have to offer. Clearly, with the advance of electronic resources this is becoming less important, but to date a huge amount of our resources is still print-based and still kept in the libraries on campus. We have seven libraries under our control and they all have very different characters, which result from the subjects they serve, the buildings in which they are housed and the students who make use of them. Of the seven, six are relatively small libraries and students who have been surveyed are comfortable using them. The main library at Perry Barr, however, is a large three-storey building that can be off-putting to those with less confidence. Since these are the students who are also likely to drop out, we felt that we did indeed have a role to play in retaining these students.

Information skills are also linked to retention of our students. Being information-literate means that you are able to find and use the information necessary for success at university. Students who have these skills are much better placed to succeed and complete their studies with us.

At the same time as being asked to contribute to the recruitment and retention of our students, we also decided that library services needed to raise its profile both inside and out of the university. Too often we were being undervalued and not invited to participate in areas where we felt we could make a positive contribution.

## WHAT WE DID

A number of strategies were agreed upon, including the development of a marketing committee. We decided that in order to make progress in the area of recruitment and retention we should start at the beginning. The university participates in the AimHigher Masterclass scheme run in the West Midlands. This is aimed at the 14–19 age group and offers children a chance to see what life is like at university. Many of the faculties offer sessions to schools and it seemed that this was something that we could also do. This way schoolchildren would be shown that there is a wealth of information within our libraries but that there are ways of accessing the information that make it not nearly as daunting as they might think.

Our aim was to show the children what an academic library looks like, to demonstrate that library staff are friendly and helpful, to show that there are many sources of information and that each source has its own strengths and, finally, to have some fun.

A small group of us got together to plan the sessions and we devised a session called 'Parallel Universes'. This took a shopping theme and was a vehicle for looking at different sources of information for finding out about jobs. We took three scenarios:



- Looking for a holiday job
- Finding a Saturday job
- Looking for voluntary work.

We felt that this would have relevance to the students – we couldn't take a subject-based approach because they came from a range of subject backgrounds.



The session was outlined in the Masterclass programme for 2005 and we got our first booking quite quickly. We offered two sessions and they were both taken up.

The sessions themselves went very well. There were six of us delivering each session. This high ratio of staff to students meant that we were able to direct the groups well and they were able to have the full benefit of their group leaders, but this was not really terribly efficient use of staff – even though we did receive funding for each student.



We have continued to offer Masterclasses although we have now reduced the number of staff involved. The focus has now moved towards making the session more fun, to counteract the 'fear factor'. There is more use of quizzes and hands-on use of the resources. Feedback has generally been good but the experience has not always been what was expected by the students or their teachers – so we're unsure as to what information is sent to them when they book the session. Certainly the information we provide

should inform them of what to expect. The consensus is that the sessions are more enjoyable and useful than expected so we must be doing something right!



*With thanks to the current team of Carol Price, Keith Brisland, Linda Garratt and Sue O'Sullivan who are taking this project forward.*

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# Grant funding for Irish academic libraries – some opportunities

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## PREAMBLE

Academic libraries continue to operate in financially restrictive environments and often under increasing external economic pressures. There is frequent mention in the literature of 'budgetary pressures';<sup>1</sup> Moyer refers to a 'budget cut world',<sup>2</sup> Holt to a 'funding crisis',<sup>3</sup> Nevo et al. write of a 'world of increasing budgetary pressure'.<sup>4</sup> Huang declares that funding is 'increasingly problematic and competitive'.<sup>5</sup> Suffice to say, 'it is no great insight to note that academic libraries are having budget problems'.<sup>6</sup>

Libraries are expected to provide services to match the expectations of their users. Managers and financial administrators, as well as customers, expect, and rightly so, a business-like approach with cost-effective services and what auditors are rather fond of calling 'VFM' – value for money. These expectations have become progressively more heightened in the era of Web 2.0 and amongst Net Gen users. Semesterisation, the internationalisation of the student body, demographic changes, increased blended learning and distance

learning modes have placed not only operational, technological and strategic burdens on libraries and their staff, but also a very real financial weight. Patrons expect instant connectivity, 24x7 integrated access and 'more bang for their buck'. In this context, libraries need to become more financially savvy, to develop better marketing and public relations skills and, critically, to acquire more expertise in matters financial. These matters financial relate not just to the management of budgets and resources, but to actually increasing and generating additional revenues. The SCONUL 2010 Vision document<sup>7</sup> recognised this under the 'management skills' strand:

'LIS [Library and Information Services] will increase recruitment of staff with skills in areas such as finance and marketing ... fundraising will become more central to our activities.'

Put in stark terms, for libraries to meet these increased needs and if we are to sustain our existing services and add value, we need more money. Gotwals describes it thus: 'clearly for most libraries, needs go beyond the capacity of the operating budget provided by the institution'.<sup>8</sup> Shrinking budgets and, in particular, lack of discretionary budgets mean that libraries will need to look more vigorously at alternative income streams and more non-traditional ways of raising finance. Despite this vulnerability, it is not all doom and gloom. Many libraries have successfully attracted additional funds, shared or reduced costs, participated in projects with other libraries and partners and forged strategic alliances that have resulted in economies of scale. Many others have reacted positively and creatively and have become adept at managing resources and budgets, often invoking those good friends Peter and Paul to stay on top of things. Libraries have developed collaborative strategies and partnerships that have become well established, such as consortium approaches to buying electronic resources, datasets and databases.

## TRADITIONAL METHODS OF GENERATING FINANCE

Traditionally, academic libraries have raised additional or non-core funds through tried and tested activities. Many of these funds are offset against other costs such as training, conference attendance or, in the case of Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) libraries, payment of student shelvees from late and overdue fees. Over the years these traditional methods of generating revenue have included:



- patron fines (for late/overdue loans)
- photocopying, printing
- membership fees
- training
- external borrower schemes
- corporate borrower schemes
- commercial searching or business information services.

#### CO-OPERATION, RESOURCE-SHARING = SAVINGS?

Many academic libraries in Ireland have also been involved in cost-saving and resource-sharing schemes, although it would be fair to say that most of the formal schemes are based around the university sector. These range from national groups to access co-operatives and to formal and informal inter-library loan (ILL) arrangements. Some examples well known to those in the Irish academic libraries community might include:

- **SHIRL** (*not published since 1994*) – shared holdings in Irish research libraries
- **ALCID** reader cards (academic libraries co-operating in Dublin)<sup>9</sup>
- **SCONUL** research extra (SRX) – many members of ALCID would also participate in SRX
- **Institute of Technology (IoT)** reader cards
- **IoT librarians group** (currently actively researching a union catalogue)
- **COLICO** (Committee on Library Co-operation in Ireland; <http://www.librarycouncil.ie/colico>)
- **CONUL** Consortium of National and University Libraries (<http://www.conul.ie>)
- **IRIS**: multiple searching of Irish university and research catalogues through IRIS OPAC (similar to COPAC) (<http://www.iris.ie>)
- **IIIUG**: this group represents all the institutes of technology in Ireland, who all use the same Library Management System – Innovative Interface's *Millennium*
- **'Joining forces'**: a 'milestone report on a framework for a national policy on libraries and information services in Ireland', produced by the Library Council of Ireland in 2000<sup>10</sup>
- **ANLTC**: Academic and National Library Training Co-operative, founded in 1995 (<http://www.anltc.ie>).

#### FUNDRAISING AND OTHER POTENTIAL SOURCES OF INCOME

Some of the more non-traditional or alternative methods of raising finance aren't yet especially developed in Irish academic libraries. There is no great tradition of fundraising or endowment

fundraising, at least outside of the major research libraries. As a source of alternative funding in Ireland, these types of sources are very much uncharted territory. Many libraries, WIT included, receive regular book donations and ad hoc collections are bestowed from time to time. As a further consequence, special collections that are bequeathed to libraries may often require additional levels of funding or expertise if the library does not already have sufficient competency. As a source of direct funding, fundraising does not generate large amounts of revenue. Notwithstanding the legacies of Andrew Carnegie and Andrew Mellon, there are social and cultural reasons for this. Huang argues that, although fundraising for academic libraries in the US is a relatively recent trend, it has in fact become 'integral' and 'the norm'.<sup>11</sup> There is a strong practice of benefactions and endowment in the USA through private and corporate benefactors, as well as charitable foundations such as the Gates Library Foundation; the public exchequer model of funding for libraries in Ireland is radically different and not likely to lend itself to outside investment (at least on a non-capital basis). Foley identifies endowment fundraising as a potentially 'long term source of revenue' for libraries.<sup>12</sup> In the Irish context, however, although there may be potential for some benefits, it is questionable whether or not libraries could rely on fundraising to sustain a level of income generation. In many instances, a matched funding element is required and this for many IoT libraries could be a serious inhibitor. Foley also contends that there is a link between the ability of a library to market itself (in the wider sense) and its ability to attract endowment fundraising. In this regard, some Irish academic libraries may face challenges or lack some experience in marketing strategies. Further constraints on attracting private monies might centre on conflicts in licensing arrangements and carrying out commercial research using copyrighted material and public funds. All that said, we can certainly learn from many of our international colleagues and the following are just some of the alternative income streams that represent core activities in many international academic and research libraries:

- fundraising
- endowments
- public-private partnerships
- marketing and public relations
- 'friends of the library' support groups
- benefactors
- alumni and foundation offices
- cross-sectoral library partnerships such as OHIO Link<sup>13</sup>

- donations / special collections
- joint-use libraries (libraries that serve multiple user groups).

#### **CURRENT FUNDING MODEL**

In the Republic of Ireland, the public higher education sector – comprising universities, institutes of technology and colleges of education – although self-governing is to all intents and purposes state-funded by central government. Funding is administered under the auspices of the higher education authority<sup>14</sup> for both capital and revenue budgets. State spending on all education has increased dramatically over the past few years, up 140% from 1997 to over €7 billion by 2006; spending in the third-level subdivision is up 100% in the same period to €850 million. Taking capital funding out of the equation, as well as inflationary and pay increases, the levels of operating budget for many academic libraries continue to be in the context of ‘growing needs and limited budgets’.<sup>15</sup> Academic library budgets are assigned by their parent institutions and as such are vulnerable to any cutbacks that may affect them. Individual academic schools or departments may, subject to their own finances, contribute additional funds from their own budgets.

Fixed costs such as permanent salaries (notwithstanding the experience of the Bangor University library staff) are normally not affected; the ‘squeeze’ usually relates to discretionary budgets in the areas of temporary or contract staff, book and journal budgets and electronic resources. Project work may depend on outside sources and is also often particularly susceptible to restraint. We are all aware of the demands print journals and the traditional modes of scholarly communication have been placing on budgets for years now; schemes like the Open Access Initiative (OAI), Open Archives Initiative and institutional repositories are attempting to go some way towards redressing the balance. Budgetary pressures or lack of funding can have consequences operationally and may result in what Boadi calls a ‘negative impact on the quality of services.’<sup>16</sup> The effect may also be seen in terms of research outputs; a study by McNicol<sup>17</sup> cites a lack of financial resources as the second most significant barrier to research in libraries. Cox has made the point that libraries frequently don’t benefit directly from research grants: ‘research grants should assist in the purchase of library collections’.<sup>18</sup>

In response to some of these budgetary pressures, Waterford Institute of Technology libraries (WITL)

embarked on a scoping exercise to try and identify some potentially unconventional methods of attracting or attaining additional funds. The remit was to look at what was available to Irish academic libraries, specifically – but not exclusively – in the realm of grant aid. Of course, the need to source and acquire additional funding and grants is not exclusive to WITL. A cursory look at the strategic plans of many academic libraries will surely reveal a section on investigating or identifying additional revenue streams.

#### **SOME PROSPECTS FOR FUNDING**

##### *ANLTC*

An example of co-operation between libraries to address training needs is the Academic and National Library Training Co-operative (ANLTC). The ANLTC was founded in 1995, its aim being ‘to identify training needs within member Irish academic and national libraries to form the basis of an ongoing co-operative training and development programme’.<sup>19</sup> It has 12 member libraries from the whole island of Ireland, comprising mainly universities but also including Dublin Institute of Technology and the Royal College of Surgeons. In addition to providing the opportunity for a wide range of affordable training for library staff, the ANLTC also offers two awards (one para-professional and one professional) for ANLTC member libraries’ staff. These are:

- 1 **CONUL staff development award for library assistants:** the award is open to staff who aren’t in the librarian grades, to encourage and facilitate their career development. The award is for a sum of €1,500 that can be used by the staff member for study, conference fees and any other activities which would contribute to their development. The winner must report on their activities within 18 months of receiving the prize. CONUL also run a staff development award scheme.
- 2 **ANLTC/Swets research fund:** this fund is open to staff in the librarian grades and its purpose is to promote ‘practitioner-based research among librarians in ANLTC member libraries’.<sup>20</sup> The award is co-funded by the ANLTC and Swets Information Services up to a maximum of €2,000.

##### *Traineeships*

A number of academic libraries – such as University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, Dundalk Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Tallaght – offer funded library traineeship

programmes. FÁS, the Irish National Training and Employment Authority, offered such a scheme up to 2004 but has since discontinued the programme. In most instances, candidates undertake either the master of library and information studies or the graduate diploma in library and information studies programme at University College Dublin, following a period of employment of one year at library assistant level. SCONUL also runs a graduate trainee scheme aiming 'to help graduates intending to work for a year before taking a university course in librarianship, information science or a related subject'.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Heritage Council Grants programme*

The Heritage Council Grants programme generally becomes available every autumn and offers genuine potential for academic library funding. Under this scheme in 2007, the Heritage Council is financing heritage projects to the value of €3.2 million for 377 projects under various grant schemes. These schemes include local heritage, publications, museums and archives, wildlife, architecture research, and archaeology.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLII)*

The PRTLII is one of two major sources of state funding in Ireland that are open to applications from academic libraries. Since its launch by the Department of Education and Science in 1998, the PRTLII has allocated €605 million to third-level institutions. The purpose of the programme is to 'provide integrated financial support for institutional strategies, programmes and infrastructure and ensure that institutions have the capacity and incentives to formulate and implement research strategies, which will give them critical mass and world level capacity in key areas of research'.<sup>23</sup> Of the €605 million allocated to date, just two third-level institution libraries have been successful in funding applications: Trinity College Dublin's Ussher library received €25.7m infra-structural funding and University College Cork's research library received €28.6m funding. Despite the key role that libraries play in the research process of third-level institutions, less than 10% of the overall funding has gone directly to libraries. There is an amount of €230m to be provided within cycle IV of the programme over the period 2007–2011.

#### *Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF)*

The other key state funding that academic libraries can potentially profit from is the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF). This is a €300m five-year fund established by the government in 2006 'to promote collaboration, support change and

enhance quality in Irish higher education so that it is equipped to meet the challenge of driving Ireland's development as a leading knowledge economy'.<sup>24</sup> Under the first cycle of the fund in 2006, €42 million was awarded to 14 major projects. These projects covered a broad range of areas including:

- supporting institutional restructuring
- enhancing teaching and learning
- enabling fourth level
- improving access and lifelong learning.<sup>25</sup>

The selected projects place a strong emphasis on inter-institutional collaboration and in this context there is ample scope for partnership and strategic synergies amongst academic libraries. The university sector – the Irish university academic (IUA) libraries – has benefited enormously from the SIF (in conjunction with the HEA) through the IReL Initiative (Irish Research eLibrary), which is making €20m available up to 2008, ostensibly for the purchase of electronic journals and datasets for research purposes. The IUA has naturally, as a result, been in a strong negotiating position with vendors and suppliers through centralised and collaborative purchasing. More recently (2007), the seven (IUA) libraries had further success with an SIF proposal to put in place a network of institutional repositories, aspiring to making publicly funded published research available to all. To date, the institute of technology library sector has had little success with the SIF, although there are some potential proposals in the pipeline.

#### *Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences*

Under the Research Projects Grant programme, the IRCHSS<sup>26</sup> funds cutting-edge research in the humanities, social sciences, business and law, with the objective of creating new knowledge and expertise beneficial to Ireland's economic, social and cultural development. Funding is 'bottom-up' and, although research should be academic-led, the scheme does not preclude academic libraries from submitting a research proposal. Applications are invited from academic staff employed at higher education institutions in Ireland for research-project funding in the following schemes:

##### **a) small research projects grants**

This scheme is for academic staff employed at third-level institutions in Ireland for research-project funding in the range of €2,500 to €50,000, tenable for a maximum duration of two years.

##### **b) thematic research projects grants**

This scheme is for academic staff employed at third-level institutions in Ireland for research-

project funding in the range of €6,500 to €300,000, tenable for a maximum duration of 3 years.

### **Bursaries**

Another prospective source of funding for library staff is the area of bursaries. One such bursary is the John Campbell Conference/Travel Bursary, funded by the John Campbell Trust in the United Kingdom. The trust makes a number of calls for applications from library and information professionals every year. The bursary is designed to 'help an information professional to attend a conference, and/or to undertake a programme of travel, which financial constraints would otherwise put beyond his/her reach'.<sup>27</sup> The bursaries are open to applicants in the UK or Ireland, for attendance at a conference outside the UK/Ireland. The bursary can be awarded up to a maximum of €1,500. In addition to this bursary, library staff should consider presenting papers at conference, as this can result in conference fees being waived.

### **Europe**

In addition to the opportunities available in Ireland, Europe – the European Union (EU) – has major funding potential for academic libraries. Under the seventh Framework Programme (FP7), one of the most significant programmes for funding in education and training is the 'Lifelong Learning Programme 2007–2013', which replaced the 'Socrates' programme.

This programme 'comprises four sectoral programmes on school education (Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci) and adult education (Grundtvig)'.<sup>28</sup> The programme was established to fund projects for the enhancement of lifelong learning in the EU. It has a total budget of some €6.9 billion, to be distributed over the period 2007–2013. Two of the objectives of the 'Erasmus' higher education programme are to 'facilitate the development of innovative practices in education and training at tertiary level, and their transfer, including from one participating country to others and to support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning'. The 2007 call for proposals asked for 'projects which help institutions to develop lifelong learning strategies and become 'open learning centres' for their region'.<sup>29</sup> There is undoubted scope for further exploration amongst academic libraries.

### **Private sector**

The private sector may become a growing source for additional funding in the future. In many research libraries and public library sectors, this practice is well established. Sumerford asserts that 'it is important to remember that donors want to support projects that will empower citizens and result in long-term improvements in the community'.<sup>30</sup> If libraries approach the private sector for direct corporate sponsorship, it is vital that it be part of a coordinated plan and an overall strategy. Library staff themselves might have a role in sourcing funding and grants. Doran, as far back as 1990, in her case-study article on fundraising in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland library, asserts that 'there may be people on the library staff with a flair for this kind of work or who have extensive business connections and these should be utilized'.<sup>31</sup> In addition to harnessing the skills and connections of library staff, many higher-level institutions have specialized sections that deal with acquiring funding. In WIT, the foundations office undertakes this role and its expertise and advice could prove a useful reserve in a funding campaign. Ultimately for libraries, to maximise revenues they must continually explore new avenues of funding and grants.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Attempting to raise supplementary revenues can be a 'daunting experience and an exciting challenge'.<sup>32</sup> There are often social and cultural constraints and many libraries are reluctant or inexperienced in grant applications, marketing or fundraising. There is, according to Peacock, a 'narrow appreciation of the role of the library as an active contributor to the teaching and learning process ... and a reluctance to engage the library in teaching learning partnerships and projects, either by exclusion or oversight'.<sup>33</sup> In order to overcome these constraints libraries need to actively cultivate more partnerships and foster more strategic links. Non-traditional approaches to generating additional revenues should be investigated and should become part of the normal process of the business of libraries. To conclude, in this article we do not claim to have definitive answers on how to source funding/grants for academic libraries, or indeed to provide a template for doing this successfully. Rather it is an attempt to highlight some potential revenue-raising opportunities for Irish academic libraries. To begin moving in this direction, libraries should consider:

- cultivating and enhancing links with business and industry as well as the wider community
- being proactive
- planning
- remembering that it is a competitive process: success may take time,
- Involving library staff and utilising their skills and contacts
- getting documentation, statistics and library data up to date
- making funding a strategic goal and outlining how and why this can be achieved
- looking at developing partnerships and alliances with other libraries, stakeholders and like-minded suitable collaborators
- exploration, through applications, travelling, conference attendance
- advocacy
- stimulating debate and further research.

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# Skills for today's information professional

## Making the most of conferences



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This article grew out of a lis-link query posted by event organiser Caroline Milner on 26 April 2007<sup>1</sup>, asking for ideas on how to get the best out of conferences from a delegate perspective. As an e-learning adviser I have been lucky enough to spend a fair amount of time at a variety of excellent conferences, as well as organising events for others to attend. In a bid to beat 'conference fatigue' I have come up with some tips which might prove useful to others. I should stress that they are very much a personal view and are not representative of my organisation. I've written them with residential conferences in mind, but some may also prove useful for shorter events.

**Don't try to do everything** – The conference organising committee will have thoughtfully planned every minute of your day, but don't feel you have to cover everything in the programme. First of all decide what your main objectives are in attending the event, and keep it realistic. For example:

- Update yourself on recent developments
- Get an overview of a new field
- Focus on one specific topic
- Make new contacts

Then, armed with a highlighter pen, pick out those sessions which are really important for you. You will probably have had to do this to some extent when you applied for the conference, but it's still worth going over your selections just beforehand. Don't be too rigid though: your interests may change as the event proceeds, and there may be room to switch sessions – have a word with the organisers.

**Check what you need to bring back** – Will you have to produce any report for your line manager or team? Or maybe you are being funded by an organisation which requires a report in return.

Check what length/depth of report they require as a minimum so you can start to prepare it during the conference.

**Take a break** - On a residential conference lasting two days or more, there will usually be a session you can afford to miss. Conferences can be quite intense so it can help to take some time out and recharge the batteries. Go for a walk and reflect, explore the local area, or take some photos to liven up your conference report. That way you'll keep your energy levels up (particularly vital if the evening programme includes a ceilidh).

A couple of exceptions to this advice are:

- Don't skip sessions your colleagues have asked for a report on
- Small-group sessions which you have pre-booked, especially the early-morning ones (pity the poor speaker in the post-breakfast slot, who will be truly thrilled to see you).

**Clever note taking** - Master the art of concise note taking. Mind maps (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind\\_map](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map)) are great for this: they keep it all on one page: focus on the main points: and can help you to remember stuff and synthesise the knowledge gained. This helps avoid post-conference amnesia when you can't remember a thing about that brilliant opening keynote, and it eases the task of writing up your report. Ask the presenter if they will provide handouts online.

**Travel light** - Don't feel obliged to cart home every leaflet or giveaway on display. If we're honest, much of it will probably end up in the bin. Here's a tip for conference organisers: it would be good if conference venues could have recycling boxes for the vast amount of waste paper. It would also be great if suppliers could use more recycled materials in their merchandise instead of bombarding us with plastic.

**Exhibition know-how** - Be selective! Most of the suppliers' information will be on the web so rather than accumulating a carrier bag full of brochures, concentrate on making contacts. It can also be useful to check pricing and reference site details which are less likely to be available online. Say hello to the exhibitors: it's bad conference manners to go round snaffling their post-it notes and sweets without spending at least a few minutes asking them about their service. After all they may well be sponsoring your pre-dinner drinks!

**Packing** - Fairly obvious this one, but take shoes you can stand/walk/dance in for long periods.

**Make contacts** - For newcomers the whole conference experience can be daunting, and some events can be a bit cliquey. Just remember that most speakers and delegates will be enthusiasts about the topic and will normally be delighted to meet anyone who shares their passion, be it rare books or blogging. Being ready to strike up conversation with complete strangers - rather like ceilidh dancing - is the kind of un-British behaviour that becomes a positive asset in the conference world. So if you're new to it all, put on a smile and get ready to introduce yourself. And if you're an old hand, don't forget how it felt to be a novice and make newcomers feel included.

I'll be attending ALT-C<sup>2</sup> for the first time this year. This major learning technology conference, stretching over three days with a vast array of workshops, will give me an opportunity to put these skills and tips to the test - and maybe think of some new ones!

Whether you are an organiser or a delegate this year, happy conferencing!

#### NOTES

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# Developing the workforce: the introduction of behavioural competencies at the University of Huddersfield



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## CONTEXT

Competencies are nothing new. They have been used by organisations for over twenty years, in some form or another. Some have focused on particular groups within the workforce;<sup>1</sup> others have been designed for specific purposes (such as recruitment or training). Competencies are very much in vogue at present and in the LIS (Library and Information Services) sector, Lifelong Learning UK is currently consulting on new national occupational standards for the libraries, archives and information services workforce.<sup>2</sup> Universities in the UK are starting to adopt them, particularly for developing management and leadership skills.

Definitions of 'competency' vary, but they tend to fall into two themes:<sup>3</sup>

- descriptions of work tasks or job outputs (known as 'competences', typically outlined in a job description), and
- descriptions of behaviour (known as 'competencies').

The case study outlined in this article describes the development and implementation of the term in the latter sense, a competency framework that focuses on the behaviours required in a contemporary library and computing service. The overarching reason for introducing a competencies approach at this time at Huddersfield was recognition that constant change has become the norm for people working in our sector. The skills that were relevant ten or fifteen years ago are not

necessarily relevant now. The workforce is now required to be more customer-focused, more flexible, more able to multi-task. Many of these skills are behavioural and less likely to be documented than the easier-to-define technical skills, which generally are already outlined in job descriptions and person specifications.

More specifically, the reasons for developing a competency framework were:

- To introduce transparency in terms of the behavioural skills expected in each role
- To provide a tool for performance management
- To assist with succession planning and career development
- To give recognition to people who meet or indeed exceed the required levels of competency
- To emphasise that the softer, 'people', skills are equally as important as technical skills.

## METHODOLOGY

The project was conceived in partnership with the University of Huddersfield's human resources department, which co-funded the project on the basis that it would be used as a model for the university. HR consultants StraightForward<sup>4</sup> were appointed to work with us on the project, which was anticipated to take approximately six months. In outline, the methodology comprised:

- setting up a steering group chaired by the head of library services and including the head of staff development, the two consultants from StraightForward, a UNISON union representative and members of library and front-line computing staff
- briefing sessions for all staff to explain the concept of competencies and why they were being introduced
- meetings with senior managers for views on core values, skills, behaviours for the future
- focus groups with staff, convened by the consultants, probing issues around perceived roles, skills, decision-making, communication and performance
- draft of framework, consultation with staff, final version of framework and accompanying documentation agreed



- training – half-day workshops for all staff, one-day workshops for managers
- implementation, initially on an informal basis then integrated with the appraisal process
- evaluation.

### WHAT THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK LOOKS LIKE

Figure 1 shows the pictorial representation of the framework. The eleven separate competencies represent the combined views of all colleagues within the service on the important skills and behaviours. They are portrayed in a circle so as not to give undue weighting to any particular competency; the two segments 'Managing finances' and 'Managing performance and development' are intended for managers, whilst the remaining nine are for all staff, including managers.



FIGURE 1. The Competency Headings

Figure 2 illustrates the format of each competency. Each one is divided into three levels, 'Learner', 'Competent' and 'Expert', with examples in each category of typical skills and behaviour expected at that level. The section across the bottom of the page gives examples of negative behaviour.

Learner - requires development	Competent	Expert - develops others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is willing to try new ideas when asked to do so</li> <li>• Remains positive when faced with new and different experiences</li> <li>• Always willing to have a go, in spite of uncertainty/ambiguity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is enthusiastic about new ideas and views change positively</li> <li>• Continues to work effectively in a changing environment</li> <li>• Responds positively and flexibly to changing circumstances</li> <li>• Sees change as an opportunity to learn and develop personally</li> <li>• Willingly accepts unfamiliar tasks</li> <li>• Enthusiastically learns and adopts new ways of working</li> <li>• Understands and manages own reactions to change</li> <li>• Persists in the face of obstacles and looks for other ways to complete tasks/achieve goals</li> <li>• Demonstrates personal resolve and energy to complete tasks</li> <li>• Continues to work calmly and effectively under pressure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports others in managing their own reactions to change by being accessible and open, providing assistance and encouragement</li> <li>• Offers support at times of change – getting involved in change projects</li> <li>• Promotes a positive response to change amongst the team</li> <li>• Adapts positively and in a timely way to changing circumstances, modifying style and approach where necessary</li> <li>• Effectively responds to and handles unfamiliar situations</li> <li>• Supports and explains changes in the Service/Institution, focusing on the benefits and opportunities</li> <li>• Actively seeks to understand and support proposed changes</li> <li>• Takes action to remove barriers to change</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows the guidelines and procedures to the letter without recognising when there is a need to take a more flexible approach</li> <li>• Acts as if roles are static and fixed e.g. that's not in my job description</li> <li>• Says 'why should we have to do that' when asked to carry out different activities</li> <li>• Looks for the negative aspects of a situation</li> <li>• Becomes aggressive or uncooperative when asked to do something different</li> <li>• Gives up easily when faced with new and different experiences</li> <li>• Fails to act when faced with uncertainty and ambiguity</li> </ul>		

FIGURE 2. Demonstrating flexibility and adaptability

Each role within the service at Huddersfield has been mapped against the competencies, assigning levels as appropriate. A subject librarian, for example, is expected to be competent in 'Working as a team' but expert in 'Supporting and educating others'. The levels represent the minimum each individual should aspire to, and a good line manager will encourage their staff to exceed their required competency level.

Each individual is required to self-assess their competencies prior to meeting their line manager. They are encouraged to be reflective and self-critical, and to note examples of good practice and areas for development. This preparation acts as the basis for discussion in the appraisal process.

### EVALUATION OF THE FRAMEWORK SO FAR

At the time of writing, annual appraisals that incorporate the competencies framework for the first time are being conducted. Despite some initial anxieties and scepticism from staff, initial feedback suggests this is going to be a valuable tool, particularly for performance management. Some managers have reported that they felt able to have difficult but productive conversations for the first time. Many people have commented on how helpful it is to see the competencies written down, to clarify exactly what is expected in their role – and also in the roles they might aspire to. Line managers now have an important role to play in ensuring that identified development takes place.

It will inevitably take some time for the framework to become truly embedded. The requirement for reflection and critical self-appraisal does not come easily to everyone and represents a cultural change in the way we manage performance.

Over the coming year the scheme will be refined in the light of further evaluation, particularly with regard to:

- consistency by line managers in their assessment of the competency levels
- discouraging a 'tick box' mentality towards assessment
- ensuring sufficient 'stretch' in the framework to maintain motivation
- annual refresher training for managers on 'difficult conversations'.

I am happy to send copies of the complete framework to colleagues and would also be very interested to receive

feedback from services which have already adopted a similar approach.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## A week in the life of Bodley's Librarian



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Oxford's Trinity term is over, so it must mean that the glut of meetings tapers off, right? We are entering the Long Vacation, a luxurious stretch of time that extends until October, but my diary doesn't seem to reflect that anticipated lull. Although the official meetings of university committees will not reoccur until Michaelmas term, my calendar offers little white space. As an American working for the first time in the UK, I'm still learning the rhythm of the terms and becoming more sensitive to the significance of the various committees and working groups. I'm also endeavouring to meet as many people as possible, so my days are especially full.

A survey of the week of 9 July through 13 July 2007 shows 32 events or meetings. Approximately 20% of them relate to fundraising and donor relations, while the majority of the others are concerned with the management of the libraries. That's about right; I expect to be spending 20 to 30% of my time on development, sending personal notes to donors, making calls, having lunches or dinners, or initiating and drafting proposals for foundations. Apart from fundraising, I am closely involved in several building projects that will allow us to deliver improved services and be more welcoming for users and the public (the renovation of the New Bodleian library and the Humanities library) and offer us efficiencies in space and staff management (the construction of the 8-million-volume high-density storage facility). The most urgent priority I have is to balance the budget of the libraries, which currently have a £3 million deficit on expenditures of £30 million. This entails reexamining almost everything we are doing and thinking its priority and how we accomplish it to determine where savings can

be made. At the same time, we want to continue with innovations and service improvements. This particular week reflects progress towards each of these goals. At the same, time, describing my workweek through the prism of the diary and my e-mail archive makes me realise how important it is to set aside time for thinking and unstructured interaction.

#### **MONDAY**

Monday morning begins as a member of a panel evaluating submissions for an award for teaching by non-academics, and is followed by a meeting with a college development officer. Oxford's 39 colleges and 7 private houses add to the complexity, but also to the richness of the environment. In five months I've visited 20 of them. Today's coffee is in preparation for a special college alumni dinner on Friday, where I will speak about the libraries and we'll offer an after-hours and behind-the-scenes tour of the Bodleian for the college's most generous friends.

Over the lunch hour (but no lunch included) I meet with another relative newcomer to Oxford, a man who has been here for only two years, who is seeking a kindred spirit as he tries to introduce change and 'customer' service in the culture of his workplace. 'Customer' is not a description that resonates well here, and even substituting 'user' for the gentle 'reader' seems harsh.

Later in the afternoon I confer with the head of the humanities division for the university about a funding initiative we are jointly proposing to a foundation. In quick succession follow meetings with a staff member concerned about changes occurring in our organisation, development staff working on a major request to a private foundation to support the renovation of the New Bodleian, and a catch-up session with a close associate. Since the Bodleian is restructuring to reduce the number of positions and balance its budget, there are a number of changes to be made, and change and ambiguity are in abundance. As a result, more meetings than ever are needed to communicate our progress or to get input from staff. In the interludes between meetings, I respond to e-mail, but with limited success in keeping on top of the deluge: a revision to the contract with the vendor of our library management system is one of the significant exchanges.

In the evening, I am invited to the award ceremony of the Canine Prize in African Writing. It's something to savour. Five African short

story writers have excerpts of their stories read at a dinner in the Divinity School, made even more magical by colourful African dress and the festively set tables. I ride my bicycle home in the Oxford summer evening, uplifted by the power of the writing and the warmth of the occasion.

#### **TUESDAY**

At 8.30 on Tuesday morning I meet with the head of the humanities libraries to be briefed on plans for the Radcliffe Observatory quarter library, a major facility that will incorporate most of Oxford's humanities libraries and be located in the centre of a sweeping development of the area previously occupied by the Radcliffe Infirmary. This site will become the locus of Oxford's scholarship in the humanities in the next decade. Possibly Oxford's last great library building in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it will be important for the changes brought about by consolidation as well as for its ability to provide a space designed explicitly for contemporary scholars.

Later in the morning I make the short walk from Broad Street to St Giles to tour the theology library, a charming and welcoming oasis. It's one of dozens of libraries and units I am visiting, and because it is small, I've allotted only 30 minutes. But my hosts are so interesting, I stay almost an hour as we stand by the front desk talking about how to provide good service to users. Shortly before lunch I join a colleague and the architect for the New Bodleian on a drive to the home of a library supporter with an interest in the transformation of the 1930s library into a state-of-the-art special collections library. The visit includes a leisurely meal at a country pub, and I tear myself away in time to be back to meet the volunteer head of Oxford's new campaign. I expect this session to be polite and perfunctory. To my surprise, she is very curious about the future of libraries, peppering me with challenging questions. It's exhilarating. After she leaves at 5:15, I hastily skim e-mail until a North American colleague leading a tour of academics on encounters with great libraries meets me for a drink. We talk about the differences between the US and the UK and the big building project under way in his university library. Tonight there is another dinner, this one an informal group of senior women administrators at the university who gather over Thai cuisine to share tips on how to navigate the university.

## WEDNESDAY

Wednesday morning begins with a lesson in Oxford politics and time. I am meeting with a seasoned head of house about bringing forward an issue of common interest for college libraries and university libraries. His recommendation is that I meet with the newly elected head of the conference of colleges in Michaelmas term, but he cautions that when they meet in fifth week they will have an agenda overshadowed by the controversial JRAM (joint resource allocation method) proposal to rethink Oxford's approach to budgeting, and that the second (and last) time they meet in term they will also have other things on their minds. Perhaps, he suggests, I should wait until Hilary term for the presentation and Trinity term for the proposed action, a jointly sponsored series of speakers and a symposium on changes in patterns of scholarship and their impact on college and university libraries. The lesson learned is that one shouldn't rush; everything happens in due course. I resign myself to playing by the rules, but I also wonder if I can do some of the groundwork in parallel.

Before noon I head over to Wellington Square, the administrative offices of the university, to spend an hour or so with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, who has oversight responsibility for libraries. We talk about the budget (with a £3 million deficit, it's not in great shape), the organisation of the libraries, our building projects and personnel matters. He's a good sounding board and always upbeat.

I'm invited for lunch with my counterpart at Oxford Brookes University. It's a good opportunity to talk with someone who can move agilely in a younger institution. The rest of the afternoon is a different story. I arrive late to the financial recovery group, an assembly of ten managers who are working their way through a list of proposals to reduce spending: cut binding; consolidate reading rooms; fill this vacancy with a lower-level staff member, etc. We are making progress, but the task is enormous. For every proposal put forward, there will be an opponent, if not in our group of managers then certainly in some categories of readers. It's important to keep our priorities straight and not to be daunted by criticism. Instead we need to focus on good communication, so people know why we make the choices we do, and on being sure we understand the most important needs of our users.

In the evening, there's a dinner at Exeter College with the Centre for Islamic Studies, whose board is meeting in Oxford. It's another opportunity to get to know a different segment of the community of users.

## THURSDAY

Thursday is a relatively light day, with not so much crammed into it. It includes a meeting of the library's executive group, where we are discussing the implementation of the library management system and whether we can redesign the training of staff so as to be simpler and more concise, saving staff time and allowing us to bring the system to the public faster. There's a mid-morning session with the head of a college and a group of college fellows who want to know what they should do about their college library when their librarian retires. What is the future of the library in the digital age? How much space do we need? The college holds some valuable archives. I wonder if they are secure enough. On the other hand, the fellows seem to feel there is an advantage for researchers to be able to work in the intimate setting of their library, with personal attention from staff. It's a discussion that repeats itself throughout Oxford in variations. As more material is made available electronically by the Bodleian, as colleges evaluate how they use their space, and as student learning patterns change, they envision a new type of library, but the outlines are not yet clear. There is a call for a new vision of the relationship between the university libraries and the college libraries, but that vision needs to take into account the unique roles the colleges play in the educational and social life of Oxford.

In the afternoon, I have asked key library staff with experience with legal deposit to come together to help me prepare for a meeting of legal deposit library directors in Edinburgh the coming week. Legal deposit is a behemoth of an issue. With four centuries of receiving publications under this programme, Oxford has built an extraordinary collection that is among the world's most comprehensive for English titles. At the same time, the cost of managing the receipts, serving them to the public, housing and preserving them exceeds the subvention we receive from HEFCE (the higher education funding council for England) and other government grants. Is there a way to process the collections to reduce costs? It's clear this is a large and complex matter and, like so many others on my plate, will require study and analysis. There are differences between UK

and US copyright laws, and the US copyright deposit at the Library of Congress is not a clone of the UK's legal deposit programme.

For the first night in a long time, I don't have a dinner. That's great, because I have houseguests coming on Friday, a library school student who is the daughter of a Cornell colleague, and I have to restock my refrigerator. I also have to review my talk for the big college dinner. The college has suggested I talk about the history of the Bodleian, but I feel like an imposter, doing this in front of Bodley's Librarian Emeritus David Vaisey, who is helping us with our evening tours. Since I know we'll be strong in history in our tours and presentations, I have decided to focus on the changes we're experiencing in libraries today. The trick is to condense what I have to say into 15 to 20 minutes.

#### **FRIDAY**

Friday morning brings a briefing on our Google Books project in anticipation of a trip to the US for a meeting of Google partners. It's another opportunity to learn about UK copyright law. Next the three of us who are giving the college alumni tours have a quick exchange about how we will manage the presentations and tools. I take advantage of a bit of down time to read 20 e-mails and send 10, with topics ranging from personnel problems to donor proposals. My American houseguests arrive for lunch, and we have a leisurely hour comparing notes on US and UK libraries before they head off for a tour of the Bodleian. I embark on a dry run of my own tour, with tour-guide script in hand. My plan is to start with the Radcliffe Camera, traverse the underground tunnel, show the conveyor belt and end up in Duke Humfrey's reading room. I have a rare moment to speak with the porter at the Camera, and all goes well in practice.

Shortly before 6 I head over for the reception and my talk. The guests are polite, and no one falls asleep. Some heads are nodding eagerly as I talk about the changes in libraries (group work, dynamic, interactive materials, global focus, etc.). We head off for our tours. At the Camera, I discover that although I have made arrangements for the building to be open after hours, the upper reading room is locked and my master key doesn't fit the lock. The porter rescues me and then turns on the lights below so we can make our underground journey. But the conveyor eludes me; I cannot find the light switch. With a dozen visitors in tow, we illuminate the conveyor faintly

by the glow of two torches people providentially have with them. It's atmospheric, the stuff of Morse, but without the murder. After a stop at Duke Humfrey's library, we return for the college dinner, a sublime repast, and great conversation. I receive an armful of flowers with intoxicating perfume as a thank you for our efforts and I beam in pride at the success of the evening, made possible by the team of librarians and staff who went all out for the Bodleian and Oxford's libraries. It's the end of the week, very full, but very rewarding. Next week will bring new challenges. It's hard, when you're in the middle of things, to see progress but, moment by moment and meeting by meeting, we do advance. I hope that when I reread this summary of my week a year from now the advances will be evident. Some of those donor proposals will have resulted in gifts; we'll have implemented our library management system, and we'll have reduced our deficit from £3 m to £2 m. Most of all, I hope that our users will find the libraries an ever stronger resource in their research and learning.

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# News from SCONUL

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## **SCONUL funding transparency workshop**

SCONUL's funding transparency workshop in May examined issues of financial reporting management and found general unawareness of impending HEFCE requirements for library data. One of several conclusions was that libraries in higher education need to be more aware and proactive in identifying new or non-traditional data requirements.

## **Conservation Oscar**

Several SCONUL members including the British Library have been shortlisted for a 'Conservation Oscar'. The awards, supported by Paul McCartney, reward the expertise of British conservators, and are organised by the Institute of Conservation.

## **RIN/NERC/JISC study**

Consultancy Key Perspectives have been appointed to undertake the joint RIN/NERC/JISC study on publication and quality assurance of research data outputs. More information is at <http://www.rin.ac.uk/data-publication>

## **'Put it in the Depot'**

'Put it in the Depot' is the catchphrase of the new Edinburgh-based Depot, a national JISC-funded repository to enable all UK researchers to deposit their academic papers and other outputs under terms of Open Access. (see <http://depot.edina.ac.uk/>)

## **e4libraries project**

The e4libraries project was launched in July to improve the efficiency of the library sector. The MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives) and BIC (Book Industry Communication) will jointly manage the project to help apply technology to inefficient manual systems. (see [http://www.mla.gov.uk/website/news/press\\_releases/e4libraries\\_project](http://www.mla.gov.uk/website/news/press_releases/e4libraries_project))

## **JISC Capital Programme funding opportunities**

JISC's final Capital Programme Circular has invited proposals for over £4 million of funding in the areas of e-Learning, e-Research: e-Infrastructure, and Users & Innovation.

## **Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills**

A major reshuffle by new Prime Minister Gordon Brown has seen responsibility for English universities and their libraries pass to the new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) led by Southampton MP John Denham.

## **University of Cumbria**

From 1 August, St. Martin's College, Cumbria Institute of the Arts and the Cumbria campuses of the University of Central Lancashire will merge to form the new University of Cumbria.

## **Clive Field receives OBE**

Clive Field, recently-retired Director of Scholarship and former SCONUL representative at the British Library, was awarded an OBE in the recent Birthday Honours List.

## **SCONUL annual library statistics 2005/06**

SCONUL's Annual Statistics, published in August, showed further evidence of the switch to a 'clicks and mortar' approach as book loans remained steady and consultations of electronic resources increased.

## **Council of New Zealand University Librarians**

Finally, a thank you from Ainslie Dewe at the Auckland University of Technology who enjoyed the 2007 SCONUL conference so much that she has invited all SCONUL members to visit CONZUL (The Council of New Zealand University Librarians). Contact [ainslie.dewe@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ainslie.dewe@aut.ac.nz)

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# The SCONUL top concerns survey 2007

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## BACKGROUND

The third survey of SCONUL representatives' top concerns took place earlier this year. This followed on from the two previous surveys, carried out in October 2004 and in January 2006.<sup>1</sup> The previous surveys used free-text responses, which were then categorised into broader themes. The 2007 survey was based on a web-based questionnaire, using the *e-inform* survey tool supplied by Priority Research Ltd.<sup>2</sup> SCONUL is grateful to Priority Research Ltd for its support in designing and administering the survey.

Using a web-based survey had a number of advantages over the previous format, including:

- speed of response: respondents could complete the questionnaire in less than five minutes
- quicker and easier analysis of survey results
- a more detailed ranking of SCONUL members' concerns, based on twelve broad categories
- the introduction of a small number of demographic questions, allowing an analysis of the differing concerns of the various sub-groups within the broad SCONUL membership.

A web-based approach will also allow SCONUL to run the top concerns survey on a regular, annual basis. This should produce some interesting longitudinal data, as concerns gradually change based on innovation, new customer profiles and technology. Remember all those things that dominated your job a decade ago but which now seem like ancient history?

## THE SURVEY

The top concerns survey was available for completion from 25 January until 15 February 2007. SCONUL members were alerted to the web survey by messages to the SCONUL mailing list. There was an encouragement for the survey to be completed by Librarians or Directors, to ensure a relative consistency of response from nominated SCONUL representatives.

A total of 96 responses were received. This represents a response rate of 56% for all SCONUL members or 58% of all SCONUL higher education institutions. It also shows an improved response rate compared to the 80 responses received in 2006 and almost a doubling of the 46 responses received in 2004.

## CURRENT TOP CONCERNS

Respondents were asked to rate twelve broad categories in terms of how high a concern they had been in their day jobs over the last three months. These twelve categories were derived from the previous two SCONUL top concerns surveys. Examples were given to clarify the categories; for example, *Space and buildings* (e.g. *building projects, space management, remote storage*). Of course, the categories were not mutually exclusive, so the ratings charts should be regarded as a broad indication of SCONUL members' current concerns and priorities.

The four categories given the highest ratings were:

- E-environment
- Space and buildings
- Staffing and HR management
- Policy and strategy.

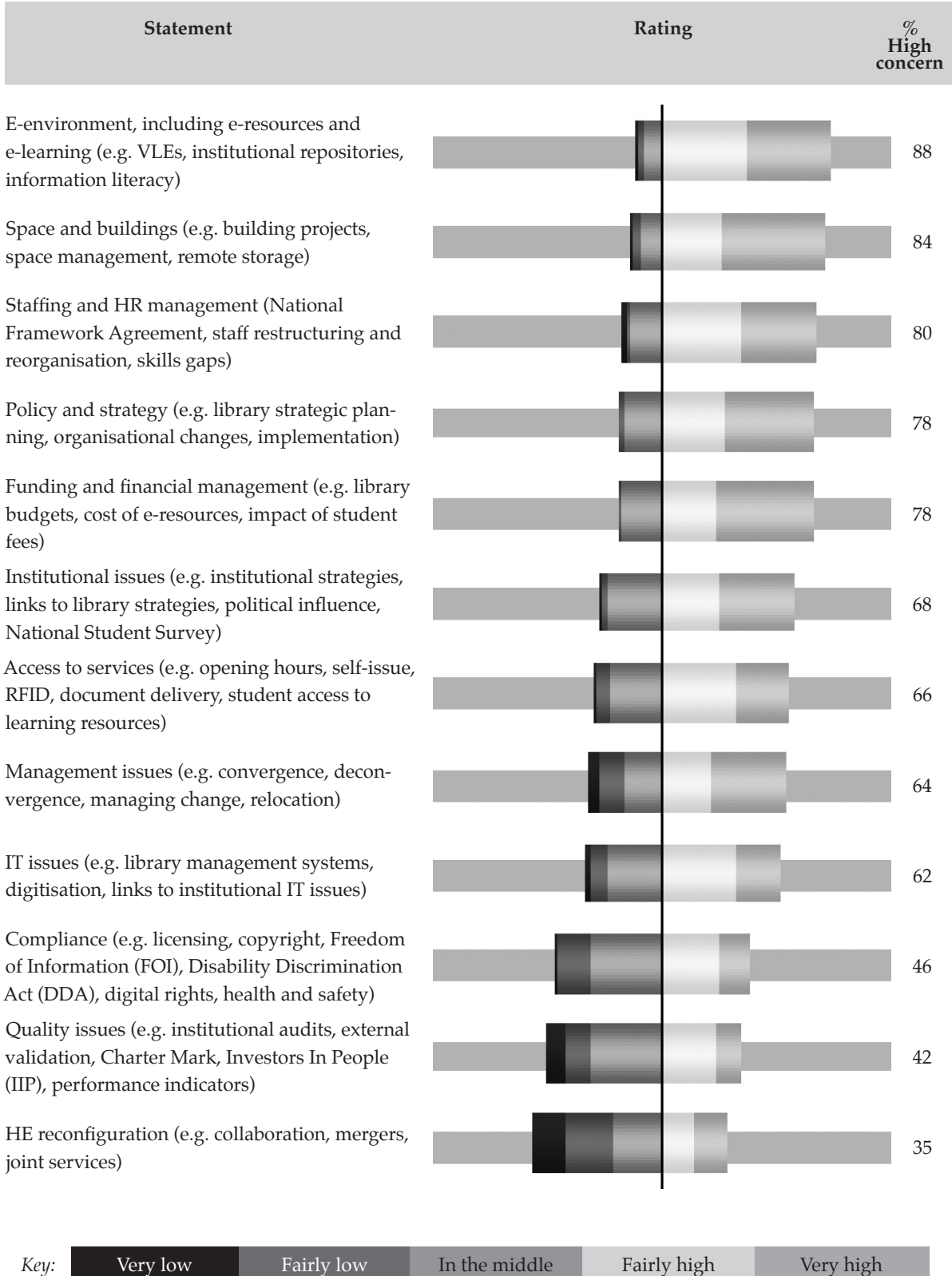
The ratings chart also shows that SCONUL Librarians and Directors are balancing a number of competing and fairly immediate concerns. Almost all of the categories are highly rated. The top-rated concern ('E-environment') has a rating of 88% but the ninth concern ('IT issues') has a rating as high as 62%. This is perhaps proof that even male Librarians and Directors have to think about more than one thing at a time.

Additional concerns not entirely covered by the twelve broad categories included:

- Impact of Google/Google Scholar on user approach to library/subscription electronic resource use

- Integrated support to students
- Links with further education colleges
- Relationships with NHS Trusts and declining NHS income
- Open access publishing and how it is going to pan out
- University status.

Q5 How high a concern have the following been in your day job during the last three months





*Notes on the presentation of data*

The chart above summarises the rating(s) respondents were asked to give. Respondents were asked to rate each aspect on a five-point scale. The bar chart shows the proportions of respondents who ticked each of the categories, omitting those who did not respond or give an opinion. The column of figures at the right of the chart shows the percentage of respondents who responded positively.

**TOP CONCERNS OVER THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS**

The final question of the survey asked Librarians and Directors to rate the same twelve concerns for their priority over the coming twelve months. These showed a broad similarity to the previous three months' concerns, but with a few divergences, perhaps reflecting longer-term strategic issues.

The top four concerns over the next year were:

- Funding and financial management
- Policy and strategy
- Space and buildings
- E-environment.

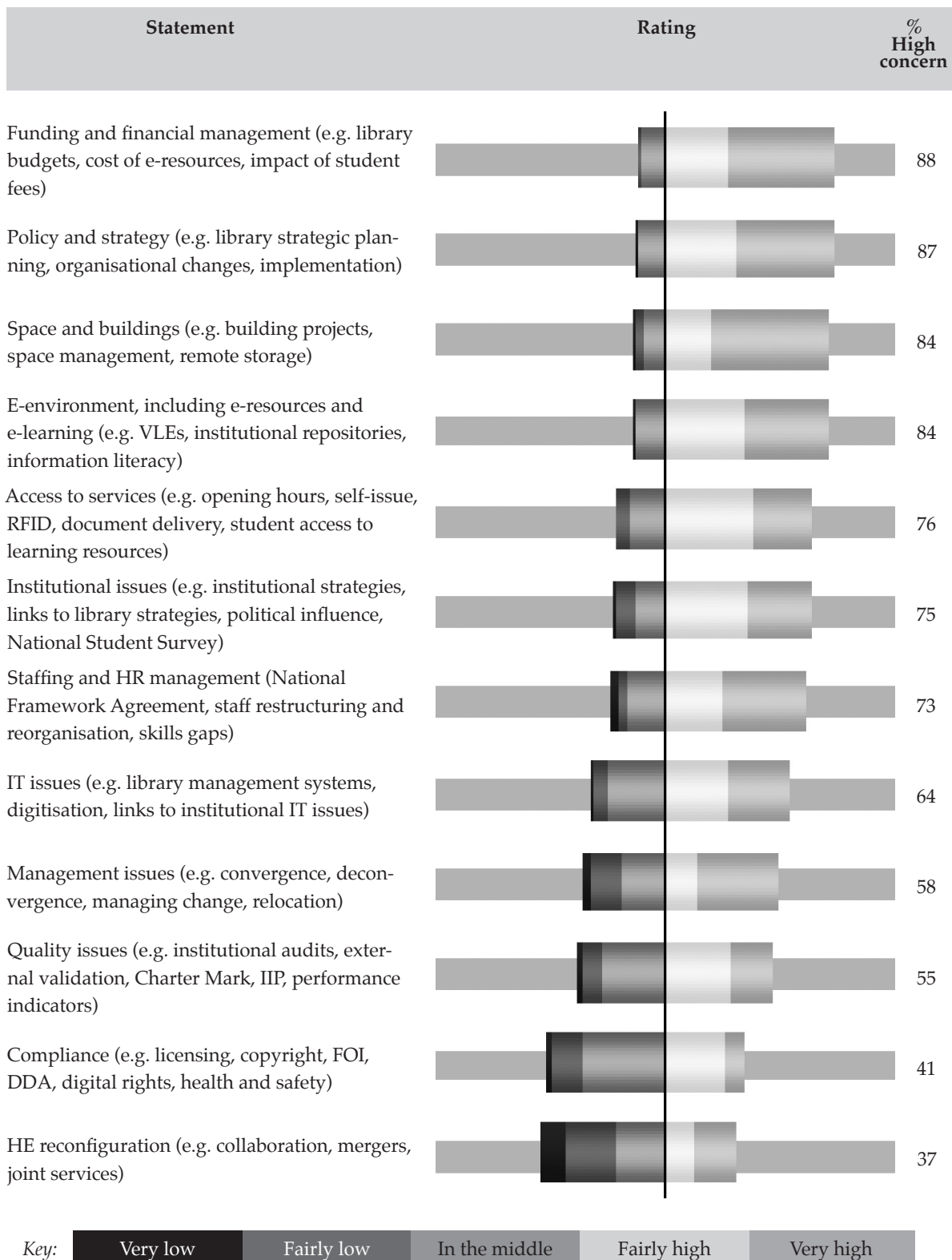
Once again, almost all of the categories were highly rated, with the ninth category out of twelve ('Management issues') receiving a 58% rating.

Additional concerns included:

- Archives and special collections
- Developing relationship with new vice-chancellor
- Links with further education colleges
- Shared services.

*continued overleaf*

Q6 Perceived levels of concern in day job during the next twelve months



**FURTHER COMMENTS**

Respondents were also encouraged to submit free-text comments on their current and future top concerns. These included:

- ‘Current concerns are heavily influenced by institutional change with regard to the site.’

- ‘Impact of changing publication models on library funding; role of libraries in supporting authors through this process.’
- ‘Impact of different funding regimes between Scotland and England.’
- ‘Development of knowledge strategy.’
- ‘Open access publishing continues to be a major issue.’

- 'Possible public/higher education library merger being currently researched.'
- 'The key institutional concern will be student retention in a widening participation environment. Key to this will be study skills and information literacy.'

### TOP CONCERNS OF SUB-GROUPS

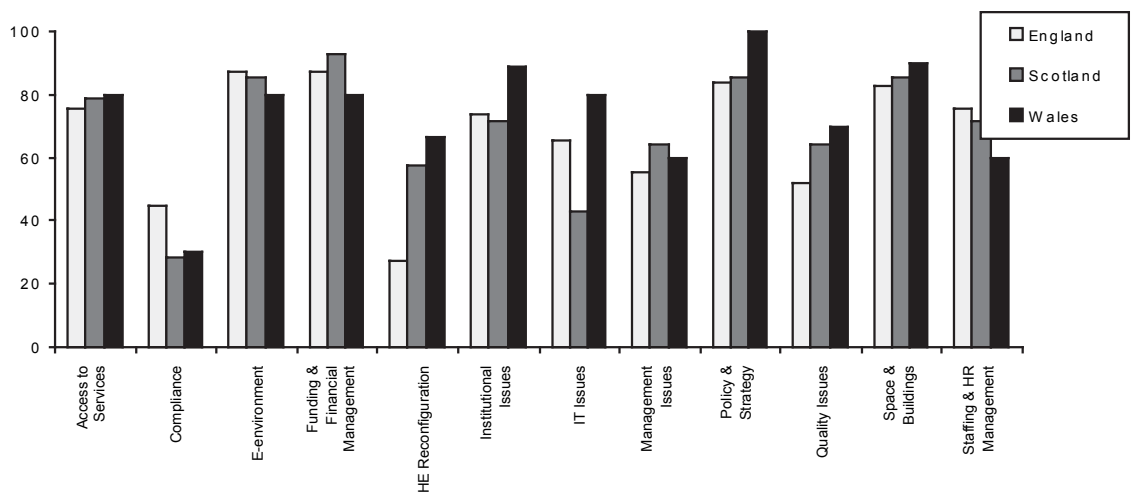
The 2007 top concerns survey included some demographic questions for the first time. Respondents could indicate their:

- country
- type of institution
- size of institution
- organisational structure.

This then allowed a cross-tabulation of data, to see if the differing groups of SCONUL members had varying concerns. To save on space and repetition, the charts included here concentrate on concerns over the next twelve months.

Due to the relatively small sample sizes, the interpretation of these results needs to be cautious and should be regarded as indicative rather than definitive. As with the rating charts above, the numerical values are derived from the percentage of respondents who rated each category either *Very high* or *Fairly high*.

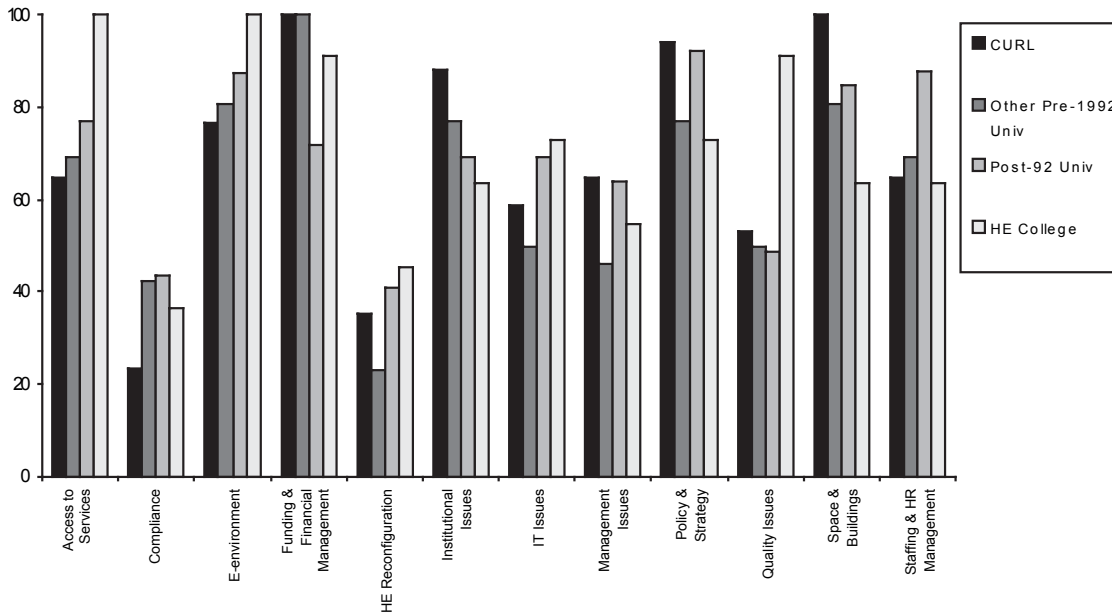
Chart 1: Top concerns by country



Response rates from Scotland and Wales were relatively high, with response rates from English institutions slightly below the overall response rate for the survey. Sample sizes from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were too small to be included.

Overall, the similarities in ratings from England, Scotland and Wales are more evident than any variations. Probably due to differing agendas from funding councils, higher education reconfiguration (institutional mergers, shared services and so on) appears to be a higher priority in Scotland and Wales than in England.

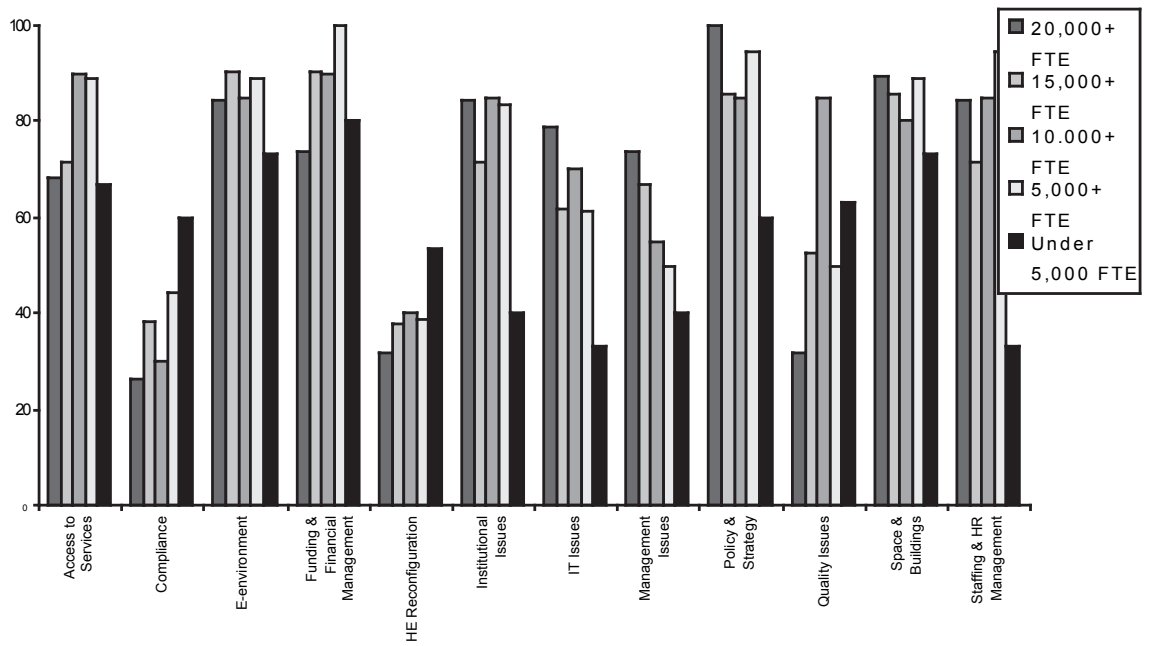
Chart 2: Top concerns by type of institution



Response rates were highest from post-1992 universities and were lowest from the higher education college sector. The sample size from non-higher education institutions was too small to be significant.

Once again, the similarities in ratings from the differing types of institution are more marked than any dissimilarities. The responses suggest that access to services and the e-environment are slightly higher concerns in the post-1992 university and higher education college sectors, with space, buildings and funding more prominent in CURL (Consortium of Research Libraries in the British Isles) and other pre-1992 universities. However, given the relatively small sample sizes, it may be unwise to fix too rigid an interpretation on the responses.

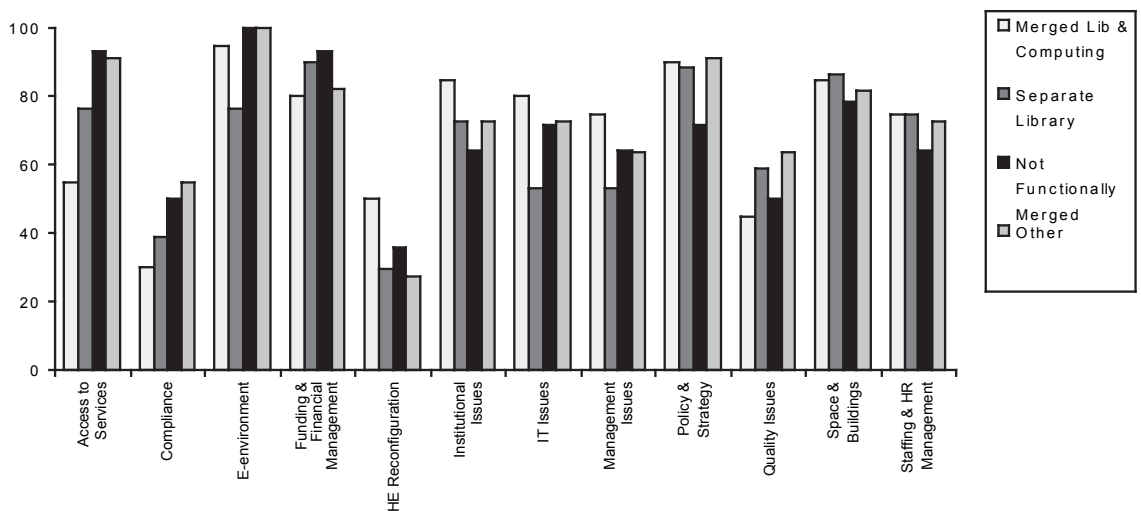
Chart 3: Top concerns by size of institution



Respondents were also asked to indicate the size of their institution, based on full-time equivalent (FTE) students. Institutions with the largest number of FTE students (more than 20,000) had the best response rates, whereas the lowest response rates were from institutions with fewer than 5,000 FTE students.

In view of some of the relatively small sample sizes, the results need to be interpreted with some caution. However, the responses from the smallest institutions (fewer than 5,000 FTE students) were noticeably different in a number of areas. This may possibly reflect the diversity of smaller institutions and their differing managerial structures.

Chart 4: Top concerns by type of service



The highest response rates were from separate library services. Once again, any attempt to interpret these results needs to be tempered by

an awareness of the relatively small sample sizes. Although there are a few divergent responses (for example, on 'Access to services'), a broad similarity in response ratings for most of the categories is very evident.

#### CONCLUSION

The 2007 SCONUL top concerns exercise has been a valuable exercise. Using a web-based survey format has increased response rates and made the survey easier to complete and to analyse. It has also allowed a more detailed rating of SCONUL representatives' concerns. The highest-rated concern of SCONUL representatives over the last three months was the e-environment, with funding and financial management seen as the top concern over the next twelve months. However, most of the other categories in the survey also received relatively high ratings, showing that there is a range of competing demands on SCONUL representatives' resources and strategic options.

A first attempt was also made to analyse the top concerns by the broad sub-groups within SCONUL (by country, type of institution, size of institution and type of service). This produced rather more similarities in concerns than dissimilarities, but with a suggestion that smaller institutions may have a rather different set of concerns from other SCONUL members.

As part of its strategic planning process, SCONUL's executive board will look at this year's top concerns survey in detail, to ensure that its strategies match the concerns of SCONUL members as closely as is possible.

#### REFERENCES

- 1 S. Enright, 'SCONUL representatives' top concerns 2006', *SCONUL Focus*, 37, 2006, p 49
- 2 [http://www.priority-research.com/education\\_einform1.html](http://www.priority-research.com/education_einform1.html) (accessed 2 August 2007)

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# CURL/SCONUL digest of scholarly communication news

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*This is taken from the CURL/SCONUL Digest of Scholarly Communication News of June and August 2007. This online newsletter (supplied to SCONUL representatives in member libraries) is a service provided by the CURL/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.*

#### SUPPORT FOR OPEN ACCESS FROM EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS

Two statements from European research organisations have been made in favour of open access to publicly funded research. The Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC) has decided 'to stress the attractiveness of policies mandating the public availability of research results – in open access repositories – reasonably soon (ideally 6 months, and in any case no later than 12 months) after publication' (the statement is at <http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/open-access.pdf>). The ERC intends to apply this policy to its own grantees. The European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) has made a similar statement, that the European Commission should consider mandating all researchers funded under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) to publish the results of their research in an open access repository within six months of initial publication. The EURAB report is available at <http://ec.europa>.

eu/research/eurab/pdf/eurab\_sciplib\_report\_recomm\_dec06\_en.pdf and is notable for having been written by people who have not been long-standing advocates of open access. Whether the European Commission will follow the advice presented to it in the forthcoming communication is still an open question, given the intense lobbying of the Commission that has been coming from the publishing industry. Aware of the lobbying, several European information organisations have set up a petition urging the Commission to implement the recommendation in the EC scientific publishing study in favour of open access. The petition, available at <http://www.ec-petition.eu/>, currently has over 15,000 signatures. All of this action should lead into an interesting conference on 'Scientific Publishing in the European Research Area' held in Brussels, 15–16 February 2007.

#### **COPYRIGHT EXTENSION TERM REJECTED BY EC-COMMISSIONED REPORT**

The 'Recasting of Copyright and Related Rights for the Knowledge Economy' is a new study commissioned by the European Commission (EC) and produced by the Institute for Information Law of the University of Amsterdam. The report strongly rejects the music industry's call for the extension of the term for neighbouring rights (for performers of music). 'The authors of this study are not convinced by the arguments made in favour of a term extension. The term of protection currently laid down in the Term Directive (50 years) is already well above the minimum standard of the Rome Convention (20 years), and substantially longer than the terms that previously existed in many Member States ... The market dominance of the "majors" is an economic factor to be taken into consideration. A term extension would in all likelihood strengthen and prolong this market dominance to the detriment of free competition.' The EC report is confirming what other national reports have already pointed out. During the similar UK debate, the report commissioned by the Gowers review on the economic evidence on copyright term extension showed that it was 'very likely that a term extension of the type under consideration would cause a net welfare loss to society' and estimated the loss at £155 million p.a. Regarding the results of the harmonisation process, the report states that it 'has produced mixed results at great expense, and its beneficial effects on the Internal Market remain largely unproven and are limited at best' and also 'advises the EC legislature not to undertake any new initiatives at harmonisation, except where a clear need for amendment of the existing *acquis* can be demon-

strated'. The executive summary of the report is available at [http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/copyright/docs/studies/etd2005imd195recast\\_summary\\_2006.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/copyright/docs/studies/etd2005imd195recast_summary_2006.pdf).

#### **ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE**

Support for the use of open source software is given in a new report from the European Commission available at <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/ict/policy/doc/2006-11-20-flossimpact.pdf>. The study, by a pan-European group of experts, highlights the heavy use of open source software across Europe and the economic benefit of the use of such software. The authors of the study conclude that free open source software 'can encourage the creation of SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) and jobs' and that the location of large numbers of such software developers in Europe provides an opportunity to 'reach towards the Lisbon goals of making Europe the most competitive knowledge economy by 2010'.

#### **CANADIAN GOVERNMENT OVER-RULES DRM FOR LEGAL DEPOSIT**

Dr Michael Geist, a Canadian academic lawyer specialising in internet law, has posted at <http://www.michaelgeist.ca/content/view/1612/159/> interesting information about the Canadian government's decision against the use of digital rights management (DRM) to thwart legal deposit in Library and Archives Canada (LAC). He writes, 'The regulations now require publishers to decrypt encrypted data contained in a publication and to remove or disable systems designed to restrict or limit access to the publication before submitting it to the LAC. Moreover, publishers are required to also provide the LAC with a copy of the software necessary to access the publication, the technical information necessary for access, and any "meta-data" associated with the electronic publication.'

#### **NO NEW LEGAL PROTECTION FOR SEARCH ENGINES IN THE UK**

In December 2006 the DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) published the government's response to a consultation on 'the liability of hyperlinkers, location tool services and content aggregators' as part of the UK implementation of the EU Electronic Commerce Directive. Essentially this was a consultation about the liability of search engines when linking to copyright-protected content. The internet service providers (ISPs) responding to the consultation wanted to see the liability of providers of search engines limited, whereas rights-holders were worried

that this would erode the permission-based approach upon which intellectual property is based. SCONUL was one of the 38 respondents to the consultation, arguing for limitations on liability, on the grounds that all sorts of people, educational institutions and small businesses would benefit from limitations, which would put a ceiling on the damages they might have to pay if they unwittingly linked to unsound information. The DTI has sided with the rights-holders on the basis that there is insufficient evidence for a need to extend the limitations on the liability of search engine providers. The response is at <http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file35905.pdf>.

#### **NEW CLARIFICATION FOR FUNDING OF OPEN ACCESS (OA) PUBLICATION FEES**

A meeting organised by CURL (Consortium of Research Libraries in the British Isles) in November 2006 identified the confusion that exists regarding the payment of open access publication fees from research grants. Following the meeting RIN (Research Information Network) worked with RCUK (Research Councils UK) to draft guidance notes for authors and university administrators on the payment of these charges under either indirect or direct costs claimed from research councils as part of the funding of research (the difference between the direct and indirect route depending on the timing of publications arising from the research). The details are available in a RIN briefing note at <http://www.rin.ac.uk/files/Briefing%20Note%20-%20Payment%20of%20Publication%20Fees.pdf>. The situation is still complex, and it will be important for authors wishing to publish in OA journals to receive guidance from research administrators or library staff in following the correct route, but as a result of the work by RIN and RCUK it is now clear that OA publication charges are a legitimate call upon research funds.

#### **VALUE-BASED PRICING FOR JOURNALS?**

The University of California (UC) libraries have issued a report describing their work on value-based pricing of academic journals. The press release announcing the report describes the work as 'a direct outcome of the UC libraries' collective strategic priority to advance economically balanced and sustainable scholarly communication systems'. This strategic priority has been evident in recent years in an increasingly hard line in negotiations with publishers and in establishing alternative publication routes for authors. The libraries' approach includes suggestions for

annual price increases tied to production costs; credits for institutionally based contributions to the journal, such as the work of editors; and credits for business transaction efficiencies from consortial purchases. The libraries are seeking an explicit method for aligning the purchase or licence costs of scholarly journals with the value they contribute to the academic community (for example in citations) and the costs to create and deliver them. In addition to describing the work done to date, the report provides examples of potential cost savings and declares UC's intention to pursue value-based prices in their negotiations with journal publishers. In addition, the report invites the academic community to work collectively to refine and improve these and other value-based approaches. The report is available at <http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/cdc/valuebasedprices.pdf>.

#### **UKPMC GOES LIVE**

The UK PubMed Central (UKPMC) service went live (on schedule) on 9 January 2007 at the url [www.ukpmc.ac.uk](http://www.ukpmc.ac.uk). Last July a nine-strong group of UK research funders, led by the Wellcome Trust, awarded the contract to develop UKPMC to a partnership between the British Library, the University of Manchester and the European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI). Many members of this group now require that articles describing the results of research they support are made available in UKPMC with the aim of maximising its impact. The UKPMC service will ensure that articles resulting from research paid for by any member of the funding consortium will be freely available to everybody, fully searchable and extensively linked to other online resources. Initially UKPMC mirrors the American PubMed Central database (hosted by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH)). Now UK scientists will also be able to submit their research outputs for inclusion in UKPMC. Through 2007 and beyond, the partners will develop new tools for UKPMC to further support biomedical research. It is anticipated that UKPMC will grow into a major online resource representing the UK's biomedical research output.

#### **RIN STUDY ON RESEARCHERS AND DISCOVERY SERVICES**

A recent study undertaken by Rightscom on behalf of the Research Information Network (RIN) identifies the discovery services used by researchers 'to discover and locate the wide variety of information sources that might be relevant



to their work'. A total of 450 research-related personnel were telephoned to form the basis for the survey. The main problem encountered by researchers was not with the research discovery services themselves but with accessing the content the discovery services revealed. Google and Web of Science showed up as popular services but the survey also revealed a 'very long tail' of services used by researchers. The advice of peers and networks of colleagues also proved to be very important in locating relevant content. Library support was usually experienced by researchers via portals rather than by personal contact since the researchers interviewed rarely visited the library. Many other interesting pieces of information are included in the study report which is available at <http://www.rin.ac.uk/researchers-discovery-services>.

#### **US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SUPPORTS OPEN ACCESS TO NIH RESEARCH**

The US House of Representatives has approved a measure directing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to provide free public online access to agency-funded research findings within 12 months of their publication in a peer-reviewed journal. With broad bipartisan support, the House passed the provision as part of the FY2008 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations Bill. A similar measure has been approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee and will be considered by the full Senate later this summer. The current NIH public access policy, implemented in 2005 as a voluntary measure, has resulted in the deposit of less than 5% of eligible research by individual investigators. In a recent letter to Congress, 26 Nobel laureates called for the enactment of mandatory NIH public access, noting that 'requiring compliance is not a punitive measure, but rather a simple step to ensure that everyone, including scientists themselves, will reap the benefits that public access can provide. We have seen this amply demonstrated in other innovative efforts within the NIH, most notably with the database that contains the outcome of the Human Genome Project.' The NIH has been a world leader in improving access to medical research and has been held back by the reluctance of the US Congress to agree a mandate. Learning from the US experience, the UK research organisations funding UK PubMed Central have already agreed on policies requiring deposit in the UKPMC database.

#### **SPRINGER AND UKB TO CO-OPERATE IN OPEN ACCESS INITIATIVE**

The Dutch consortium of university libraries, UKB, and Springer have signed a letter of intent to the effect that they will jointly explore the potential of open access publishing. UKB strongly supports the open access model for scientific publishing as a means to stimulate the widespread use and re-use of scientific information, because payment of an 'article processing charge' ensures universal free access to the published information. The letter of intent signed by UKB and Springer is designed to allow authors to gain experience with open access publishing in existing, established journals; to allow open access journals to build a solid scientific reputation; and allow all players to gain experience with the economic viability of the business model and the incorporation of open access in the scientific publication cycle. Under the letter of intent, Springer undertakes to offer free and immediate world-wide access to articles that have been accepted for publication in one of Springer's journals in 2007 by corresponding authors whose main affiliation is with one of the UKB members; Springer allows for simultaneous publication of the articles in the open access institutional repositories of UKB members (DARE); in the course of 2007; UKB and Springer will negotiate a long-term open access agreement; and the intention of both UKB and Springer is to evaluate the arrangement, which is seen as a pilot, with all stakeholders, and to actively disseminate the outcome of the evaluation. See the press release at <http://www.ukb.nl/English/nieuws.htm>.

#### **EVER-RISING IMPACT FACTORS?**

Over the summer of 2007 publishers have been issuing press releases announcing success for particular journals or a particular percentage of the journals they publish in achieving higher impact rankings in the 2006 Thomson ISI 'Journal Citation Reports'. This annual spate of announcements is a curious feature of the publishing industry. It makes one wonder about the journals *not* mentioned in the press releases. Presumably they have lost out in the impact factor rat-race? And of what relevance are these announcements to the academic community? Journal impact factors do appear to be in the minds of members of the RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) panels, but what do impact factors really tell us about the quality of academic research? The UK government has asked HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) to develop a new framework for the assessment and funding of research, and it

is to be hoped that HEFCE will look at a broader range of quality indicators than a particular set of citation statistics derived from a far from comprehensive list of journals. A consultation paper on possible new bibliometrics for use after the 2008 RAE was due to be issued by HEFCE in the autumn of 2007. Members of the CURL/SCONUL Scholarly Communications Group recently met with HEFCE staff to discuss metrics that might be part of the new RAE framework.

#### **'THE POWER OF INFORMATION'**

A report by Ed Mayo and Tom Steinberg entitled 'The power of information' is now on the UK Cabinet Office web-site at [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications/reports/power\\_information/power\\_information.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications/reports/power_information/power_information.pdf). The report contains some recommendations to the UK government which – if implemented – will be helpful to the academic community. For example, recommendation 4 is: 'To encourage innovation in the re-use of information by non-commercial users, UK trading funds should encourage the introduction of non-commercial re-use licences, along the lines of those pioneered by the BBC's Backstage project and Google Maps.' The spirit of the report is to increase access to public sector information, noting the economic and social benefits to be derived from re-use of both government- and citizen-created information. A recent conference in Australia discussed a similar move to improve access to public sector information, and an Australian 'National Information Sharing Strategy' is already in draft.

#### **UK GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO NEW MEDIA REPORT**

The UK government has published the 'Government Response to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee Report into the New Media and Creative Industries'. The response – available through [http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference\\_library/Publications/archive\\_2007/creative\\_new\\_media.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2007/creative_new_media.htm) – confirms that the government has rejected the select committee's recommendation for a proposal to the EU to extend copyright in sound recordings to 70 years. The response also recognises that Creative Commons licences are 'one of several options for copyright owners to consider when exploiting their works' (note the emphasis upon exploitation rather than upon access to content). The response also encourages the licensor 'to be clear about the extent of both the rights being retained and the rights being relinquished', which is helpful in the light of

widespread ignorance and confusion about copyright in the academic environment.

#### **EC GREEN PAPER ON THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA**

The European Commission has launched a consultation on the EC green paper on the European Research Area ([http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/consultation-era\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/consultation-era_en.html)) with a deadline for submissions of 31 August 2007. The EC writes that 'The debate is open to everyone with an interest in the realisation of a European knowledge society.' The Commission's interest in the future for scientific publications is ongoing, and Commission staff thought that earlier responses from the academic community were very valuable.

#### **UKSG STUDY ON USAGE FACTORS**

The United Kingdom Serials Group has published the 'Final report on the investigation into the feasibility of developing and implementing journal usage factors' written by Dr Peter Shepherd, including the results of a web survey by Key Perspectives Ltd. The report is available at [www.uksg.org/usagfactors/final](http://www.uksg.org/usagfactors/final). The report concludes that, although impact factors will continue to be important as a measure of quality, there is a case for developing more comprehensive usage statistics that could be used to allocate a 'usage factor' to each journal. (NB: the assumption in the report is that such metrics will still be required at the *journal* level rather than at the *article* level.) Dr Shepherd's recommendation is that COUNTER (Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources) should have a role in the development of usage factors, as COUNTER is the only service to command sufficient trust from both publishing and library communities. The report does not allow for the development of any service that could harvest usage data without requiring the active co-operation of all stakeholders.

#### **GOOGLE SCHOLAR @ GSK**

Attendees at the UKSG (UK Serials Group) annual conference in April 2007 had the opportunity to hear a presentation by Jennifer Whittaker of GlaxoSmithKline on GSK's decision to promote Google Scholar to researchers as a means of providing a quick search across scientific information on the web. Google Scholar's ease of use and broad coverage are attractive to GSK, although the limitations of the service are recognised. The Google Scholar usage has proved to be additional to use by GSK researchers of traditional bibliographic databases, and GSK's staff see the

two types of search tool as being complementary. Discussion following the presentation covered the level of trust in Google Scholar searches, users showing a higher level of trust than information professionals, but GSK's experience suggests that Google Scholar has the potential to become an important element in information services. A report on the presentation and discussion appears on UKSG's blog, 'LiveSerials' at <http://liveserials.blogspot.com/2007/04/google-scholar-gsk-from-discussion-to.html>.

#### **WIPO FAILS TO REACH AGREEMENT ON BROADCASTING TREATY**

A controversial new intellectual property right due to be created by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) has been successfully opposed by a coalition of web activists and the technology industry. WIPO has spent nearly 10 years attempting to reach international agreement over a new treaty which would give broadcasters intellectual property rights over broadcasts in addition to existing copyright laws. The Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR) of WIPO met recently to finalise a recommendation that the new proposal go to a special conference for ratification by WIPO as a whole. At the end of the meeting there was not enough agreement between member nations about the proposal and the committee recommended that the proposal not be forwarded to a diplomatic conference for adoption. This is a victory for public access to information, as the new treaty would have created a new layer of rights on top of copyright which would have restricted access to content, even content in the public domain. Opponents of the proposed treaty agree that there is a need for legislation to prevent television signal piracy, but that this legislation should not extend to the content carried in the signal.

#### **PRICING DIGITAL INFORMATION SERVICES**

An insight into the way commercial companies price digital information services has been published in a newsletter from Greenhouse Associates, a US-based consulting firm providing services to publishing and online information companies. The newsletter is available at <http://www.greenhousegrows.com/publications/index.html> and lists '10 rules for pricing digital information services'. The first rule, 'Align pricing with value', appears to make sense from a purchaser's viewpoint, but the text makes clear that what this rule means is the price varying from customer to customer, certainly a feature of publishers' big deals in different countries. The second rule,

'Don't base pricing upon cost', also reflects the way the information industry currently deals with the academic community, and will become an important issue in the level of OA (Open Access) publication charges to authors. If only publishers would adopt Greenhouse Associates' fourth rule: 'Pricing must be transparent!' The rule recommends that 'vendors should be able to calculate a price for any customer using rules that all customers can see and understand, rather than by a behind-the-curtain process that vendors can't share with customers'. It would also be good to see the adoption of the ninth rule, 'Assume your pricing practices will be public.'

#### **HOW CONFIDENT IS THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY ABOUT THE FUTURE?**

In the *Financial Times*' 'Lex column' of 18 July 2007 the reporter wrote in very positive terms about the future for Reed Elsevier: 'The concern that governments might object to paying twice for academic journals – they fund both the research that goes into articles and the libraries that buy them – has not translated into a tangible threat. So, with one of the most reliable models in the media sector, the group delivers 10% earnings growth each year.' Whatever the reality of the picture painted in this article, it illustrates the confidence amongst the major commercial publishers that they will still control the research dissemination process. A very different view of the future emerges when talking to smaller journal publishers, who see their business as being destroyed by free access to repository content. Again, whatever the reality of that view of the future, it illustrates a growing divergence within the publishing industry. One effect may be that smaller publishers such as learned societies will increasingly feel that their future is more secure as part of a larger group, thus reinforcing the dominance of the market by a handful of big commercial publishers and leading to even bigger (and more expensive) 'big deals' to which libraries feel they have to subscribe.

#### **AND FINALLY ...**

The ALPSP (Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers) has announced an open access option for authors publishing in its journal, *Learned publishing*. The price to make an article open access is £1250 for members of ALPSP and £1500 for non-members, par for the course. A differentiation in price set by a member organisation normally indicates a service to members, so does the differentiation in price for a publication charge imply that open access is being treated by ALPSP as a service to its members?

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# 'Shifting boundaries': SCONUL Conference 2007

20-22 June 2007, Birmingham

Conference reviewed by Antony Brewerton,  
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As I stood at Oxford railway station I really stood at a crossroads. The track heading south could take me in the direction of Glastonbury and some of my favourite recording artistes: Arctic Monkeys, Björk, The Go! Team, Bat for Lashes and even Shirley Bassey. The track north would take me to the SCONUL Conference.

Which would I decide upon?

Well, as you are not reading the NME I think you can guess the answer.

This year's SCONUL Conference was set in a rather rainy Birmingham. I walked up the hill from Birmingham New Street and was soon at the Jury's Inn Hotel. As your dedicated journal Editor I first checked out the conference rooms. Part of my eagerness to suss out the venue was that this year your intrepid reporter was also to be official SCONUL photographer for the event. The room where the presentations were to take place was a rather broad room with pillars. To ensure everyone could see the presentations there were large screens all around. It was like Glastonbury without the mud!

The theme of this year's Conference was 'Shifting boundaries'. As the pre-Conference blurb put it:

"Not so long ago academic libraries had clear boundaries and were differentiated in terms of mission, physical presence and services. The library was probably the most easily recognised building on campus. Now these boundaries are blurring and even disappearing. Technologies are coming together and content has

long since broken free from physical entities such as books and printed journals."

Quite some potential for a conference.

This theme was taken up straightaway by **Anne Bell**, the Chair of SCONUL, in her welcoming remarks. Anne promised a diversity of perspectives and experiences from our speakers. She thanked the Conference sponsors (3M – the principal sponsors – and Blackwell Book Services, the British Library, Cisco, Dawson Books, Ebsco, Ex Libris, Gresham, Innovative Interfaces, Mentor, MLA West Midlands, Nordplan, OCLC Pica and Sue Hill Recruitment) and extended a special welcome to delegates Trish Fouracres and Clare Langman, whose places had been sponsored by MLA West Midlands (and who have included a report in *Focus* on what they made of their first SCONUL Conference). Shifting boundaries, Anne reflected, could mean an extension of activities ...or a decline. This could encompass political, organisational or social shifts. It was fitting that the Conference should have such a theme in Birmingham, which has seen significant shifting boundaries in the last forty years with the shifting fortunes – post-War – of the car industry, the "brutalism of 1960s architecture" (like the Bull Ring) and –more positively– the shifting social and ethnic boundaries. Despite some years of economic decline, recent investment in the city centre (the Bull Ring 2.0) has seen the population growing again, in size and confidence. Just as Birmingham has faced challenges, so do we. And just as Birmingham has been successful, so can libraries.

Challenges and successes lay at the heart of the first paper of Conference. **Jim Neal**, Vice President for Information and University Librarian at Columbia University, began by quoting Lenin with his talk entitled *A lie told often enough becomes the truth*. Jim reviewed the strategic and tactical importance of our public image. He first considered the environment. Key drivers include:

- customisation – meeting individual needs;
- openness – providing barrier-free access to information and services;
- self service;
- mutability – change as a constant and an increasingly hybrid approach;
- productivity – an issue for organisations and individuals;
- usability;
- assessment;
- marketing – with an emphasis on penetration and diversification as strategic options;

- strategic action – yes, action, not just planning;
- business plans – including risk planning;
- competition – the need to focus more on competitive environments;
- resource development – including developing the visibility of the library and new resources.

Jim then looked at the role of libraries. We will always have our core roles (acquiring information, organising it, helping customers find it, answering questions about it and archiving it) but we also need to be developing new roles, with libraries as:

- consumers;
- aggregators;
- publishers;
- educators;
- research and development organisations;
- entrepreneurs;
- information policy advocates (locally, nationally and internationally).

After setting this context, Jim returned to the title of his talk. He reminded the audience of the scene from the Mel Brooks film *History of the World Part 1* where Brooks' Moses (in a parody of DeMille) comes down from the mountain carrying three tablets of stone listing fifteen commandments, stumbles and drops one so ends up delivering ten commandments. Jim felt more sure footed so offered us fifteen lies (or misrepresentations/ distortions) about academic libraries:

1. academic libraries are building digital collections of limited value and impact and perpetuating the limitations of the analog environment;
2. academic libraries have failed to develop comprehensive institutional and collaborative strategies to preserve the analog collections and archive the digital record;
3. academic libraries have lost the ability to serve the interests and needs of students;
4. academic libraries have developed a stranger relationship with their faculties, missing opportunities to partner and to advance new service models for teaching and research;
5. academic libraries have had no effective impact on the scholarly publishing marketplace and have not successfully influenced new models of research communication;
6. academic libraries are not providing the essential leadership in promoting, managing and leveraging content repositories in collaboration with the scholarly community;
7. academic libraries are ineffective participants in the political process and have had mini-

mal impact on key information policy issues affecting higher education and the public interest;

8. academic libraries are confronted by a copyright 'axis of evil' and have been consistently unable to influence national or global legal or legislative developments on intellectual property;
9. academic libraries do not know how to construct entrepreneurial strategies and advance new markets and new products that drive resource development;
10. academic libraries do not understand or support the needs of users and are sustaining traditional models of service that ignore the social and intelligent capabilities of digital and network technologies;
11. academic libraries are not implementing rigorous tools for evaluation of the impact and relevance of their programs and services, and thus are not able to demonstrate that they really make a difference;
12. academic libraries are part of an 'information poor' information profession, with limited ability and commitment to data-supported choices, rigorous investigative capabilities, and sharing of research results;
13. academic libraries consume valuable campus real estate and can no longer justify the continuing investment by their universities in libraries as expensive book warehouses and student centres;
14. academic libraries are not recruiting and developing the professional workforce that can tackle the complex challenges of the new information, technology and service conditions;
15. academic libraries sustain dysfunctional organisational models characterised by too much hierarchy and bureaucracy and with too much focus on 'process as the most important product'.

In this comprehensive introduction Jim then went on to successfully knock down each of these lies. Obviously some of these 'distortions' were easier to defeat than others, but it was still most welcome to hear someone provide an overview of the good things we are doing.



Ronald Barnett and Jim Neal

Jim was followed by **Ronald Barnett**, Professor of Higher Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, a very affable (and – at times – eccentric) speaker. The academic bravely began by observing his audience: “what an impressive and terrifying group you are” he stated, before confiding that “libraries terrify me”. He then shared some reflections with us on change and the increasing complexity and speed of change. We live in a ‘liquid world’, a ‘super-complex world’. We now live in a world where, even if you had more time and more money, you could still not solve all the problems with which we are faced. The educational world is full of questions. What is a university? What is teaching? What is a library? Once easy to answer, these concepts are now far more difficult to pin down.

Lots of philosophical questions.

Ronald then reviewed how universities are responding (identifying Unique Selling Propositions, personalisation of services, and the like) and issues for libraries, which include:

- development of learning and interactive spaces;
- dissolving of boundaries within the institution;
- the distinction between libraries and classrooms becoming less clear;
- understanding and satisfying the varying needs of academics as researchers, teachers and consultants.

One of the big challenges libraries face is that of continued relevance. Despite being library-focused enough to want to speak to the SCONUL Conference, this academic colleague freely admitted that he hardly ever visits his institution’s library, preferring to use Google. Perhaps unwittingly, Ronald may have posed us with a challenge even greater than any of the philosophical questions he raised in his talk.

The opening trilogy was completed with a practical talk by **Mary Heaney**, quite newly appointed as Director of Services at Manchester Metropolitan University. Mary outlined her drivers for change and the challenges she faces. Her ‘to do’ list includes:

- develop an estates strategy;
- develop an ICT strategy;
- transform the library to make it more user-focused;
- modernise catering services, accommodation services, etc.;
- promote the university as a venue for public engagement;
- develop a green travel plan.



Mary Heaney

Mary then outlined how she was setting out to achieve this little lot. She illustrated her plans for MMU’s three campuses, delivered her strategy for building partnerships to achieve these plans and then showed how she aims to make her service more market-orientated. Ambitious stuff.

This was in many ways very much like an introductory talk to Mary’s challenges and she certainly has some exciting times ahead. I would really hope we could have a follow up session, say at SCONUL Conference 2009, to see how Mary got on.

After tea (and the opportunity to check in) we were offered **workshop and briefing sessions**. As per usual, delegates were treated to a wide selection of sessions from which to choose. I always feel like a child in a (albeit specialist taste) sweet shop and choosing just one workshop is not easy. Luckily for you, dear reader, I always manage to

convince dedicated colleagues to act as reporters so a flavour of the sessions is included below.



*Networking at Birmingham's Botanical Gardens*

After this intensive start delegates were given an hour off for good behaviour but we regrouped at 19.00 for the Conference Dinner at the **Botanical Gardens**. As the sun set over the glass houses (yes, it did come out for ten minutes) delegates had the opportunity to network over a glass of rosé or two.

After dinner we were treated to the spectacle that is the **Nachda Sansaar Bhangra Dancers**. I won't try to describe how amazing this was, I will leave you to feast over the photographs of the action. After entertaining us with their rhythms and magnificent dance moves, the troupe encouraged SCONUL colleagues to get up and learn some steps. If I thought the guys in their orange and green costumes were a sight to remember, I had not anticipated the image of the great and good of the academic library community embracing bhangra dance. This year we dispensed with tradition and did not have a SCONUL team photo. Instead, dear reader, I will leave you to see if you can spot your boss in these priceless images. This was certainly a nice example of breaking down social boundaries.



*I bet you look good on the dance floor – The Nachda Sansaar Bhangra Dancers (plus enthusiastic trainees)*

Day Two began (for early birds) with a sponsor session, a product briefing from Ex Libris. For the rest of us, the first speaker of the day was **Geoffrey Bilder**, Director of Strategic Initiatives at CrossRef. The morning's theme was how content had shifted, how we had moved away from the (relative) ease of managing print collections to the (super) complex world we live in today. Geoffrey looked at 'the early modern Internet' with particular emphasis on the concept of trust. Trust/authority/reputation is a common concern of publishers, librarians and (hopefully) readers. Publishers and librarians are concerned about readers getting accurate, reliable information. Readers (well, some of them) are also concerned with retrieving reliable data.

We need to be aware of the changing nature of trust in the Internet Age. This, however, has been largely ignored. We bemoan the number of spams and viruses, and question the reliability of wikis. But what are we really talking about? The answer is 'trust'. Publishers make available commissioned works that go through a peer review process. Librarians select quality materials to grace their shelves (be they real or virtual). They both lend authority. Yet end users seem to be anti-authority.



*Geoffrey Bilder*

So how can we get trust back? Geoffrey looked at sources of trust, be they local (opinions of trusted friends) or global (proxy trust, such as auditors), horizontal (views of peer communities) or vertical (hierarchical, based on laws or society's values). How has this been translated into cyberspace? Examples of good practice include the rating system on eBay, the buyer reviews on Amazon

and the metrics used by Google. Web 2.0 will see this progress further with bloggers and other social networkers providing recommendations via links. But whom do you trust? Who has the same tastes/value systems as you? And if you trust someone's taste in music will you also trust their taste in film?

A new authority culture is building up (just as a publisher has a certain reputation so might a blogger) but how do we tap into this? How can we use Face Book or Second Life to enhance our reputation and build trust in this new environment?

This was a thought-provoking and very humorous talk. Many of us are pondering our Web 2.0 presence. Will it help us connect with 'the kids'? Or will it be intrusive and make us appear like a geography teacher dancing at the school disco? By stepping back – and making us look at the wider themes – Geoffrey might make the decision process a little bit easier.

An absolute tour de force.

Geoffrey was followed by **David Seaman** from Dartmouth College Library looking – as the subtitle of his talk stated – at the opportunities and challenges of digital collections in academic libraries. David started with some sobering observations on Web 2.0 technologies. His students found it "weird and creepy" that the Library may want to speak to them on Face Book, and Second Life is used only by older cyber users and "First Life weirdos".

Like Geoffrey, he urged us to look at the bigger picture before rushing in to try to poke young people on Face Book. We need to look at change positively and manage changing content just as we manage any other aspect of change. We also need to be aware (and make clear to our colleagues) why change (which invariably carries some stresses) is necessary. For David the key drivers are:

- time – there are not enough hours in the day;
- mass – digital natives expect everything to be available electronically;
- ubiquity – of connection and access;
- visualization – demand for intelligent clusters of data not just lists of hits;
- malleability – the ability to 'rip, mix, burn', with the end user in control;
- and hence: republishing.

Instead of focusing on our weaknesses in this environment we should play up our strengths.



Although we dwell on the threats we should strive to make the best of the opportunities that this new world offers:

- a chance to think more strategically about our business – we are an information poor information industry: we need more data to help us to plan;
- we need to highlight our service strengths in the face of Amazon and Google;
- more data is obviously malleable, offering more opportunities to satisfy demands;
- there are more opportunities for sharing metadata and content;
- we need to look for economies of scale and move to inter-dependence, not merely collaboration.

Another excellent presentation to make use really think before we go rushing into the future.



*David Seaman*

After coffee we had another **workshop and briefing session**. Again, my network of scribes came up trumps as the reports below show.

An early lunch was followed by the **SCONUL Annual General Meeting**. I will not go into detail (the full minutes are available via the SCONUL Web site under [www.sconul.ac.uk/events/agm2007](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/events/agm2007)) but the highlights included:

- the distribution of the SCONUL *Annual review* for 2006 (“it’s excellent” was a comment from the floor; see for yourself at [www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/pubs/annual\\_review/06.01pdf](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/pubs/annual_review/06.01pdf));
- the Chair’s report on SCONUL’s current activities – strengthening its strategic alliances, commissioning consultancy, reviewing

its infrastructure and developing its international agenda;

- SCONUL’s plans to refocus its agenda regarding teaching and learning (a report from Vanessa Crane);
- an update on the VAMP from Stephen Town plus a demonstration of its new Web 2.0 presence (see the Performance pages of the SCONUL Web site);
- an update on the financial strategy (to increase income, reduce costs and increase perceived value of the Society) from Treasurer, Alun Jenkins;
- the election of Executive Board members (Bidly Fisher and Phil Sykes were duly elected);
- details of forthcoming conferences: 4 December for the 2007 Autumn Conference at the British Library (with a special Canadian presence) and 11-13 June for next year’s Conference in Edinburgh.

The AGM was all done and dusted in fifty minutes.

In a break from presentations, the afternoon offered an array of **visits** to choose from. After receiving a variety of articles about developments over the last couple of years (see, for example, issue 40) I was keen to see the University of Birmingham’s Learning Spaces in the flesh. I was not disappointed and special thanks must go to Stephen Clarke, Head of eLearning, for an excellent presentation (to put things into context) and an inspiring tour of some interesting facilities.

The evening reception was a five minute walk away (in the rain this time) at the **Ikon Gallery**. The gallery has a series of temporary exhibitions. The highlight for me was a collection of photographic and collage works using images of ‘seventies rock culture. Anyone who has collected so many pictures of Lief Garrett is either a genius or very strange or both, but I liked the work. The reception’s welcome address was given by **Pamela Taylor**, the Principal of Newman College and Chair of GuildHE. The Gallery, she said, is about transformation and we as librarians are transformers. She applauded us for our most positive roles in institutional change. Pamela finished by suggesting some collective nouns for HE: a Vanity of VCs; a Lack of Principals; and for us – a Liberation of Librarians!

After last night’s dance floor action, the Liberation Front headed back to the hotel for a much more subdued dinner.



*Christine Ennew*

Day Three started with a paper from **Christine Ennew**, Professor of Marketing and Dean of Law and Social Sciences at Nottingham University Business School. One of the big themes for marketers today is globalisation – in both demand and supply – and how organisations can respond to this. It was therefore interesting for me to hear how a marketer would apply this to our sector. Of course, this is a big issue for most universities and most of our strategic plans contain at least something about increasing internationalisation. Christine gave an overview of the issues and then reflected upon her own experiences at Nottingham, which has campuses in China and Malaysia. For universities there are essentially two questions: what markets to be in and how to operate in them. The key challenges are concerned with quality assurance (how to ensure consistency of quality for local and international students with regards teaching staff, content and support services), the student experience (how we offer a similar student experience to students based in the UK or abroad and what experience different groups are after), identifying partners and then managing that experience.

Of course, much of this is of direct relevance to libraries.

After coffee we were treated to an excellent paper from **Joan Lippincott**, Associate Executive Director of the CNI (Coalition for Networked Information) and a well-known name to most colleagues.

The title of Joan's paper was *Net Gen learners and libraries*. Why should we be so concerned with meeting the needs of the Net Gen? Part of this is so we have a better understanding of our current undergraduates. But it goes further than this. As Joan reminded us, the Net Gen student of today will be our Net Gen scholars of tomorrow.

So who is this important group? Key characteristics are that they were born between 1982 and 1991 (the next generation have been given the fantastic name of 'screenagers!'), they have grown up with computers and never think of technology as being tied to one spot. They are always connected, used to multi-tasking, keen to work in groups, experiential learners, often visual thinkers and producers as well as consumers.

But doesn't this also – to some degree, at least – describe us? So connecting with this group may be less difficult than we sometimes imagine. (Their key difference – for Joan – is that older generations tend to be more text-focused than this visual generation, something we librarians find especially difficult!)



*Joan Lippincott*

So how should we be adapting our libraries for this generation? We can transform:

- content;
- tools;
- services;
- environment.

Joan then illustrated each of these headings with examples of good practice: for details see the rich collection of slides from Joan's talk hosted on the SCOUNL Web site (see [www.sconul.ac.uk/events/agm2007/presentations/Lippincott.ppt](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/events/agm2007/presentations/Lippincott.ppt)).

So how can we be successful in this regard? Joan had one key piece of advice, that chimed well with this marketing librarian. How should we best design library space? How can we develop our service portfolio? Should we have a presence on Face Book? The answer? Ask your students!

A tremendous talk.

The final speaker for this year's Conference was Michael Zastrocky, Managing Vice-President / Academic Strategies at Gartner. Michael started by saying he would reflect on the papers that went before him and perhaps challenge a few assertions. He would then attempt to give us "the rest of the story".

Like many of his fellow speakers, Michael went back to basics. For him, one of the keys is to understand what we mean by a 'university' (echoing Ronald Barnett from Day One). We are surrounded by various different examples of institutions calling themselves 'universities': traditional universities (eg. Oxbridge); non-traditional universities (Phoenix University); even corporate universities (Motorola University). But are they all really universities? A university isn't just a place to buy a course. It should be an experience. It should be transforming.

Then he turned to the idea of a student-led curriculum and virtual only options. Is this a good idea? Sometimes you don't know what you have to learn. Would you trust a pilot or brain surgeon who had selected which elements of their training they would undertake? Or who had only had virtual experience?

And how about bridging the gap between digital natives and digital immigrants? How easy will that really be? Michael illustrated this with a very entertaining discussion about cameras. What a digital native will call their 'camera', the digital immigrant will call their 'digital camera' (and probably refer to their older model as their 'real camera'!!).

We are also blinded by the 'digital' divide. To state something that should be obvious, but that we usually lose sight of, segmenting groups is complex: digital immigrants have wildly different views based on education, class and economic status; digital natives are not universally clued up about everything.



*Michael Zastrocky*

Michael finished by returning to his first point. Technology is great for knowledge transfer but not for understanding. We need to know how to apply knowledge and what it means. This is how we achieve wisdom. This is invariably by a human experience. You need a real person to help you, to help transform you. Yes, the future will be digital, but it has also got to be physical, in buildings and in people.

A fitting end to another excellent SCONUL Conference.

Anne Bell brought things to a close by thanking those who put the Conference together and reflecting on the last few days. Special thanks were extended to the speakers, the sponsors, the planning team and even the photographer (!).

How could Anne sum up the Conference? "Food for thought is an understatement", she said. A lot of what we deal with is the shifting sands ...but perhaps we should pay closer attention to the shifting Teutonic plates that lie beneath our day-to-day gaze. We need to consider (as individuals) how we are going to shift things at our home universities and (as a Society) how SCONUL should shift.

Food for thought indeed.

The following section contains reviews of some of the workshops and visits that make up the rest of the SCONUL Conference. Some sessions ran more than once (hence the multiple reports). Other sessions have not been reviewed. Readers are also directed to the SCONUL Website where presentations and other details can be found. We are also fortunate to get the impressions of the Conference from first time attendees.

So for a fuller flavour of the SCONUL Conference 2007, read on...

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*Book digitisation programmes*

**Ronald Milne**

Reviewed by Julie Parry, Bath Spa University

In a most interesting presentation Ronald Milne described current mass digitisation projects with particular reference to Google Booksearch and the Bodleian Library. He explained how the one-off digitisation projects of some ten years ago, such as the Lindisfarne Gospels, have given way to "industrial-scale operations" in which the holdings of major research libraries are being digitised en-masse by companies such as Google.

The Bodleian mass digitisation project covers 19<sup>th</sup> century materials which are out of copyright. The scanning is undertaken by Google on Oxford University premises using a "non-invasive" process. The result is a freely accessible, full-text service available to anyone, anywhere, via the web. Google and Oxford each get one digital copy.

Ronald Milne argues that mass digitisation is about access rather than preservation. It saves the time of researchers as they no longer need to wait for the material to be delivered to them. However, he cautions that, although the researchers of the future may not need to travel to see original texts, if they rely solely on digital versions they will lose contact with the physicality of the objects.

Finally, there are too many legal implications at present to consider digitising material which is still in copyright.

Reviewed by James Brown,  
Research Information Network

Ronald Milne spoke with authority when he informed a small audience about his experiences with digitisation, and "the move from boutique to mass." During his earlier years at the Bodleian, Ronald saw a necessary small-scale focus on iconic heritage items (which were essentially self-selecting). There wasn't much emphasis on lifestyle costs and such, but rather a desire to simply get it up onto the web. Another reason for boutique digitisation is the re-unification of cultural artefacts, such as the British Library's involvement with a team of experts from the UK, Europe, Egypt, Russia and the USA to reunite the Codex Sinaiticus in virtual form.

Mass digitisation, as Ronald explained, is really rather different. And here the talk gathered pace as a number of interesting lessons and insights were imparted from his time working with Google in their quest to make content freely available and searchable over the web through *Google Book Search*. These projects "represent a step-change in the dissemination of information, almost on the scale of the invention of the printing press." The project started before Google were a public company, so it may have appeared altruistic, but make no mistake: for them it was an *indexing* project based around commercial reasons. Virtually all financial costs were met by Google - no publicly funded library could hope to afford to do this on such a scale. The real costs turned out to be more about senior staff time, and deciding the selection of materials in a style befitting a factory production line.

The project was very much about access rather than preservation (although some, like Michigan, have tended to think about it on those terms) and the hope is that having found an item with better search and discovery tools, someone may choose to go along to the library in person - this is not the end of traditional libraries! What was clear, however, was that this new kind of mass digitisation provides easy access to information that may foster new research opportunities like never before.

*New Directions in Leadership*

**Anne Burrows**

Reviewed by Steve Rose, Oxford University  
Library Services

This workshop described some recent research, undertaken at Aston Business School, to assess leadership competencies. The research used 360 degree feedback on a number of individuals, their managers, their staff and colleagues to try and determine the most important competencies. Results showed that integrity and trust were valued highest, followed by the ability to coach and develop staff, manage conflict, include staff in decision making, keep others informed, promote teamwork, and manage work relationships. These results reinforce much of the evidence which considers people skills as one of the key ingredients of essential leadership.

Workshop leader, Anne Burrows, noted that the evidence to emerge from the research is being used to develop a training programme at Aston Business School. It is being developed under 4 key areas :

- Motivation
- Strategic Planning
- Emotional Intelligence
- Leadership style

Anne considers that leadership cannot be taught (a view shared by many) and regards this assumption as one of the greatest challenges when devising leadership development programmes such as this. She also believes that it is important to develop leadership competencies in others than current leaders working at senior levels within the organisation. Therefore, middle managers are being included in the development programme in Aston.

As the programme was in the early stages of development at the time of the workshop, it is not possible to offer any evaluative information as to its impact, although Anne recognises that evaluation of such programmes is essential. Hopefully some useful lessons will emerge in due course to assist others wishing to address leadership competency issues within their own organisation.

*Workshop on e-books: observing and stimulating the market*

**Hazel Woodward**

Reviewed by Rupert Wood, University of Reading

Hazel Woodward, Cranfield University, gave workshop participants a briefing and then answered questions on the JISC funded national E-books Observatory Project.

The project came about, Hazel said, from widespread frustration with the current market for e-books and the difficulties many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) experience in accessing the e-books their students really want to use (that is core reading list material). Ignorance about what books are available; the complexity of access routes; and inappropriate pricing models add to the problem. The Observatory Project, launching in July / August 2007 intends, in partnership with a variety of publishers, to licence a collection of online material in four subject areas for two years. JISC will fund the publishers chosen to make available a selection of their core e-books to all HEIs free of charge for the duration of the project. There will be an evaluation of usage for teaching and learning; and the knowledge gained will be transferred to stakeholders in order (it is hoped) to: assess demand; stimulate the e-books market; and help to develop more appropriate business models.

The project will make 90 – 100 titles available (some not currently available electronically) in the areas of Business studies; Engineering; Media studies; and Medicine.

More information about the project is available at [www.jiscebooksproject.org/](http://www.jiscebooksproject.org/)

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**Open Access Publishing workshop**

**Steve Hall and Mark Patterson**

Reviewed by Sue White, University of Huddersfield

This lively session was led by Steve Hall, Commercial Director of Wiley-Blackwell, and Mark Patterson, Director of Publishing at PLoS (Public Library of Science).

As expected, the speakers put forward very different views on open access publishing. Steve Hall emphasized that high quality publishing costs money, but that Wiley-Blackwell is not averse to the 'pay-to-publish' model of open access publishing provided the true publishing costs are met by the funding bodies/institution/author.

Mark Patterson reflected that the landscape is changing very quickly. The PLoS series of e-journals was launched in 2003 and already attracts high impact factors. From acceptance to publication can take as little as three weeks and Web 2.0 developments enable the user community to annotate articles and debate findings online.

Several issues were raised by the delegates, including

- o the need for publishers to be more transparent about their pricing so that librarians understand why prices are so high – this would help librarians manage both their budgets and their academic staff;
- o the need for a long term commitment to e-archiving by publishers;
- o questioning whether the added value provided by traditional publishing is actually wanted;
- o the distorting effect of the RAE on publishing – post-RAE, authors may be more willing to take risks and publish in open access titles;
- o the importance of retaining peer review in open access publishing;
- o the welcome addition to the debate of academics - this is no longer just about Publishers versus Librarians.

This was a brief but stimulating session which highlighted the dramatic changes in academic publishing and despite the controversial subject matter was conducted in a highly civilised manner!

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### **Knowledge management and the HE librarian: opportunity or threat?**

**Hilary Johnson and Sue McKnight**

Reviewed by Robin Green, CURL

This useful workshop started out trickier than (at least one of) the participants expected, and revealed a characteristic of the topic that (at least one of) the participants thought might be rather

awkward to deal with if thinking Knowledge Management is a good thing to introduce.

The tricky start was to reach common ground on a definition of Knowledge Management (KM). We probably all feel we have a rough understanding of what it means, but actually defining it – well, that's another matter. The organisers brought along a sheaf of different explanations with terms as varied as 'organisational memory', 'set of tools', 'effective application of intellectual capital' and 'enterprise discipline' to prove the point.

In any particular situation it's perhaps best to agree that actually we can reach a locally-shared understanding of what it means for us without needing to define it too closely anyway. However, very generally, there's something in there about understanding the nature and purpose of your organisation and therefore the information (in the broadest sense) that will be useful to it; capturing, organising and storing that material; and making it available in a timely way that adds value to the organisation. That last point is critical (a) as a justification for the whole process and (b) to complete what has to be a virtuous cycle, as the organisation will evolve through using its knowledge. There needs to be 'push' as well as 'pull' for this to be most effectively achieved.

It can be argued that librarians and those in related roles have the skills to take this on – as one participant put it, it's just extending Ranganathan's concept of every book has a reader and vice versa. Additionally, a partnership approach is essential, and we are accustomed to collaboration.

And the awkward characteristic? Well, the organisation needs a critical mass of information to be able to harvest value. This needs efficient systems. The range of information sources you need to draw on may be vast - from MIS and LMS systems to email, blogs, etc. – and the boundaries will shift continually. When you begin considering where information flows and gathers in the organisation, the need to share, manage and exploit this information, and whose perspective steers this, common principles need to be agreed across the organisation and basic processes may need to be changed. This suddenly becomes a political issue. Will your organisation be ready for the potentially radical implications of KM, and is it our role to take this on?

Congratulations to the workshop leaders for leading us through this complex topic and including

more practical issues and tips than a review can cover. A good workshop.

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### **UK Research Reserve (UKRR)**

**Nicola Wright**

Reviewed by Helen Workman, Oxford Brookes University

Nicola Wright, UKRR's project manager based at Imperial College, outlined the objectives of the project, discussed progress to date and next steps. The objectives are to co-ordinate retention of low-use printed journals, to enable quick and easy access to their contents and to provide collaborative storage. It is envisaged that two copies will be retained in Higher Education (HE) libraries and one in the British Library Document Supply Centre, the latter one being used for electronic delivery of requested items directly to researchers. A new subscription-based pricing model will be developed, reflecting the provision of a storage facility in addition to document supply. SCONUL will help to co-ordinate retention.

Phase 1 (£709k, January 2007-June 2008, six HE partners and the British Library) has involved the 'de-duplication' of journals, with the criteria being specific to the individual HE institution. This involves shelf-checking, title measurement (one aim is to save library space), consultation and advocacy. An advocacy tool kit will be available soon and a de-duplication tool kit will follow. An external consultant is being appointed to evaluate phase 1.

Some interesting figures from de-duplication at Imperial College's Hammersmith Library: 2,538m analysed, 1,069m disposed of resulting in 68 tonnes for recycling.

Discussion touched on the importance of subject librarians' knowledge of usage and the usefulness of 'the dust test' as a criterion of low use – it was even suggested that carbon dating the dust may be revealing!

Reviewed by David Perrow, Oxford University Library Services

This workshop updated participants on the first phase of the UK Research Reserve (UKRR). The UKRR is a £709k project funded by higher education councils from January 2007 to June 2008, with

the active involvement of both SCONUL and CURL.

The aim of the project in its initial phase is the co-ordinated retention and collaborative storage of low use print journals. Later phases are likely to embrace other low use research materials, such as monographs. The British Library, the non-HE partner in the project, will store the first and prime copy at its Boston Spa site and provide article supply to Higher Education (HE) members, with second and third copies retained by participating HE members for backup and to guard against disaster befalling the first copy. The HE members in Phase 1 are Imperial College London, the lead institution, University of Birmingham, Cardiff University, University of Liverpool, University of St Andrews and the University of Southampton.

In the workshop Nicola Wright, the project manager, explored the issues raised so far in the project and the prospects for its long term development. She described the difficulty of establishing actual holdings, since catalogue sources such as SUNCAT do not always reflect actual shelf holdings, and this needs to be checked carefully at the shelf before discard or retention decisions are made. Disposal of periodical backsets is also a major undertaking, and has involved the project in brokering an arrangement with a recycling firm, since re-use of redundant periodicals in libraries abroad has not proved to be feasible or cost effective.

The project is now looking to expand beyond its pilot phase to add more HE members so that the concept can be proven. The business model is based on an annual subscription rather than transaction pricing, and there was discussion in the workshop about how institutional savings in space and storage costs could produce a gain to offset the subscription, and how these savings would need to transfer from University estates departments to library funds on a permanent basis to ensure sustainability.

For further details see: <http://www.curl.ac.uk/projects/CollaborativeStorage/Home.htm>

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### **Visit to Symphony Hall**

Visit reviewed by Liz Waller, University of Leeds

A few artistic souls opted for a visit to the Symphony Hall Birmingham. Opened in 1991 this is

an impressive venue technically sophisticated and flexible enough to deal with a wide range of performance - from individuals (Natasha Bedingfield will be there in September) to small groups (Hollies in November) and full orchestra. The Hall features a the reverberation chamber, a 12,700 cubic metre void which is equivalent to about 50% of the volume of the Hall itself. It envelops the platform end of Hall in a U shape and links with additional chambers that run along the sides of the Hall at high level. A series of huge, concrete doors each weighing one tonne, opens from the Hall and can be adjusted to create the required degree of 'echo'

Our tour went both front and back of house. We were lucky enough to sit in on rehearsals for Copland's "Dance Symphony" featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with Ilan Volkov conducting.

Backstage was fascinating as we saw the concrete doors mentioned above (we were creeping around silently at this point as rehearsals were in full swing) and what appeared to be large "coffin-like" containers which were the transport for the double basses!

There were plenty of hints and tips for those planning building projects in the area of acoustics: Symphony Hall is founded on 120 concrete pillars which are interspersed with 800 rubber cushions to reduce vibration from the railway line which runs directly below the site.

Interesting too backstage was our visit to the dressing rooms, staff bar, etc. Sadly the top of the range accommodation for the Conductor of the orchestra was in occupation!

We had a most illuminating visit to Symphony Hall, well provided with information from our tour guide from their Education/Community Team - many thanks to all involved.

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### **Our Soho House adventure**

Visit reviewed by Pat Noon, Coventry University

When the taxi fails to turn up to take you back to your hotel leaving you stranded in a strange city much too close to a boarded up pub and forced to catch a bus and then walk back to the hotel in the rain you can be forgiven for just checking if your

SCONUL Conference visit was worth it. Fortunately it was.

In its heyday Soho House stood at the head of an estate of 200 acres that included one of the world's first factories and a mint. It is difficult to imagine this now as it sits amongst the densely packed terraces of modern Handsworth and next to that boarded-up pub but the house itself survives and is a wonderful attempt by Birmingham Museums to recreate the home of the industrial revolution.

For those of you not familiar with Soho House it was built by Matthew Boulton considered by many to be the midwife of the industrial revolution. His home played host to the Lunar Society, a large group of the most brilliant and influential thinkers of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Century inventors and engineers and included James Watt, Joseph Priestley and Josiah Wedgwood.

The house has been rescued from a life of private schools and hotels and its rooms have been lovingly and painstakingly restored with contemporary designs from Boulton's own plans and illustrations and even forensic scraps of the original wallpaper found during the renovation. It includes many original furnishings as well as authentic contemporary pieces to complement them. If you have read Jenny Uglow's fascinating - but frankly rather tiring - book *The Lunar Men* it is fascinating to see the originals of some of the pieces she celebrates including jasper (black Wedgwood to you and me) and blue john, as well as the ormolu figures for which Boulton was famous. The description of the ormolu put me in mind of some library management systems, lovingly but over elaborately engineered and designed, and much too expensive for anyone to actually afford to buy. There is an evocative re-creation of his study including original furniture given added authenticity (according to our very well prepared guide) by the old fossils in the room. Mishearing I briefly took exception, being sensitive about my age, until I spotted the rocks on the sideboard.

A fascinating insight into an important period in Birmingham's - and the country's history - which shows how good museums can be even after a walk back in the rain.



## Perceptions of a SCONUL Conference virgin

Clare Langman, Information Specialist (Engineering/Life and Health Sciences),  
Aston University

It was 12pm on Wednesday 20 June and I was standing in the foyer of Jury's Inn, waiting to register for the SCONUL Conference 2007. It was the first time I had attended the conference and I had been given the opportunity through a bursary from the MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council). Looking around the room my first impressions were that I was the youngest person there – by quite a few years – and that everyone else seemed so senior and superior to me. However, after five minutes chatting to a few people I felt more than welcome and realised that I was going to enjoy being in the company of all those “senior managers”!

The theme was ‘Shifting Boundaries’ and the conference kicked off with an inspirational talk from Jim Neal from Columbia University. He spoke about changing library trends and the differences between how we are perceived and what actually happens in reality. We need to collaborate more with practitioners and educators to ensure that we are equipped to meet the changing roles facing us and also to show these groups the good work we are already doing. Mary Heaney from Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) spoke about her experience of overseeing a wide range of departments undergoing superconvergence. MMU have taken an integrated approach towards all student services to optimize maximum flexibility across the diverse locations of the institutions. The focus is centred on enhancing the student experience so that students are able to get the information they need from wherever they are in the University.

For the workshop session I chose “New markets, New students, New support structures”. Staff from institutions across the West Midlands gave brief practical examples of the initiatives their libraries were involved in which allowed them to reach out to the changing student demographic. I picked up some really good ideas which I will take back to my own institution and suggest we follow some of the innovative practices already in place around the region.

The conference dinner on the Wednesday evening was held at the beautiful Botanical Gardens. It was actually one of the few nice days that we have had during the Summer so we were able to enjoy the surroundings with a glass of wine

before the meal. The meal itself was delicious and I really enjoyed the night.

The Thursday programme proved to be as interesting as the previous day. Christine Ennew spoke about the University of Nottingham's International Strategy and the developments of their campuses in China and Malaysia. I was amazed by the sheer amount of work involved and have admiration for the staff at the University for helping to drive the internalisation.

To end the conference Michael Zastrocky gave a really inspirational presentation on the impact of information technology innovation on higher education, emphasising how technology shouldn't replace the human aspect in higher education and that a mix of these two things is crucial to the teaching and learning process.

The main thing that surprised me during the conference was the number of speakers who came from the USA. It was really interesting to hear about the issues and challenges facing libraries in the US and comforting to know that they face many of the problems which we face. I also love the American accent which made their presentations even more enjoyable!

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## Personal impressions of The SCONUL Conference 2007

Trish Fouracres, Learning Centre Manager,  
Harrison Learning Centre, University of Wolverhampton

I was fortunate to be able to attend the SCONUL conference this year for the first time. Having only recently moved to both a new job at Wolverhampton University and also to the HE sector I was both excited and slightly anxious (a feeling I have come to know well in the last few months) at the prospect. As a fairly late nomination I wasn't able to attend all 3 days or the evening events, (due to previous commitments, not because I wasn't allowed!) so my experience is a little abbreviated. However, Antony asked for first impressions and gave Clare and me a very tight brief (“what you enjoyed most, what you had not expected, etc, etc?”)!

So what can I say?

- I enjoyed the location! Although not a stretch for me as I now live and work less than 20

miles away, Birmingham must be the most exciting city in the UK?

- I was impressed by the sheer scale, size and diversity of the conference itself with presentations, workshops and visits on a wide range of topics.
- I was surprised by the number of delegates and institutions represented. I don't know why, but I was.
- I was impressed by the organisation and smooth management of such a varied programme and so many delegates.
- I was interested to learn about areas outside my experience.
- I was curious to find out about some of the subject areas and if they correlated to my knowledge and experience from other sectors (yes and no, just in case you're curious too!).
- I was fascinated and inspired by some speakers, particularly those who opened new neural pathways for me.
- I was disappointed that there were no controversial or contentious speakers! A lively addition to Conferences I've attended in the past is at least one speaker who takes a well-aimed pop that sets the place buzzing and bristling.
- I was sorry to miss the Botanical Gardens.
- I was very sorry to miss the dinner.
- I met some delightful people. Social networking is clearly a major element of events like these and a difficult area to develop. Hence the importance of dinner.

Overall, as you'd expect, it was an interesting experience and a fascinating insight. Many thanks to MLA (WM) for giving me the opportunity.

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# SCONUL Transparency Event

4 May 2007, MIC Centre, London

Reviewed by Carole Pickaver  
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In 1998 the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) set up a transparency and accountability review programme as a means to enable the higher education funding bodies to meet their responsibilities to report to government in a transparent and accountable way on the use of the funds provided from the public purse for the sector as a whole. The top-level approach adopted by most universities at the time concentrated on direct research and on teaching and learning. Whilst it has been acceptable to provide an institutional view, there appears to be an increasing move to obtain more 'granularity', with library services being of interest in relation to research and teaching.

Objectives of this SCONUL workshop were:

- To obtain a clearer understanding of the drivers relating to the financial reporting management required by higher education institutions
- To examine ways of identifying how much services cost and the value that these services provide for the institution
- To raise awareness, through case studies, of the requirement for the identification of and value in consistent gathering of management information
- In the workshop experience, to identify the skills issues required by senior and middle library managers to enable them to respond to the changes in higher education funding dynamics as part of developing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training.

Various speakers pursued these themes:

## **TRAC and FEC (Full Economic Costing): background, implications and current situation**

John Newton,  
Deputy Director of Finance, Cardiff University

John provided an informative background analysis of HEFCE transparency requirements particularly pertinent to library and information services, alerting the group to a new reporting requirement for 2008 that particularly asks for library-specific data. Less than 10% of the audience were aware of this forthcoming requirement or had been notified by their finance department that data would be required. A key element for HEFCE's transparent approach to accounting (TRAC) is to establish and maintain direct liaison links with the library over the interpretation of data. It was noted that libraries are extremely good at collecting statistics about their activities; however, the output tends to be geared to a peer audience. The information required by Finance departments for transparency will require a level of reworking existing data and new data-collection elements. Each institutional library will undoubtedly have unique parameters and it is essential that these are clearly identified and that transparency drivers and data requirements are adjusted accordingly. For example Cardiff has numerous 'branch' libraries in its schools and this has a direct impact on the data-collection techniques that can be agreed and on the final interpretation of the data. The use of 'research status' can help libraries recover estates and indirect costs from funding. Librarians will need to consider using a variant template of the TRAC academic timesheet to enable them to capture staff activity and assign costs accordingly. The area of e-resources data capture, interpretation and relevance is presenting new challenges and as libraries shift between hard copy and e-format these will need to be addressed.

## **Information Services – University of Reading JCPG good practice case study**

Roger Jones, Senior Project Officer and Project Manager, Reading University

The case study from the University of Reading's joint costing and pricing steering group (JCPG) provided an insight into the type and complexity of data that could be used as part of any transparency submission. The presentation highlighted the importance of drilling down information to specific departmental level in order to clarify and validate data dips/spikes. A key point identified was that the institutional landscape constantly

changed and therefore drivers and data-capture techniques need to be reviewed regularly. It was accepted that the use of the 'Other' category for cost assignment had been frequently used for the case study; however, it was noted this was now proving detrimental for true TRAC reporting and would have to be revisited.

## **Transparency – costing, pricing, data source information etc.**

Lorraine Cooper, The Larian Consultancy Limited

This session provided a very practical approach to helping managers identify cost elements and raised the question of whether libraries need to have staff on their payroll who have accountancy skills to help service heads of department financially manage their organisations effectively. The ability to identify and apply costing techniques provided department heads with reasoned justification against which they could then request an increase or realignment of resources. Costing techniques such as activity costing and zero-based budgeting provide the opportunity for them to identify resources devoted to critical service provision. These techniques can also clarify the rationale that declares these services to be essential, challenge their quality threshold and help establish threshold resource margins for different levels of service.

## **From costing to value and impact: the potential of the SCUNUL VAMP programme**

Stephen Town, Director of Knowledge Services, Cranfield University

An overview of SCUNUL's value added and impact measurement programme (VAMP) indicated how the work with transparency had clear connections to stage 2 of the project. The redesign of the website provided the opportunity to post and raise awareness of the need for libraries to demonstrate their value. The data-collection techniques potentially identified for transparency were an example of shared information that could be hosted by the VAMP website for quick and easy retrieval.

So what are the key points we should take away from all this?

- Libraries need to be more aware and proactive in identifying new and/or non-traditional data requirements – it takes time to identify, analyse and collect meaningful data.

- Drivers are linked transparency and the business environment. Libraries are not financially insignificant in this environment.
- Data-collection requirements are becoming more specific and linked to key institutional business elements – research, teaching, enterprise and so on. This will require libraries to re-examine their existing data collection with this in mind.
- The data libraries have traditionally collected that are of value, such as the SCONUL return, require reviewing and reworking to meet the needs of financial and other non-traditional library stakeholders.
- The move to use of e-resources will require new data-collection techniques:
  - The role that suppliers will need to contribute to support data extraction needs to be clarified.
  - Changes in access technologies will need to encompass data-collection and extraction requirements.
- Data collection and analysis can be powerful tools in establishing the viability of activity and services levels to meet key institutional objectives.
- Employee profiles and the skills requirements to support library activities are broadening beyond those provided through traditional library-education programmes and now include:
  - marketing
  - financial/accounting
  - business analysis.

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## The USTLG spring meeting

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The University Science and Technology Librarians Group (USTLG) is an informal group based on the JISCmail LIS-SCITECH mailing list. We meet once or twice a year (meetings are free) and new members are always welcome. It is a good opportunity to get to know other people working in the same field and to keep up to date on innovations and activities.

The 2007 spring meeting of the USTLG was held at the Open University Library in Milton Keynes on 23 April. The theme of the meeting was 'emerging services', with five speakers discussing new or evolving services.

Terry Hulbert from the Institute of Physics Publishing gave an interesting perspective on services the IoPP offers to its readers, including moves towards a community website model – not just to establish a single, common platform but to enhance the user's experience of IoPP products, creating a seamless and intuitive transition between IoPP sites.

Anne Bell and Ruth Thornton spoke about their experiences with the UK Research Reserve (UKRR) project. UKRR is a collaborative, co-ordinated and sustainable approach to securing the long-term retention, storage and access to low-use printed research journals. Ruth discussed how this project was put into practice at Cardiff University, and offered some advice on the practicalities of the project by discussing what they would have done differently with the benefit of hindsight.

Linda Kerr from Intute gave a brief presentation outlining the changes that have been made to Intute for Science and Technology, including linked search functions and RSS feeds. She noted that one of the main aims of Intute was to work with universities to embed Intute resources into virtual learning environment sites as well as cataloguing resources and maintaining links.

Gareth Johnson from SHERPA (Securing a Hybrid Environment for Research Preservation and Access), based at Nottingham University, gave a presentation about the history and aims of SHERPA, along with the current work of the project team. Gareth gave a thorough overview of the issues surrounding repositories, including topics such as copyright; the role of the library; technical issues; policy; professional support; advocacy; and the practicalities of running such a service.

The final speaker was Clari Hunt from the Open University, who gave an overview of some of the work being done by its library to support students' skills development at a distance through a virtual learning environment. Clari showed some of the generic tools that the library has produced to help development of information skills, and how this can be integrated into courses. She finished by showing how these can all be used within the course websites (which are all Moodle sites) to develop course- or programme-specific resources for students to use.

The meeting finished up with a tour of the Open University Library's facilities. Feedback from the day was very positive, with encouragement for the next meeting to build on the sharing of experiences. If you are a science and technology librarian, and would like to host a meeting or have a topical issue to share, we would be very happy to hear from you. In any case, keep an eye on the LIS-SCITECH mailing list for details of upcoming events.

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## Value-added collections: the Oxford Libraries Staff Conference, St Catherine's College, Oxford, 15 March 2007

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Eager to take up the challenge to 'think outside the stacks', some 250 Oxford University Library Services (OULS) staff converged on St Catherine's College for a day of stimulating and thought-provoking presentations and workshops on the theme of 'value-added collections'.

### SETTING THE SCENE

The vital importance of this 'added value' was established in the opening presentation, by John Cox of John Cox Associates Ltd, on 'the history and future of the scholarly journal'. Academic journal publishing is a niche market which is facing serious challenges – not only from open-access publications but also (and more significantly) from major commercial rivals such as Google Scholar, Google Book Search and Microsoft Academic Searcher. Users now have the option to look for content from many different sources; Cox argued convincingly that scholarly journal publishing's future success depends on building superior functionality around that content, giving users the tools they need to search, analyse and manipulate data with maximum ease, effectiveness and convenience.

With the easy, convenient access to information that the internet supposedly provides, might we call it the 'perfect collection'? This was the question posed to us by Alice Keller, OULS's head of collection management. Imagining the perfect library, we may perhaps dream of a limitless

collection, containing every imaginable book and idea – yet such a phenomenon would in fact be far from Utopian. As Jorge Luis Borges' story of the Library of Babel makes clear, a library that contains everything must include the nonsensical and the idiotic as well as the edifying; it will hold material that is misleading, useless, even dangerous.<sup>1</sup> A good collection, by contrast, is useful and valuable because it has boundaries and purpose, and users can have confidence in the quality of the information it contains. The internet, then, while not quite a Library of Babel, cannot properly be called a collection either; whilst it may have the potential to become the 'perfect library', good management is essential if this ideal is ever to be realised.

## WORKSHOPS

The range of workshops on offer reflected the breadth of the question the conference was addressing: all aspects of collections were covered, from the preservation of past treasures to the exciting possibilities afforded by new technologies. I began with the session led by Chris Fletcher, head of western manuscripts, whose presentation 'Magic and meaning: exploring literary manuscripts in the Bodleian' amply demonstrated the two kinds of value that Philip Larkin believed to inhere in all manuscripts: the meaningful, which contributes to our understanding of the content of the text, and the magical, which affords us a tangible point of contact with the author him- or herself. The delights to which we were introduced included Jane Austen's juvenilia, Percy Bysshe Shelley's guitar (classified as 'Bodleian Relics 1!'), and notes and postcards from Larkin himself reflecting the development of the thoughts on love which were finally encapsulated in his poem 'An Arundel Tomb'. But what of magic and meaning in the electronic age? Far from being lost, Fletcher suggested that they may now be found in new sources, such as authors' e-mail archives or hand-edited printouts of word-processed drafts.

Jonathan McAslan (of OULS collection management) brought us back to the present day by addressing the question 'Electronic journals and databases: are they being used?' The answer was a resounding 'yes'; in fact, in the case of JSTOR, Oxford University is the heaviest user in the world. Recognition of the importance of reliable usage statistics for purchasing and licensing decisions has led to the establishment of an internationally recognised code of practice governing this information: COUNTER (counting online usage of networked electronic resources).<sup>2</sup>

However, statistics cannot tell us everything we may want to know, such as why users will choose one resource over another. Lively discussion was generated by the question of access to electronic resources for walk-in users (whose effect on usage statistics is significant), and where responsibility for restricting their usage and enforcing licensing agreements should lie.

The final workshop I attended looked towards the future, as Michael Fraser of Oxford University computing services introduced us to the potential benefits offered by VREs (virtual research environments). While the technical terminology of the topic was new to many of us, it became clear that many of the librarian's key skills – data curation, user education and, perhaps most importantly, our knowledge of the communities we serve – can be brought to bear on VRE projects. Fraser argued that the key to success is to start not with the VRE service itself, but with its (potential) users: to find out how they work, what research-related tasks and activities they perform on a daily basis and how the proposed VRE might be tailored to fit into and enhance these activities. The VRE is not intended to replace traditional working environments, but it does make possible significant additional benefits, most importantly the enabling of inter-institutional collaborative research, bringing together communities of scholars from all over the world.

## RESHAPING AND POSITIONING

Are librarians an endangered species? Figures are available which appear to suggest not: for example, there are more libraries than branches of McDonalds in the United States. However, Professor Derek Law of the University of Strathclyde insisted that these comforting statistics must not be allowed to distract us from the very real challenges with which we are presented by the new generation of users who are 'digital natives': those to whom Google, wikis and social networking sites are second nature, and whose expectation and desire is for immediately accessible, 'good enough' online information. How do librarians and information professionals – most of whom, still, are 'digital immigrants' – address users who are increasingly 'aliterate' and for whom libraries are at best a secondary resource? Since knowledge is no longer equivalent to the printed word, what can libraries now do to secure the influence that they once derived from their status as storehouses of knowledge? Law's message, like that of earlier speakers, was clear: content alone is no longer enough. It is the services we build around that

content that matter, bringing users and information together by selecting, acquiring and/or providing access to resources, and by training and educating patrons in their use. (Having a coherent philosophy for e-collection development is particularly important.) Rather than letting traditional library activities be surpassed by user-led Web 2.0 initiatives, Law argued, libraries can instead pick up on these and professionalise them.

Dr Sarah Thomas, the new Bodley's Librarian and Director of OULS, provided plentiful examples of ways in which this could be done in her presentation, 'Positioning Oxford's libraries to meet the needs of next-generation scholars and students'. Having acknowledged that librarians may feel in the current situation as if our very foundations are shaking, Thomas went on to suggest that the changes we are now undergoing are not in fact more radical than anything that has happened before – change has always been a constant – and there are many tools and tactics we can apply to help us to adapt. Mobile-device searching, strategic digitisation and a recommendation system such as that used by Amazon (adapted for the library context) are all possible means by which we might increase exploitation of our collections. We must continue to make the most of our existing strengths (in Oxford's case, the unique special collections), and also develop our collections in creative and innovative ways, by spending more on diverse media and increasing access to non-owned material. And, just as importantly, we need to communicate with our users in dynamic and effective ways, such as employing interactive tools to facilitate two-way communication, enabling participation in structured folksonomies and public tagging, and providing engaging customised web pages. In short, Thomas argued, we should know our users; give them what they want; give them what they need.

#### **FINAL THOUGHTS**

By the close of the conference, I realised that truly to 'think outside the stacks' means going much further than I had initially expected. It is not enough simply to broaden one's understanding of 'library resources' to include electronic publications and databases as well as books; we need to go beyond this, to know the people who are using these resources and to understand their continually evolving needs. By adding value to our collections in ways that will meet those needs, we can rise to the challenges of the digital age.

#### **REFERENCES**

- 1 Available at: [http://jubal.westnet.com/hyperdiscordia/library\\_of\\_babel.html](http://jubal.westnet.com/hyperdiscordia/library_of_babel.html) (accessed 23 March 2007)
- 2 See <http://www.projectcounter.org/about.html>

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# Digital repositories: dealing with the digital deluge

JISC Conference  
University of Manchester,  
5-6 June 2007

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Libraries are increasingly being faced with working in the complex and demanding world of electronic research and scholarship. A key response to these demands has been the development of interoperable digital repositories.

This recent JISC conference in Manchester saw delegates discussing some of the issues faced and offered an opportunity to share practical solutions. JISC presented its vision for a UK repository network, whereby managing and sharing resources is straightforward and effective. A number of JISC project leaders that have been instrumental in assisting this at both the national and local level took part in the event.

Nationally, projects such as Sherpa, Sherpa Plus and, most recently the Repositories Support Project have provided advice, support and guidance to institutions setting up and running repositories. On the technical side, the UK Intute Repository Search and the IRIScotland project have shown that, at least in managing the provider side and exploring value-added services, federations of this scale are valuable. Novel value-added services are emerging: the RIOJA project is exploring the interfaces that a repository would need to support the functions of an overlay journal, a much discussed and perhaps overdue development. Peter Murray Rust, a Cambridge chemist, offered a glimpse of the services that become possible once the technical and legal barriers to open access are overcome, so that the power of the Web and Web 2.0 can be deployed to enable real-time collaboration, join-up of hitherto disparate content, text and data mining and so on.

Of course, such services rely on high quality, well-described and lawful content being available, and the conference delegates heard from projects that ensure that this is possible. The Versions and, more recently, Version Identification Framework projects are developing a widely-agreed vocabulary to describe the versions of a research paper that might be in a repository. As well as being Shakespearean partners, RoMEO and Juliet are also services that indicate whether a particular paper can be, or must be, deposited into a repository. All this is very well, but not all universities have repositories, although more and more do, and some researchers therefore have until now been unable to gain from the benefits that accrue by making their papers open access. The conference saw the launch of The Depot, which offers a place for researchers to make their peer-reviewed papers open access should those papers have no other home.

There is a range of contexts for all this work. Internationally, the Netherlands has created a repository network (DAREnet), including specific services highlighting the elite scientists and those just starting out ('Cream' and 'Promise' of Science respectively). The EU DRIVER project has built an international network, which includes the Sherpa consortium in the UK. However, at a national level, delegates agreed that there are particular advantages from coordinated national initiatives, including a unified approach to metadata, marketing and communication, the involvement of scholars, a unified approach to copyright, and of course the building of the institutional repository infrastructure.

The JISC digital deluge conference also addressed the increasingly hot topic of how repositories can manage research data, images and multimedia, and (topically, given the launch next year of the UK EThOS service) doctoral theses.

## USEFUL WEB SITES

Presentations and reports from the event can be found at:  
[http://www.jisc.ac.uk/events/2007/06/repositories\\_conference.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/events/2007/06/repositories_conference.aspx)

An introduction to the JISC Repositories Network can be found at:  
<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/publications/repositorynet.aspx>  
(includes links to the Repositories Support Project, Intute Repository Search and the Depot)



Sherpa:  
<http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/>  
(includes links to Repositories Support Project,  
RoMEO, Juliet and Ethos)

IRIScotland:  
<http://www.irisotland.lib.ed.ac.uk/>

Rioja:  
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ls/rioja/>

The Versions and Version Identification Frame-  
work Projects:  
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/versions/>

DAREnet:  
[http://www.darenet.nl/en/page/language.  
view/home](http://www.darenet.nl/en/page/language.view/home)

EU Driver project:  
<http://www.driver-repository.eu/>

All sites accessed July 2007.

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# LILAC 2007 conference report



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The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual LILAC conference (LILAC is the Information Literacy Group of CILIP's Community Services Group) took place at the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) from 26 to 28 March 2007. The conference has been growing, in both size and impact, ever since its inception at Imperial College in 2005. This year almost 200 participants were given a large range of parallel sessions to select from which covered all library sectors. In addition, no fewer than four keynote speakers presented challenging lectures that successfully brought the themes of the conference together.

This year's event began with pre-conference workshops which focused on writing articles for publication and on creating effective e-learning and e-learners. These sessions set the tone for the conference, the themes of which were recognising the need; providing new ideas and practical approaches; and facilitating/encouraging research. After a mouth-watering lunch (a theme continued throughout the three days) the conference 'proper' began with an introduction to the city and the university from MMU's Vice Chancellor, John Brookes.

Following this, the first of the keynote speakers, Dr Ross Todd, gave his lecture. Ross is associate professor in the school of communication, information and library studies at Rutgers University. Despite having only landed at Manchester airport from New Jersey that very morning, he gave a motivating talk in which he presented information literacy (IL) as both a problem and a solution for libraries and information agencies. Ross expressed concerns regarding the lack of critical examination and evaluation of the impact and benefits of IL and asserted the need for a clear understanding of what we are trying to achieve and how we serve different users who have different needs.

During the remainder of the afternoon delegates had a dizzying array of parallel sessions to choose from, which focused on all manner of IL-related subjects from embedding and engaging users to developing IL strategies and plans. The first day of the conference was rounded off with a networking event at Urbis, a spectacular glass building in Manchester's cathedral gardens. Urbis is an exhibition centre focusing on life within cities around the world, but its main attraction for the delegates that night was the mini fish and chips, Lancashire hotpots and chicken kebabs that were on offer.

The second day provided a very full timetable with parallel sessions taking place throughout the day that considered areas and issues such as collaboration, non-stop information change, learning, training, technology, referencing, plagiarism and IL development. During these sessions, much good practice and innovation within the IL arena was presented to, and shared amongst, attendees. In addition to the myriad of parallel sessions on offer there was also an opportunity for delegates to listen to a keynote speech from Sir Muir Gray, programmes director both of the UK national screening programme and of clinical knowledge, process and safety for the national programme for IT. Sir Muir talked about the provision of health care information in the UK and how technology is driving huge changes in how the population accesses such information.

The night of 27 March saw the conference dinner taking place at the magnificent Manchester town hall. An imposing Victorian-gothic building, this was an impressive location for delegates to discuss and reflect upon the ideas and information imparted and investigated during the past two days. The after-dinner speaker was Caroline Williams, executive director of Intute, who gave pause for thought about the future direction of

information literacy and also managed to get in a number of laughs.

There were a few less lively looking delegates the next day when we again met for the closing morning of the conference. Some final parallel sessions took place before the delegates assembled en masse for the concluding keynote speeches. Christine Bruce, who had been invited over from Brisbane for the conference, got us all thinking with her absorbing lecture on the current models of information literacy, including her own 'seven faces of information literacy'.<sup>1</sup>

After Christine's address there followed the launch of Lollipop, 'an information literacy course for enquiry desk staff'.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the programme is to develop IL skills in all library staff but the ultimate aim is to ensure that these skills are transferable and can be easily moved from the training suite, to the workplace, to real life. Although currently written for the higher education market, Lollipop is easily customisable and is free to those who want to use it for their own organisation's use.

The closing keynote speech was given by John Dolan, head of library policy at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). John talked about the cost to society of not advocating, providing and developing literacy for all and of how libraries can help contribute to producing a multi-literate nation.

This year's LILAC event was both thought-provoking and fun and provided an excellent opportunity to meet and speak to colleagues from all sectors. Information literacy is an issue that is affecting us in all walks of librarianship. LILAC gives us an excellent opportunity to share our experience and expertise within IL and helps us to gain an understanding of the challenges facing those working in other areas. On previous performances LILAC 2008 promises to be bigger and better and just as much fun. We look forward to seeing you there.

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1 C. Bruce, *Seven faces of information literacy*, Adelaide: Auslib Press, 1997

2 <http://www.lobelollipop.com> (accessed 7 August 2007)

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# New Publications from LISU

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## *Trends in scholarly journal prices 2000–2006*

LISU at Loughborough University, is pleased to announce that *Trends in scholarly journal prices 2000–2006* (LISU Occasional Paper 37), ISBN 9781905499236, is now available (in full colour) from:

LISU, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leics LE11 3TU.

It can be ordered online from  
<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/dis/lisu/pages/publications/oup2.html>  
from where it is also available to download free.

For further information about this report, contact Claire Creaser, LISU Director, Tel: 01509 635682, e-mail: [lisu@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:lisu@lboro.ac.uk).

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# News from member libraries

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## The British Library

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### **CLIVE FIELD OBE**

The exceptional contribution to research librarianship of Dr Clive Field, who retired as Director of Scholarship and Collections at the British Library last year, has been recognised in the Queen's birthday honours list with the award of Order of the British Empire (OBE).

Clive Field joined the British Library as Director of Scholarship and Collections, a newly created role, in 2001 after thirty years working in academic librarianship (most recently as the University of Birmingham's Librarian and Director of Information Services). He played a pivotal role in extending legal deposit to ensure the long term preservation of the nation's digital heritage through the Legal Deposit Libraries Bill 2003. With his characteristic energy Clive was the driving force behind the library's engagement with the digital future, keeping the UK's national library at the forefront of national and international scholarship and research.

As the Chairman and Director of the Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL), and through other national and regional agencies, he has been involved in promoting the development of hybrid and electronic libraries and collaborative solutions to research library support for many years.

### **KNOWING THE NEED: UK SURVEY OF LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES NOMINATED FOR CONSERVATION AWARD**

The National Preservation Office (NPO) has been shortlisted for the prestigious Conservation Awards for 'Knowing the Need', the first large scale survey of the state of preservation in the United Kingdom's libraries and archives.

The collections in UK libraries and archives are a significant part of the nation's cultural heritage. To make sure they are accessible to present and future users it is vital that they are maintained and housed in appropriate conditions. Over the past five years the NPO has undertaken detailed surveys of a large number of individual libraries and archives in the UK. With guidance and training from NPO staff, librarians, archivists and conservators have contributed to this project

which defines the steps that now need to be taken to preserve the collections for current and future use.

Some 28 million items – books, documents, photographs and other paper-based material – from 79 organisations were sampled to create this picture. Good practice in preservation is widespread and most of the material surveyed is well cared for and accessible, but this survey identifies areas of risk, now and in the future.

The principal themes which have emerged are:

- improvements in the monitoring and control of environmental conditions are needed - 88% of collections in libraries and 58% in archives are not in monitored and controlled environments
- 13% of material is unstable and would be damaged if used
- 68% of post-1850 paper is vulnerable
- 46% of collections are not covered by an up to date, written disaster plan.

The survey programme has shown that improving the storage of the nation's collections would be the most effective step towards ensuring their preservation for the future.

For more information visit the Awards website [www.conservationawards.org.uk](http://www.conservationawards.org.uk)

The winners will be announced at the British Museum on 27 September 2007.

#### **SAVED FOR THE NATION: NEW BRITISH LIBRARY CENTRE FOR CONSERVATION**

The new British Library Centre for Conservation provides a world-class facility for all aspects of book conservation including education and training, as well as state-of-the art technical facilities for the nation's Sound Archive, enabling unrivalled standards of care for the Library's priceless collections.

The 2,600 square metre Centre is a distinctive new building immediately to the north of the library's existing building at St Pancras, London, in the middle of the block bounded by Ossulston Street on the west and Midland Road on the east. It is joined to the existing building by a terrace, providing a new public square on the St Pancras site.

The £13.25 million project began construction in August 2005 and was completed on 17 January 2007. The programme of moving staff and equipment into the Centre for Conservation has been completed and the Centre opens to the public on 17 May 2007. The building has been designed by

architects Long and Kentish, the principal contractor was Sir Robert McAlpine, with engineering design by Arups, project management by Drivers Jonas and cost consultancy by Davis Langdon.

#### **BOOKS FOR IRAQ**

A consignment of 300 academic textbooks donated by the UK higher education library sector and UK publishers has been delivered to the Iraq National Library and Archive (INLA) in Baghdad.

The British Library's Higher Education team, working with SCOUNL, launched an appeal in February this year for undergraduate and postgraduate English texts in the social sciences, identified as being vital for the reconstruction of the INLA by its Director, Dr Saad Eskander.

A wish list of titles was put together following consultation with a number of libraries to form the basis of the appeal. More than 300 titles were eventually donated, the great majority being purchased especially for the INLA. Some measure of the importance of the donation is that the INLA's book budget this year is US\$7,000 while the value of the donations is estimated at between US\$20,000 and US\$30,000.

Dr Eskander, Director of the Iraq National Library and Archive said: "On behalf of the INLA's staff, I would like to express my gratitude to all the British academic institutions and the British Library, which kindly sent books to us during these difficult times. We view your action as a true symbol of solidarity with your colleagues in Baghdad. The donated books will certainly fill a gap in our social sciences collections. They will be, therefore, very useful to our readers, who are university students and private scholars."

#### **TAKING YOUR INVENTION BEYOND THE GARDEN SHED**

The British Library has appointed Mark Sheahan to be its first ever 'Inventor in Residence'. For the next 12 months Mark will be the face of the library's intellectual property (IP) collections and services, starting with a round of free one-to-one advice sessions to be held at the British Library Business & IP Centre at St Pancras.

Mark is the inventor of Squeezeopen™, an easy-open container which won him the accolade of Innovator of the Year in 2003 ([www.squeezeopen.com](http://www.squeezeopen.com)). He has not only designed, developed, patented and sold his products but has also had his inventions taken up by major packaging producers, via licensing agreements, in the UK, the US and Japan.

The one-to-one advice sessions are intended to help inventors who have products or ideas that need patenting, or who are seeking advice on securing the best licensing agreement.

"Inventing can be a lonely and frustrating pursuit," says Mark. "If you want to get your idea out of the garden shed and onto the market, perhaps the most important thing you can do is to make connections with other inventors, join an inventors' club or make use of a resource like the Business and IP Centre.

"One of the major errors that many inventors make is to try to take their idea to market without first seeking guidance on how they can best protect and develop it," he adds. "Through these advice sessions, I hope to offer people who are in the position I was ten years ago the kind of tips that will help them to avoid some of the common pitfalls and to make the most of their invention."

For more details visit [www.bl.uk/bipc/](http://www.bl.uk/bipc/)

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## Glasgow School of Art

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### NEW CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE

Blogs in architecture, fine art and design have been launched to alert users to the wide range of high quality resources available either in the GSA Library or via the Web. All resources have been selected by the subject librarians not only to ensure quality but also to match the School's profile in learning, teaching and research. The preference of users for a visually attractive and interactive service has been taken into account in the design which includes:

- A-Z list of high quality resources
- New books available in the library
- Regular postings of new and updated content
- Subject librarians links
- Demo movies using Flash
- del.icio.us tags
- Web, image bank and subject gateway search functions

<http://gsaartdesign.blogspot.com/>  
<http://gsaarchitecture.blogspot.com/>

### SKETCHING NORTHERN ITALY: THE MACKINTOSH SKETCHBOOKS PROJECT

Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Northern Italian sketchbook is a little-known record of this famous architect's impressions of part of a 'Grand Tour' of the continent which he undertook as a young man in 1891. Now held in the archive at Glasgow School of Art, the sketchbook highlights Mackintosh's skills as a draughtsman and provides a unique insight into a formative stage of his career.

David Buri, Architecture and Design Librarian at Glasgow School of Art, has been undertaking research into this fascinating primary source, which has involved accurately identifying and recording for the first time, all the sources for the drawings. AHRC funding has enabled the creation of a project website which will open up this unique and fragile document to both researchers and the general public. The website will be launched in Autumn 2007 and will be freely accessible via the Glasgow School of Art website at [www.gsa.ac.uk](http://www.gsa.ac.uk)

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## University of Leeds

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### PODCASTS IN ITALY

Podcasts of our Edward Boyle and Brotherton Library tours have been available on our website for some time and these are now being used for training in the University of Padua. One of our colleagues there has loaded them to a Moodle platform where they are listened to in conjunction with our .pdf plans. A report on this e-learning course is being presented at the 73rd IFLA Conference in August, Applying Moodle to continuing professional development.

### BRETTON HALL LIBRARY

The summer saw the closure of University of Leeds's Bretton Hall Campus. Approximately 18,000 volumes have been transferred to the Leeds campus and are now located in our Brotherton and Edward Boyle Libraries. In August we welcomed to Leeds our academic colleagues who have new purpose built accommodation (including two theatres) and look forward to seeing students from Bretton Hall at the beginning of the academic year.

#### **DISABILITY DEVELOPMENTS**

The library's disability officer – supported by the information literacy team – is working with the university's disability services to develop training programmes for disability support tutors and personal assistants to disabled students. This is the first time such a programme has been organised at Leeds. Greater awareness and understanding of what the library has to offer these individuals and the students they support is the primary objective. We are planning to learn through feedback what the library can do to continually improve its services, increase accessibility and usability. At the same time we are working to develop training sessions on how to use the library catalogue specifically designed for students with dyslexia which will be delivered in the session 2007/08. Based on existing training material we are rewriting and redesigning the sessions to incorporate new materials and different teaching and learning styles. Depending upon success, it may be possible to run a more extensive programme covering a greater range of topics designed to be delivered in a variety of teaching and learning styles.

#### **DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY**

Easter saw the opening of our refurbished group study area in our Health Sciences Library which was created in collaboration with the university's ALPS CETL (Assessment and Learning in Practice Settings Centre for Excellence in Teaching and learning). Thanks to the generosity of the Wolfson Foundation we will be implementing further improvements to the facilities there over the next year.

#### **LEEDS READ 2007**

This year Leeds Read went poetical with our students and staff voting for their favourite poem. No prizes for guessing that Rudyard Kipling's 'If' came top of the Leeds charts. Other events in support of Leeds Read included 'Pancakes and Poetry' – a reading of selected poems which drew upon our copies of original works from our special collections (pancakes were particularly popular), and 'An evening with Simon Armitage', with readings from the poet who went on to answer questions from an enthusiastic audience.

The library has received the latest large instalment of the papers of the poet Simon Armitage. The association with Simon began in the early 1990s, when his career was beginning. Now that he is well-established as perhaps the leading English poet of his generation, the library looks forward to the archive growing far into the future along-

side those of many other poets from the Yorkshire region in the library's collections.

#### **RECENT APPOINTMENT**

In August the library welcomed Bo Middleton to the post of head of e-strategy.

#### **AND FINALLY...**

Those interested in the progress of our Sshhh...! bags may be interested to know that our autumn range comes in red or black. The travels of the library bags can be viewed at [www.community-walk.com/librarybag](http://www.community-walk.com/librarybag)

Liz Waller

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## **Leeds Metropolitan University**

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#### **LEARNING ADVISERS**

In summer 2007 Sandra McDowell retired after 32 years at the university as Learning Adviser for the art, architecture and film schools. Kirsty Carver and Karen Fisher are now job-sharing her role and Lindsay Joyce moves from our Harrogate College to take on the post of Learning Adviser for cultural studies and social sciences. Lizzy Bellarby, whose subjects include computing, IT systems and information management, is on maternity leave, with Catherine Robinson providing cover. Catherine (previously at the University of Leeds) also joins us on a permanent basis as Learning Adviser for the area of built environment.

Learning Advisers have organised a successful series of short talks by well known members of university staff on the theme of assessment, learning & teaching. Speakers include a lecturer/ WebCT champion, the Pro Vice Chancellor for Assessment, Learning & Teaching who spoke about the university's strategic approach to learning, and a professor of teaching and learning who discussed how we integrate Web 2.0 applications in developing information skills. The sessions have been well attended by a variety of library staff.

#### **EXTENDING OPENING HOURS**

The Civic Quarter and Headingley libraries opened throughout summer 2007 from 08:30 to 22:00 in response to customer feedback; reflecting the fact that many students are still studying throughout the standard vacation times. From September 2007 full daily 24 hour opening is planned.

#### SELF SERVICES 'SILVER' AWARD

The library's implementation of its new self service machines using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) for faster, simpler, more effective borrowing and returning of library materials won 'silver' in the UCISA-Eduserv Award for Excellence 2007. The panel chair commented: 'The panel were impressed by the way in which this project had rapidly delivered enhancements to students' experience.. [and] to read of the various ways in which the lessons of this project are already being disseminated through our community.' Dilys Young and Stuart Bolton (INN University Services) received the award from Peter Walker of Eduserv at the UCISA management conference in London in March.

#### FOOD AND DRINK IN THE LIBRARY

During 2006-7 we ran pilots to enable students to bring food and drink into designated areas of Civic Quarter and Headingley libraries, asking for feedback via customer comments. 91% of respondents wished to be able to continue to bring food and drink into the library and indeed many wished for it to be extended to all floors. Overall it is clear that students welcome the additional choice so that they can enjoy a snack whilst studying. Early concerns that relaxing the food and drink rules would lead to damaged stock have not materialised and cleaning has been increased to make sure the learning environments remain tidy and clean. It has therefore been decided to continue with the policy as it is though not at this stage extend it to other areas.



#### STUDENT ART

The refurbishment of the Headingley Library in spring 2007 offered the opportunity to work with various subject areas in the university to showcase student artwork and has resulted in an ongoing partnership with the MA contemporary art students. Students were asked to show their work in our new silent study area and interpreted 'Silence' in innovative and challenging ways, including using lard as a material. The Civic Quarter Library was also the location for two students as part of the Situation Leeds event taking place across the city; one of whom used the books returned each day as the basis for 'The library writes its own

book' and the other who spent two weeks hunting for the 'Pseudoscorpion' hidden in our older bookstock.

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## University of London

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#### SENATE HOUSE LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT NEWS

The second phase of the Senate House Library, University of London refurbishment programme began in August. This involved temporarily relocating the entrance to the library to the North Block of Senate House and moving some of the collections.

The refurbishment is necessary to allow for library space to be rewired and redecorated, with the shelving respaced to become more disability-friendly.

While every effort is being made to keep materials on open access, on occasion some will be temporarily re-shelved in the closed-access stack. These will remain available on request.

We apologise for any inconvenience the moves cause and we hope to keep disruption to a minimum.

Please check the website [<http://www.shl.london.ac.uk>], newsletter and notices in the library for the latest information about further moves.

Sarah Jackson  
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## Open University

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#### NEW INFORMATION LITERACY COURSE – 'BEYOND GOOGLE' TU120

The Open University (OU) Library is celebrating the end of the second presentation of its new OU course, TU120 *Beyond Google*. The course, co-authored by library staff and academic colleagues from the Technology Faculty, focuses on bringing information literacy up to date by using new tools such as social bookmarking, blogs and wikis. The next presentation of the course runs later this year, in October. For more information, visit the taster site at [www.openuniversity.co.uk/tu120](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/tu120)

### M-LIBRARIES CONFERENCE 13 – 14 NOVEMBER 2007

The Open University Library, in partnership with Athabasca University, is delighted to be acting as hosts for the very first International m-libraries Conference. This event promises to break new ground in library technology development. As the use of mobile technologies becomes increasingly ubiquitous, libraries around the world are experimenting with developing services and resources to be delivered to mobile phones, MP3 Players, PDAs, portable games consoles and other devices. These developments have not yet been the subject of any international conference or symposium. For more information, visit the m-libraries website at [www.open.ac.uk/library/mLibraries](http://www.open.ac.uk/library/mLibraries). Registration is now open.

### OPEN RESEARCH ONLINE

Open Research Online is now live. It is a repository of OU research publications and other research outputs and, with 5000 items, is now the 3rd largest academic repository in the UK. It is an Open Access resource that can be searched and browsed freely by members of the public. Visit [oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk) for more information.

Sam Dick

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## University of Reading

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### SPECIAL COLLECTIONS SERVICE: NEW SERVICE, NEW AWARD

The university's new Special Collection service at Redlands Road opened for business on 2 October 2006. It is a new departure, being a joint venture between the university's Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) and the University Library. Both contribute to the reading room service giving access to manuscripts, rare books and archives from both bodies. A celebratory 'launch' party took place on 14 December 2006, with sparkling wine, sushi and the Vice Chancellor cutting a ceremonial ribbon.

Key to this development was building a brand new £1.4 million archives store alongside MERL's facilities. It houses 5,000 metres of special collections material on two floors of mobile shelving in environmentally controlled conditions. Provision in the build could allow later extension. The collections are of national and international importance, their richness probably unparalleled in a university of this age and size. This year, the Archive of British Publishing and Printing was awarded Designated status by the MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council). Already

holders are the library's Beckett Collection relating to the playwright Samuel Beckett, and MERL, including its archive and library of agricultural history and rural life. Only seven English universities have more than one Designated collection.

Rooms at the Special Collections service can be booked for classes and seminars using the collections. Working in conjunction with the University's Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning on Applied Undergraduate Research Skills, several collections are proving a prime source of original teaching materials.

The Special Collections service is open Monday–Friday 09.00–17.00. More information at: [www.reading.ac.uk/library/colls/special/jointservice/](http://www.reading.ac.uk/library/colls/special/jointservice/)



*Archive and rare book treasures were on display at the launch of the University of Reading's Special Collections service, run jointly by the University Library and the Museum of English Rural Life*



*Special collections are now housed in an environmentally ideal and secure environment in the new £1.4 million state-of-the-art archives store*



*Three MLA Designated collections of national importance are held on one site at the University of Reading*



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## Roehampton University

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### **VISITS TO OTHER LIBRARIES – THANK YOU!**

Over the past three months or so every single member of Roehampton library staff has had the chance to visit another library, as we look for things we'd like to put in the new extension. (For those who didn't read this last issue we have £12M to spend by 2010!)

This visits programme has been a huge success as staff have seen many inspirational ideas we'd now like to build into the extension project. We also have a huge collection of pictures to show the architects as examples of what we would like them to design for us. It has also been a good exercise in getting staff to work in teams they wouldn't normally be in, as the groups were deliberately mixed.

So a big thank you from us to all of those SCONUL libraries who hosted visits from all our groups. And thanks in advance to those we might come back to as we turn to looking in detail at some features and ideas.

### **ARCHIVES COMPLETE**

Our Archives now have a purpose built store with temperature control and extra fire protection for the first time ever. Currently housed are the Froebel Archive of Childhood Studies and the Anne Hutcheson Guest Language of Dance collection. The 4th floor space also has a new seminar room and a closed access research room.

### **WORK IN PROGRESS**

Work continues on our cyber café which should be open for next academic year. The furniture has been ordered and we reckon the Saltire Centre will have competition for bright colours. (So bring your sunglasses!)

We will also have a short loan collection transformed into a reference only Key Texts collection, following feedback that reference is preferred to loan.

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Deputy Librarian  
E-mail: Adam.Edwards@roehampton.ac.uk

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# Advice for authors

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*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.

The copyright in items published in *SCONUL Focus* remains the property of the author(s) or their employers as the case may be. Items are accepted on the basis that SCONUL will normally expect to grant permission for the reproduction of articles, on paper or in other media, for educational/research purposes. This will include open access repositories, to which authors are encouraged to submit. Authors should contact the Chair of the Editorial Board if they would like to discuss this policy.

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](mailto:sconul@sconul.ac.uk). An online version can be found via [www.sconul.ac.uk](http://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](mailto: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

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We look forward to hearing from you.



