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# SCONUL Focus

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### **Editorial information**

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

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

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## A is for Advocacy...

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As this issue of *SCONUL Focus* was going to bed, we were still awaiting to hear the fate of the Bangor Eight, the eight subject librarians at Bangor University who were being offered up to make a saving of £300,000.

Why were library staff so readily identified as a potential and desirable saving? Part of the reason is, of course, that old chestnut "everything is easily available on the internet, nowadays". As the University's consultation document –quoted in *The Guardian* and now on virtually every librarian's weblog- states:

'The support to the academic and student communities from the qualified subject librarians, whatever its contribution to the teaching and research roles of the institution, is hard to justify in value-for-money terms at a time when the process of literature searches is substantially deskilled by online bibliographical resources.'<sup>1</sup>

As a subject team leader (in my day job) I found this particularly chilling. Could I protect my team if similar charges were levied at us?

This news came just as we were compiling the Oxford Brookes University Library annual report and developing operational planning templates that made the link to the strategic priorities of the university more explicit than before. More than ever, it is essential to show just how we (all) are supporting the strategic aims of our parent bodies,

just what a good job we are doing, that we are successful and worthy of continued investment. Advocacy is part of the answer.

For me, this was the key theme of this year's SCONUL Conference, reported in some depth in this issue.

But that is not the whole of the story. Increasingly, we need to consider -and re-consider- our role. What is our Unique Selling Point?

My Sunday paper recently described a wonderful service:

'It helps you answer questions and solve problems. It enables you to discover new things, which is always fun.... Oh, and it's free to use.'<sup>2</sup>

And what is this brilliant service? Well, it's your library! Only it isn't. The article is (of course) about Google. But it *could* describe us. SCONUL has recently been actively consulting with its members on concerns and worries. It has also recently updated the SCONUL Vision. One of the concerns (quoted in SCONUL Chair Suzanne Enright's article) is Google. One of the big messages of the SCONUL Vision 2010 is marketing<sup>3</sup>. We need to remind the rest of the world just how valuable we are.

But how can we compete with Google? Google and Google Scholar do have their short comings, and it is just as well to be aware of these, for when another academic colleague emails us to give us the Good News ...or the powers that be start comparing 'free' services with 'expensive' subject librarians. Hence Martin Myhill's article -included in this issue- is particularly welcome. But more than this, we need to promote what we can offer over and above the world's favourite search engine.

The answer? Us.

Phil Sykes bravely argues that in the virtual future, real live librarians are the answer. In this crazy world of digital information we need more help, not less.

I'll leave you with a quote from my library's annual report, the acknowledgement in a part-time undergraduate's LLB dissertation:

'This study would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of a ... group of unsung heroes: the university librarians who look after printed and electronic resources, enabling students to access an amazing range of materials.'

It's time we started singing our praises. It's time to pump up the volume.

Antony Brewerton  
SCONUL Focus Editorial Board

#### Notes

- 1 Curtis, Polly, 'Bangor librarians face internet threat', *The Guardian*, 16 February 2005. Available at [www.guardian.co.uk/uk\\_news/story/0,3604,1415830,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,1415830,00.html)
- 2 Simmons, John, 'How Google created a brand out of the ether', *The Observer*, Business, 3 April 2005, p. 7
- 3 [www.sconul.ac.uk/pubs\\_stats/pubs/vision%202010](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/pubs_stats/pubs/vision%202010)

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## Putting library staff back into libraries



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Recent events at Bangor University have, inevitably, led to speculation about the future of academic librarianship. The *Times higher* for 11 February 2005 led with the headline 'End of the story for librarians?'<sup>1</sup> and even those who believe the difficulties at Bangor are of limited general significance are concerned about the effect the precedent it creates may have on the perceptions of university senior managers. As I write, CILIP are acting on behalf of the staff, and our profession, at Bangor and we must all hope that they succeed.

The purpose of this article, however, is to argue that, far from being at a point where academic librarianship is set to decline, we may actually be at the beginning of a period of exceptional growth and renewal. In particular, I believe that we have the opportunity to create libraries in which the abundance and quality of support our readers receive from library staff is greater than it has ever been.

#### THE 1980s AND 1990s: TAKING STAFF OUT OF LIBRARIES

To appreciate the possibility we have before us, we need to consider how our libraries developed in the 1980s and 1990s, and the particular external pressures that led us to take the path we then did. Over this period universities suffered a precipitate decline in funding per student and a huge expansion in student numbers. Libraries responded by creating services that required fewer library staff members to cater for a given number of users. To do otherwise would have been entirely irresponsible: it would have led to impossibly heavy workloads on our staff and persistent service failure. Among the techniques we used to cope with the unprecedented level of demand upon us were:

- Using technology to improve efficiency (for example, sharing electronic catalogue records)

to reduce the need for original cataloguing at each institution)

- Using technology to enable readers to do things for themselves that previously had to be done by library staff (for example, renewing books via OPAC)
- Achieving economies of scale (for example by amalgamating small departmental libraries into larger units)

Among the inevitable consequences of this was a tendency for libraries to become more impersonal and anonymous places, with fewer interactions between library staff and readers. Sometimes this was simply because, as with issuing books for example, the process was speeded up, reducing the possibility of friendly exchange. Sometimes it took place through a deliberate reduction of service points, as when multiple help desks on different floors of a large library were replaced by a single enquiry desk at the library entrance.

The closure of departmental libraries illustrates particularly vividly both the gains and losses in the process I am describing. Small departmental libraries are hugely expensive to run; they require libraries to devote a disproportionate share of library funding to the particular narrow groups they serve; and the liberation of resources to which their closure leads can allow substantial improvements in the general library service which benefit all its users. For example, closing a departmental library may allow the parent library to open its main site for longer hours, which means both that general users benefit and the users of the former departmental library are able to access resources for longer hours.

However, something important is lost in this process, besides the convenience to departmental library users of having a library close to where they work and socialise. Because of their scale and intimacy, departmental libraries are particularly responsive to the needs of their departments. They maintain good contact with academic staff; they are able to track academic developments closely; and they come to know their students, to whom they provide friendly and knowledgeable support (friendly because they relate to them as individuals, and knowledgeable because they know both about the information resources the students use and the information needs that the syllabus dictates).

I am not arguing that we should maintain uneconomic departmental libraries, or indeed that we should reintroduce card issue systems in order

to allow library staff to spend more time with users! I do believe, however, that we should be conscious of what we have lost in developing the more streamlined and anonymous services we now have, and that we should be alert for opportunities to introduce services that allow us to regain the level of friendly support achieved by the best departmental libraries – albeit within the context of larger libraries whose efficiencies allow us to provide comprehensive services for long hours.

I also believe that our notion of ‘progress’ in the provision of library services needs to be adjusted to reflect the idea that the provision of easy and abundant access to library staff expertise and help is a crucial aspect of excellence in library provision. During the 1980s and 1990s we came to think of the most ‘progressive’ libraries as being those that made advances in information technology most rapidly available to their users, and those that achieved the most impressive efficiency gains by introducing systems that ran with minimum staff intervention. We were, of course, concerned with the *quality* of human support (this was after all the period that saw the rise of ‘customer care’) but only within the context of a declining *quantity* of such support. The competition between us was principally about technical innovation, breadth of information access, streamlining and efficiency, formal quality standards, convenience and hours of availability, introducing new services, and creating superior buildings. It was not about making the maximum amount of human support and expertise easily available to our users. Nor could it have been: the financial imperatives I described earlier meant that, inevitably, we had to reduce the amount of individual support our users received.

#### **2005 ONWARDS: PUTTING STAFF BACK IN TO LIBRARIES?**

But has anything changed to allow us to reorder our priorities and put more time into providing direct support to users? I believe it has.

Firstly, we are not engaged in as desperate a struggle to keep our heads above water as we were in the ‘80s and most of the ‘90s. We have still had to make efficiency gains over the last few years, because library spending per FTE student has continued to decline in real terms, but the gains we have had to make are not as great as in former years<sup>2</sup>. For example, there has been an increase of 13% in the number of students per staff member between 1997/98 and 2002/3; but this compares with an increase of 19% in the single year between

1995/96 and 1996/97! (and it is worth reminding ourselves that, had the Conservatives won the 1997 election, they were projecting a 4% decline in spending on universities in the subsequent year).

Of course the fact that the screw is tightening less slowly than it once was calls for only modified rapture, but when we look at indices of activity in libraries over the last few years it becomes apparent that there may be more slack in the system than the headline figures allow for. The SCONUL statistics I have quoted above appear to demonstrate a workload increase of 13% between 1997/98 and 2002/03; but those additional students only, in general, generate additional workload if they visit our libraries, ask us questions or use our materials. When we look at the actual SCONUL indices of activity over the same period we see that, over SCONUL institutions as a whole

- Visits annually per FTE user declined from 73 to 56 (23% reduction)
- Enquiries declined from 10.1 per FTE student to 7.8 (23% reduction)
- There was a 40% decline in ILLs as a proportion of overall loans.
- Annual loans declined from 54 per FTE student to 52\*

What these figures indicate, then, is that, in most libraries, a decline in some of the demands upon us could be used as an opportunity to release staff time to provide more one-to-one support to users (either face to face or using C&IT). We also, of course, have techniques at our disposal that can reduce workload further. Those libraries that have comprehensively redesigned their systems to encourage self-issue, for example have not found it difficult to increase the self-issue proportion to well above 70% of the total. Though our instinct tends to be to cash in such improvements as a

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\* The loans figure is almost certainly an underestimate of the extent to which the library workload connected with the issue, return and re-shelving of books has reduced, because the figure does not differentiate between 'first-time issues' and renewals. In both the libraries I have managed recently the proportion of renewals in the issue figure total has increased markedly, largely as a result of the facility to renew books via OPAC or the internet. While it may be legitimate to treat these as 'issues' for the purposes of the SCONUL statistics, an online renewal has almost no impact on workload. Figures based upon first time issues would, I believe, be a better workload indicator, and I would be surprised if they did not show a substantial decline across SCONUL libraries.

'saving' or an efficiency gain, there is no reason why we should not seek to channel the staff time saved into providing better direct support to users. The reports from member libraries in a previous *SCONUL Focus* contain an account by Sue White of how, at the University of Huddersfield, the savings in library assistant time resulting from the introduction of self-issue were used to create a new role of 'Library Guide'<sup>3</sup>. The Library Guides are library assistants who are available in the foyer area of the library to show readers how to use basic services and take them to the areas of the library or the specialist staff they need to make use of.

A second cause for optimism lies in the fact that the changes to university funding over the next few years will mean that, where we can demonstrate that we can introduce improvements to give our universities competitive advantage, we have a better opportunity to secure additional resources than we have had for many years. Although universities are being rightly cautious about the increase in income that will result from the introduction of 'variable' fees, most are projecting a significant increase in available funds. Although an 'opportunity' to secure additional funding is nothing like a guarantee – and libraries have had an undistinguished track record of securing their fair share of the additional funding that has come to higher education since 1997 – fortune favours the brave and the prepared. If we can present an exciting vision to our parent institutions of improved library staff support leading to better learning, improved student satisfaction and greater research competitiveness we may be more successful in getting our share of additional funding than our previous experience has led us to expect.

A further impetus towards providing better personal support to users may be provided by the changing nature of competition between our libraries. Although competition between university libraries is courteous, amiable and moderated by a strong leaven of cooperation, we do, nevertheless, compete. We try to differentiate ourselves from one another in what we do in order to increase the competitiveness of our parent institutions. One way in which we have traditionally competed with one another is, of course, in terms of the breadth of access to the stock we provide. This has, however, already become considerably less salient as a differentiator between libraries. There has been an astonishing convergence, for example, in the number of journal titles available to users in different types of institution. Though

differentiation through book stock is still significant, it will weaken significantly as a result of initiatives like the recently announced Google venture to digitise out-of-copyright materials at major research universities. How much competitive advantage will a university library's excellent holdings of nineteenth century monographs confer upon it, for example, once the Bodleian's collection of one to one and a half million such items is available online?

In recent decades, of course, much of our competition has been about technical innovation but, even here, there seems to be a certain cooling off. If one compares the *SCONUL Vision* for 2005, for example, with the *Vision* for 2010, technological 'big ideas' are less dominant as drivers of development in the latter document<sup>4</sup>. Though it is always risky to suggest that the motor of technological progress has stalled, specific technological changes have not been as central to the long term library plans I have seen recently as in similar documents from five or ten years ago. There are other areas where competition remains, but is muted compared to a decade ago: we still aspire to provide excellent buildings but the glory days of post-Follett funding are over; libraries are still vying with one another to extend opening hours, but there is nowhere to go after 24 hour opening.

If future competition between libraries is going to be less about stock provision, and less about technology, what is it going to be more about? The answer will, of course, be whatever we collectively determine it to be, but I would suggest that a plausible and desirable alternative would be a rivalry to make the maximum amount of friendly expertise available to every user of our libraries. This is certainly the most significant strand in the draft strategy produced by my own library, at Liverpool University, for the period 2005/09. Our aim is to maximise the proportion of staff time available to users. If our plans are fully funded we will provide:

- full reception services, rather than just the current 'security' desks at library entrances
- roving helpers at the entrance to the library
- roving help in computer areas
- subject-focused help desks in different areas and on different floors of our libraries, not merely in entrance areas
- larger faculty teams, allowing us to provide much more personalised support to both students and researchers
- increased one to one support to distance learning students.

Even if our plans are not fully funded, our main developmental priority will be to move nearer to the ideal of abundant, friendly and expert staff support set out in the plan.

#### **IS DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT IN THE AVAILABILITY OF SUPPORT TO USERS REALLY ACHIEVABLE OR DESIRABLE?**

The vision I have set out here is of academic libraries where users find human help easily and plentifully available. As such, it runs counter to the strong instinct, hard-wired into our brains by the privations of the 80s and 90s, to encourage user self-sufficiency. One possible objection to this is that, regardless of its feasibility, it is not even desirable to increase help in this way, and that what is set out here mistakes quantity of help for quality. In extreme cases, of course, this criticism could be justified: a library providing friendly and focused help through a small number of expert staff would be better than one that provided abundant but misleading and dourly delivered assistance; but all things being equal, and with proper training and development, a library providing plentiful help will be better than one that dispenses help only frugally. In the real world quality of support is, inevitably, largely a function of quantity.

It might also be objected that encouraging self-sufficiency for library users is good, and the spoon-feeding that is more likely to occur if staff help is generously available is bad. This argument is hard to sustain if one subscribes to the prevailing modern view that library users are, or are at least strongly akin to, 'customers'. Customers prefer organisations from which they can obtain help instantly – where nothing is too much trouble – to those that ration help parsimoniously. Like Mae West, they think that too much of a good thing can be wonderful. Even if we take the view that it is an oversimplification to see library users purely as customers – because they need to achieve self-sufficiency in information searching whether they want them or not – it still seems to me more likely that students will acquire, or reinforce, these skills in organisations where one to one coaching and mentoring are easily available.

A further objection might be that the relative optimism of my analysis does not accord with reality – that the financial pressures we will face over the next decade may mean that the scope for the expansion of support I am advocating simply does not exist. Only time will tell of course, but I find it hard to believe that there is no scope for such an improvement if we have the will to

achieve it. In many libraries the staff that are easily available to readers for the provision of advice and assistance form a very small proportion of total staff numbers; it is not uncommon to find academic libraries employing hundreds of staff making only one or two people easily available to answer enquiries. It seems inconceivable that there is no scope for improvement in such situations.

A final objection might be that placing such emphasis on the expansion of staff support ignores the reality of the position academic libraries are now in – one in which we are no longer monopoly suppliers of information to our users and where, increasingly, our libraries are not even the main source of academic information for some groups of users. Those same statistics that I quote above to show that there may be scope for redeployment of staff time to user support also demonstrate clearly how the tide is going out for libraries as physical collections. Even our position as the principal suppliers of quality-validated electronic information within our respective institutions will eventually be eroded. But the one aspect of our operations that can escape ultimate extinction is our own ability to add value to the information world by our knowledge of what it contains and how it relates to the needs of our users. It makes eminently good sense to place our people and their expertise at the centre of our strategic thinking because, in the end, all that will survive of us is staff.

#### Notes

- 1 Tysome, Tony, 'Librarians under threat', *Times higher education supplement*, 11 February 2005, p.8.
- 2 All the statistical references in this article are to the *SCONUL library statistics: trend analysis to 2002/3* by Claire Creaser, available at [www.sconul.ac.uk/pubs\\_stats/stats\\_internal/trends02-03.pdf](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/pubs_stats/stats_internal/trends02-03.pdf)
- 3 *SCONUL Focus*, (32) Summer/ Autumn 2004, p.75
- 4 The *SCONUL Visions for 2005 and 2010* are both available at [www.sconul.ac.uk/pubs\\_stats/](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/pubs_stats/)

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## What's in a name?



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The subtle change in the name of Manchester's John Rylands University Library on 1 October 2004 from John Rylands University Library of Manchester to The John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester was more than a bit of tinkering with nomenclature. It marked the library dimension of the decision of UMIST and the former Victoria University of Manchester to dissolve themselves and be reborn as the new University of Manchester (whose continuity is, though, indicated by its new logo, MANCHESTER 1824, which refers to the foundation date of the earliest of its constituent parts). We can claim to be both the newest and the third oldest university in England!

What did this mean in practice for the libraries and their staff? It meant the creation of a new library service from the merger of the former JRULM system and the libraries of UMIST and the Manchester Business School, with retention of the global 'John Rylands' brand in a modified form to reflect the change. More to the point it presented me, as Director of the JRULM and Librarian Designate of the new University, Mike Day, the Librarian of UMIST, and other senior colleagues with the challenge of integrating the staff and services of three previously independent library systems into a single entity in the year between the agreement of the two universities to merge and the merger itself.

The process was helped enormously by three factors. The announcement by the two merging universities that there would be no compulsory redundancies as a result of the unity process gave staff some degree of reassurance about their future. The degree of independence enjoyed by the library from central administrative structures left us free to begin the process of merger long before it became an official reality (typically we would do something, after which someone in the centre would say 'You shouldn't have done that



yet'. We'd reply 'But we have and it's working well' – to which there was no answer). Finally and, most importantly, the professional commitment and co-operation from colleagues from all three merging libraries at a time of uncertainty for many, as people had to compete for existing or new roles, was a revelation. The fact that we were a fully unified service by the time the new university came into being is a tribute to all staff of the former MBS, UMIST and JRULM libraries.

Apart from unifying the service, what has the change meant in practice? The first thing to emphasise is that our objective has not been to make savings (so far, at least, there has been no particular pressure to do so) but to add value. We have restructured our approach to subject support by re-designating all our former subject librarians, whatever their origin, as Academic Liaison Librarians with a specific remit to work closely with the large schools which have absorbed and replaced formerly independent departments. Because many of the consultative committees of the legacy universities have been replaced by a system of much greater executive responsibility it is important that we find other ways of two way communication and Academic Liaison Librarians who, ideally, are as much part of their School as of the library, play a pivotal role in this.

We have also been able to take advantage of the surplus of highly skilled staff produced by rationalisation of previously separate and parallel processes to develop digitisation and e-learning activities more quickly than might have been the case if it had been necessary to seek new resources for them. At the most senior level, Mike Day, as Deputy Librarian for Infrastructure and Planning Support, has brought his formidable analytical skills to bear on the integration and enhancement of our management processes whilst Diana Leitch, who has the remit for Information Resources and Academic Support, has developed close links with our new 'super' faculties, some of which are larger than many universities.

It was tempting at the outset of our planning process for integration to throw all the pieces of the jigsaw in the air and start everything from scratch. The problem with that approach is that the pieces we inherited would almost certainly not have fitted into the nice new slots we might have devised for them. We were also working to a tight timescale, which did not allow us the luxury of major experimentation. Instead, therefore, we took the more measured approach of adaptive, incremental change, with major shifts of

activity for some colleagues, usually into wholly new areas in which they were keen to work, whilst others modified or expanded existing roles, joined larger, integrated teams, or managed more closely defined but growing areas of activity. Jessie Kurtz, for example, who had been Head of Public Services at JRULM, took on the added role of Site Librarian for the Joule Library (the former Main Library of UMIST), whilst David Whitehurst, who had been Deputy at UMIST became Head of Technical Support, responsible for all IT-related activities in the new Library.

If the approach we adopted was not the most exciting way forward it seems to have worked very effectively, with the library emerging in a recent staff survey of the new university as easily the most highly regarded of all central services. The challenge now is to maintain the momentum of our merger and to build on the enthusiasm and flow of ideas that it has generated from many colleagues. The mixture of backgrounds and experience that the new library has gained from its three predecessors is one of our greatest strengths and to see, for example, a colleague whose background is in a technological university library bringing her skills and insights to bear on issues relating to Special Collections has been both stimulating and challenging to many of us.

At a recent meeting of our senior management group and other key colleagues with the President of the University he remarked on the fact that no one referred to which library they had originally come from and congratulated us on the degree of integration that we had already achieved in a very short time. This has enabled us to think strategically from the outset and the pleasing thing for me is that so many colleagues are more than keen to do so.

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# 'Stirring up other men's benevolence': library fundraising in Oxford



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## FUNDING AND PHILANTHROPY IN OXFORD: A MIXED ECONOMY

As an ancient institution whose beginnings were based entirely on the personal generosity of kings, queens, princes and bishops – the wealthy of medieval times – it is hardly surprising that the University of Oxford still exhibits many of the features of a private foundation. Its older colleges, certainly, are generally well-endowed, and its resource-hungry tutorial system, together with the sense of 'privilege' that typically accompanies life in an Oxbridge college, are some of the more obvious survivals of an earlier, more well-provided, standard of 'student experience' which is rarely available in more recently founded (and less well-funded) public universities.

What is less well-known about Oxford is that the early twentieth-century advent of national public funding for universities served largely to develop the funding base, not so much of the college system, as that of the central university which, until that time, had been the small administrative 'creature of convenience' of the colleges themselves. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, therefore, the University of Oxford as a whole now exhibits a complex mix of funding dependencies, in which many of the older colleges are as well-endowed as some wholly private US universities, while the central university itself is much more like a 'normal' UK publicly-funded university: inadequately endowed and facing all the financial challenges arising from the unwillingness of successive governments to provide

what is necessary, from the taxpayer's pocket, to sustain the provision of high-quality education.

This 'mixed economy' situation in Oxford gives rise to a further surprising feature of the university in relation to fundraising in its more modern forms. For, while most of the colleges have long been able to benefit from the spontaneous generosity of former members, it is only during the last 15 years or so that the central university has 'set out its stall' to underpin its increasingly tight finances with overt and systematic efforts to raise private funds. Thus, while it may be true that 'Oxford' is today generally recognised as one of the leading fundraisers among UK universities, its central Development Office is, surprisingly, only 16 years old, and its first 'Campaign for Oxford' dates from as recently as 1989. And, even now, only about 5% of Oxford's alumni give on an annual basis to the university (the Princeton figure, by contrast, is over 50%).

## LIBRARY FUNDRAISING IN OXFORD: FROM BODLEY TO VAISEY

The Bodleian Library – Oxford's principal research library – was itself founded on private benefaction, and on a scale virtually unknown in modern times. In today's terms, Sir Thomas Bodley's 1602 refounding of Oxford's university library would probably be worth close to £1 billion. Such was Bodley's generosity towards his alma mater that, had it not been for the subsequent maladministration of his endowments, the Bodleian might today have been the only UK university library (except perhaps for Buckingham) not needing to rely at all on public funds. For over 150 years also, the Bodleian was a *de facto* national library (a position underpinned by Bodley's far-sighted arrangement, in 1610, for 'his' library to have the right to claim a copy of every book printed under royal licence in the UK). For several centuries too, the Bodleian was a focus for the generosity of book-lovers and of great collectors, who consistently plied the library with gifts and materials of outstanding quality and value.

Yet, by the late twentieth century, with only a relatively small endowment (around £18 million), the Bodleian found itself seriously under-endowed by comparison with its North American university library peers, such as Harvard, Princeton and Yale. Forced to rely increasingly, like most UK university libraries, on recurrent (and largely public) funds from the central university, and facing annual running costs rising way beyond the general levels of inflation, the Bodleian became one of the first parts of the central Oxford system to set

about trying to 'plug the gap' by raising private funds on a systematic basis. This was largely the work of David Vaisey who, when he became Bodley's Librarian in 1986, made it his personal goal to improve the library's funding base by taking explicit steps, almost four centuries after Thomas Bodley, to stimulate private philanthropy to support the library's work.

So it was that, several years before the university itself set up a central fundraising organisation, Vaisey established a Development Board of well-placed external volunteers; he hired a professional fundraiser; and he began to devote up to 50% of his own time to Bodleian fundraising activities. The result of all this dedicated effort, over the ten years of his librarianship, was the raising of more than £20 million from private external sources.

Vaisey raised funds by direct appeals to Bodleian readers and select groups of university alumni; by carefully-targeted applications to potentially sympathetic foundations; and by devising projects likely to attract the support of private individuals with some connection to Oxford. Personal contacts were pursued, across the globe, especially among the more active members of the Friends of the Bodleian – an 'arm's-length' charitable organisation founded in the 1970s by a previous Bodley's Librarian. Directly assisted by the central university during the 1989-94 Campaign for Oxford, Vaisey's pioneering efforts did much to ease the pressures on the Bodleian's funds during the difficult 1990s, and served to develop a library capacity for mobilising private philanthropy – what Sir Thomas Bodley, 400 years before, had called 'stirring up other men's benevolence'.

But despite all this success, Vaisey admitted to being personally disappointed that much of the money he raised had to be used to support the routine running costs of the library, or its project-based costs, rather than to strengthen its endowment base. Ironically, the largest addition to library endowment came after his retirement in 1996, when the 'David Vaisey Endowment Fund' appeal raised over £1 million as a mark of the respect in which he was held. It was all the more surprising, therefore, when the present writer was appointed as Vaisey's successor, that the only reference to library fundraising in the contract of employment was the throw-away line that 'Bodley's Librarian may expect from time to time to advise the university on fundraising for library purposes'!

But at least, when the present Bodley's Librarian came into office in January 1997, he was fortunate to 'inherit' an experienced library fundraiser, as well as the 'in principle' support of the university's Director of Development. But, faced with the major challenge of organising the managerial integration of the university's many centrally funded libraries, including the Bodleian, it was clear that he was not going to be able to devote as much of his time to fundraising activities as his predecessor had done. The first move, therefore, was to re-engage Vaisey himself as a part-time consultant, and to use his vast experience, and his wide-ranging personal contacts, as a means of maintaining the fundraising momentum established over the previous decade.

With Vaisey's help, and the energetic support of the library's own professional fundraiser, it proved possible to raise the level of external fundraising beyond the previous annual average of about £2 million. The bulk of those funds were again raised for specific projects (such as the completion of the £1.2 million for the Incunable Catalogue project, or the \$1 million required to establish the Oxford Digital Library), obtained through grant applications or approaches to private individuals (including a £250k gift from a Singapore businessman to upgrade the Lower reading room of the Radcliffe Camera), and c.£300k per annum was raised for general running costs, by direct appeals to library users and targeted groups of alumni. (Such appeals, however, were not always made with the wholehearted support of the colleges, who inevitably regarded the alumni as 'theirs'!) Explicit fundraising events were arranged also, including visits to the Friends of the Bodleian in New York and Washington, where Bodley's Librarians past and present featured as a 'double act' in selling the message about the library's continuing needs.

At the same time, a major £7 million application was being prepared for the newly-formed Heritage Lottery Fund, to support a range of physical renovations and an imaginative Visitor Programme for the old library. Having spent almost two years, and c.£250k, completing the various stages of the application, the failure of the bid in 1998 came as a heavy blow, not least because, notwithstanding the approval of the Fund's officers along the way, the millions were awarded, instead, to an *ab initio* football museum project that has since failed! (More than one member of Bodleian

staff was heard to reflect ruefully on the mysteriously shifting definition of 'heritage' ...)

It came as a pleasant surprise, therefore, to find that the high-profile 'failure' of the bid attracted the sympathy of a number of individuals and foundations, who were prepared to offer substantial support for elements of the bid involving the refurbishment of historic parts of the Old Bodleian. Thanks to this wave of sympathy, £4.5 million was raised in less than six months to renovate the fifteenth-century Duke Humfrey's Library and both the Upper and Lower reading rooms of the Bodleian. Contributions included major grants from the Wolfson Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Pilgrim Trust, and Oxford's own Rhodes Trust; and the work appeared all the more appealing because it was undertaken exactly 400 years after Sir Thomas Bodley's own reconstruction of the library, from 1598 to 1602.

#### **REDOUBLING THE EFFORTS**

Meanwhile, the process of managerially integrating the first group of 30 centrally-funded Oxford libraries was taking shape; and by 2000 the 'Oxford University Library Services' (OULS) was formally established, with Bodley's Librarian as its first Director. With all of the large research and faculty libraries, and many of the larger departmental libraries, under the new organisational umbrella, it became possible, for the first time in the university's history, to take a strategic overview of library provision. Systems support, technical services operations, conservation and binding processes, staff development and training activities, and the many all-important elements of reader service provision – all these key library issues could be addressed 'across the piece'. But the changes necessary to introduce tangible improvements in these areas were never going to be cost-free (in the initial stages, at least), and the full value of the integrated approach would only be achieved, over time, on an 'invest-to-save' basis. But if it was clear that additional resources would be needed 'to make integration work', it was equally evident that the central university itself was too cash-strapped to find all the upfront costs needed for the new library service organisation to deliver on its potential.

Internal steps were therefore taken to achieve early savings wherever possible, and to redistribute existing resources. But it was only by redoubling the library fundraising efforts that the OULS was going to be able to make the major improve-

ments that were possible to envisage within an integrated service. And nowhere was this more obvious, and significant, than in the area of physical accommodation. A first strategic overview of the library space issue had been undertaken in 1999, even before the OULS was formally created; and this revealed that over £60 million would be required to bring the accommodation up to standard conditions, to resolve the pressing materials storage problems, to introduce modern service facilities (including networked information provision), to improve back-room production processes and, ultimately, to reconfigure the library estate to achieve recurrent running and space costs. By the time the OULS came into being, therefore, the Director and his senior staff had already begun to persuade the university that nothing less than a major capital campaign was necessary to meet the overall funding requirement.

It took almost 18 months to convince the university that such a major fundraising effort would be necessary to achieve a new paradigm of modern, cost-effective, library operations; but the argument was won more easily because of the existing track-record of fundraising success within the Bodleian. By 2002, therefore, with the personal support of the Vice-Chancellor, and the willing involvement of the Oxford and New York Development Directors and their staff, the OULS was able to launch a five-year capital campaign, with an overall fundraising target of £57 million. And, as an earnest of its support, the central university had put £17 million towards this figure, with £10 million to help renovate the New Bodleian, £6 million to purchase an off-campus library operations centre, and £1 million to refurbish the eighteenth-century Clarendon Building.

#### **EXPLOITING A LANDMARK DATE: THE BODLEIAN'S 400TH ANNIVERSARY**

One of the most important features in any fundraising campaign is the choice of the 'hook' on which the whole thing is to be hung. 'Stirring up other men's benevolence' is not easily done in a vacuum: any appeal needs a convincing and attractive 'storyline' to give it the substance to stimulate the willingness to give, to persuade donors that 'joining in' is a worthwhile thing for them to do, and to make them feel that their contributions, great or small, are an integral part of a greater whole. And in Oxford, it was the historic example of Sir Thomas Bodley that provided the underlying message for the 2002 libraries capital campaign.

2002 was, conveniently, the 400th anniversary year of the Bodleian Library in its refounded existence. The £57 million capital campaign was therefore 'branded' as a re-run of Bodley's earlier mission: to provide a world-class university with a new and greatly improved library service. With this aspect prominently featured, the campaign was launched at a New York gala dinner, where a 'one-night-only' display of Bodleian treasures was staged, where tables were sold at exorbitant prices, where three distinguished honorees from the worlds of literature, computing, and the media were awarded facsimiles of the seventeenth-century Bodley Medal, and where the venue (Sotheby's main saleroom) was fitted out like the interior of an Oxford dining hall. The message was one of renewal, and of honouring the outstanding philanthropy of a historic Oxford library donor by the ongoing emulation of his example. And, with over \$1.3 million raised on the night, the campaign was off to a flying start!

#### **PLANNING ON SUCCESS**

But raising £40 million, even over a five-year period, and even for the Bodleian Library, is no mean target. The euphoria of a major launch can pass very quickly, and the follow-up, and the ongoing work, can be very labour-intensive and costly. 'Counting the cost' of a major fundraising effort, and ensuring that the resources are both available and cost-effectively deployed, are key. The 'received wisdom' in the development world suggests that the ratio of fundraising cost to fundraising target was of the order of 1:10. It might therefore 'cost' Oxford as much as £4 million to reach the capital campaign goal.

With resources of this magnitude to find and deploy, it was clear that the campaign effort needed to be professionally planned and managed. (Not only so, but it is also the case that many foundations will only assist a campaign if they can be shown that the effort itself is being properly conducted.) For this reason if for no other, it was important, not simply that the initial launch of the campaign should be followed up systematically, but also that a campaign plan should be produced, mapping out fully the course of the five-year fundraising effort. Much attention and care was given, therefore, to the elaboration of what has proved to be a key document in the campaign: 'The University of Oxford Libraries Capital Campaign Fundraising Plan, 2002-7'. With eight separate projects in the overall campaign portfolio, and a variety of individual needs within each of them, it was important that the whole

thing should be seen to 'hang together' as a coherent and achievable plan, and that the individual elements should be both compelling and strategically beneficial.

The campaign plan itself, therefore, was tightly and professionally produced. It contains an overview of the projects, an outline of the campaign strategy, its accountability within the university, its budget, an account of Oxford's development infrastructure and of the publicity and communications support, a spreadsheet of the five-year timetable of campaign-related events, and an explanation of the campaign's reciprocation and gift acknowledgement mechanisms. Appendices include a copy of the 'counting document', by which the campaign income is plotted in various categories; a 'gift pyramid and table', where a plausible estimate is made of the range of gifts to be sought; and a list of 'acknowledgement opportunities', illustrating the ways in which gifts are publicly recognised.

But, whatever the original reason for producing such a plan, it quickly became clear how crucial such a systematic approach really is in maintaining control of the fundraising effort. At all stages of the campaign, the document provides a 'road-map': it keeps the campaign on course; it makes it possible to know where things are up to at any given point; and it sustains both a sense of direction and of momentum. At a practical level, the plan enables reporting on progress, both internally and externally; and it helps to identify the next priority 'push' which needs to be made. For example, at the time of writing, it is possible to say that 43% of the funds have been raised in 48% of the five-year period; that two of the eight projects have already been fully funded; and that, because of cash-flow issues and the timetable of works, the new medical research and information centre needs to be the highest priority for current activity. 'Planning on success' would be virtually impossible without the prior formulation of the plan itself...

#### **KEEPING THE RIPPLES ROLLING: AN OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES**

Two of the lessons most quickly learned were that 'friendraising must precede fundraising', and that 'people give to people' - by which is meant that close personal engagement is the key factor in stimulating potential donors to give. And these extremely time-consuming activities require the ready availability of the most senior Oxford staff - the library Director (especially), the Directors of

Development and, on occasions, the Vice-Chancellor and the University's Chancellor, Lord Patten of Barnes, who graciously serves as Patron of the campaign. Such high-level involvement often makes all the difference between success and failure in individual approaches to donors.

There is, ultimately, no substitute for the painstaking 'cultivation' of individuals – involving meetings, personal visits, individual library tours, formal and informal presentations, letters, phone calls, and reports of every conceivable kind. But a carefully constructed framework of events serves to maintain the overall momentum, and to target particular approaches. For this reason, in addition to the often long-term cultivation of individuals and corporations (of which the recent mass-digitalisation deal with Google – which took almost two years to finalise – is a prime example), and the detailed preparation of formal applications to trusts and foundations, the fundraising effort is underpinned by an ongoing programme of campaign-oriented events. Designed to raise the profile of the Campaign, and to provide occasions for prospect cultivation, such events include lunches, dinners and receptions (in Oxford, London, and various parts of the US), Bodley Medal award ceremonies (in New York, San Francisco and Oxford), Friends of the Bodleian gatherings, displays of Bodleian Library treasures, exhibition openings, book launches, lectures, and concerts.

More intimate lunches and dinners, personal visits to the Bodleian and one-to-one meetings with the Vice-Chancellor are also used at key stages in prospect cultivation. An attractive range of publicity literature (booklets, brochures, stationery), a campaign video/CD, and a dedicated website ([www.ouls.ox.ac.uk/campaign](http://www.ouls.ox.ac.uk/campaign)), are used to raise the profile of the Campaign, and these have proved particularly valuable both in the early stages of cultivation and in supporting formal funding requests. Much input and help is provided by senior members of OULS staff, by the university's development offices in Oxford and New York, and by the Libraries Development Board, chaired by Sir Robert Horton, whose members provide both material support and a steady stream of introductions to prospective donors, both in the UK and in the US.

Finally, legacies have been encouraged by creating a 'Bodley's Circle' for those who make testatory provision for any OULS library during their lifetime (the Circle now numbers over 100 members); and a direct-mail appeal to alumni on behalf of the campaign is currently being organised by the

university's Development Office. Based on past performance, the Director of Development estimates that up to 2,000 alumni may be expected to make gifts totalling around £750k.

#### **MEETING THE RISING TIDE OF ENGAGEMENT**

By the summer of 2004, it became apparent that the growing calls of the campaign on the Director's time were becoming unsustainable in conjunction with his other duties. Recognising the importance of the campaign, the University Council approved an arrangement whereby the Director would free up his time to concentrate almost wholly on his fundraising activities. With effect from August 2004, therefore, the Deputy Librarian, Ronald Milne, took on the rôle of Acting Bodley's Librarian, with the Head of Library Administration, David Perrow, as Acting Deputy. The new arrangement has proved effective in intensifying the fundraising efforts, making it possible to engage with a wider range of potential donors, and to plan a more intensive series of fundraising activities. (Library fundraising activities outside the campaign have continued also and, during the last few years, more than £8 million has been raised for non-campaign purposes, mostly associated with major acquisitions or support for library project work.)

The Director now has two full-time fundraising staff, who work closely with him on an expanding database of campaign prospects containing the details of almost 150 individuals, trusts, foundations, and corporations. These prospects are all being actively pursued, with individual cultivation strategies either being implemented or in the process of development. The 'yield' from these sources during the calendar year 2005 is expected, with a reasonable degree of confidence, to be of the order of £10-15 million.

#### **ATTRACTING AND REWARDING GIFTS: THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMING OPPORTUNITIES**

During the course of the Campaign, as in fundraising activities more generally, it is important, either in helping to secure major gifts, or in recognising them appropriately, to be able to offer naming opportunities to major donors. Within the Oxford campaign, such opportunities take the form of named posts, named funds, named rooms or spaces within library buildings, or even, in the case of very large gifts, named buildings within the library estate. The use of the Bodleian benefactors' panel is also a routine attraction for major donors, and is almost invariably a source of great satisfaction to those whose names are featured on it.

In the case of naming opportunities for posts, rooms and buildings, the process has recently been formalised, principally because the number of major donations is expected to increase over the remaining years of the campaign. For the naming of OULS posts and rooms within the OULS estate, approval is sought from the Curators of the University Libraries (the OULS governing body) on the recommendation of the Director after appropriate consultation. In the case of naming OULS buildings and of library areas within university buildings, approval is sought from the Buildings and Estates Committee on behalf of Council. Given the confidential and often sensitive issues involved in discussing these matters with donors, both before and after the making of major gifts, these are issues which require, and which usually receive, the sympathetic support of the university bodies concerned.

#### CONCLUSION

Only time will tell if the campaign's overall fundraising goal will be reached by October 2007. But it will not fail for lack of effort and, at the very least, a considerable number of the Oxford library service's key development needs will be met. And, in drawing into Oxford's 'circle of philanthropy' so many new donors, the effort can already be said to have made a significant contribution to providing a platform for library support for many years to come.

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# Selling centuries of history through innovative design: the development of commercial operations in the Bodleian Library 1985 - 2005



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#### THE FOUNDER'S IDEALS

At a time when the SCONUL Newsletter has recently recognised the need to rebrand itself to truly reflect its audience and purpose, I was approached to pen an article on the Bodleian Library's developing alter ego in the twenty-first century as a product driven, brand led visitor destination and international trading concern – a place of greeting card, stationery and quality gift item fame. How did this happen? What were the core reasons behind the developments and how successful has the library been over the past twenty years in combining commercial concerns and scholarly service?

Historically, the founding, restoring and furtherance of the library has relied on the vision of its supporters and staff. In the sixteenth century, Sir Thomas Bodley showed himself to be the very embodiment of early marketing in his desire 'to stirre up others mens benevolence, to help to furnish it with bookes'. He sought to engage and inspire the great and the good to give generously to his cause. The library was to be a national archive and an international research facility.

Today the Bodleian continues to perform these functions to a widening audience as Sir Thomas Bodley intended. Patronage and profile are even more necessary now than they were in the library's early years. In order for the library to maintain its status, to serve the scholarly community and to widen access, the support of the curious onlooker, the future scholar and the casual visitor is a valuable resource that has not been overlooked.

#### COMMERCIAL AWAKENINGS

In the mid 1980s, active readership card figures for the Bodleian stood at 32,000 at a time when casual visitors to the library's great free public room, the magnificent fifteenth century Divinity School, were 200,000 per annum. Visitor numbers to the Divinity School, (which was located just beyond the small shop selling scholarly publications, postcards and slides), had been recorded annually for many years, so providing a basis for further analysis. Library tours with restricted numbers conducted by volunteers were operating successfully, this initiative coming from the then library Secretary, Dr Charles Mould. The library was a place of absolute architectural and scholarly fascination and the heart of the university to most non readers who chanced upon it. It oozed the Oxford wow factor of mystery and myth but had not yet thought it appropriate or needful to engage fully with the visitor.



The Bodleian was, and still is in part, a hybrid; it is neither fish nor foul when being considered as a visitor destination. It does not have an on-site staff-educational officer for public outreach yet its sole reason for existing is to provide education. It is not in the public domain in the way of a museum or gallery but has a few free public areas by choice and occupies an area in Oxford that Pevsner describes as 'unique in the world'. The polite signage in the external Quadrangles requests 'Silence Please' but visitors engage in animated



dialogues in the public spaces which echo unavoidably up to the reading rooms. The library has the most stunning and vast collections to match any museum but for reasons of conservation, security and research remits, the bulk of these are not available for public viewing. The library receives operating funds from key educational grants and yet has continued to experience a shortfall in its required funds for several years.

The library recognised the need to address these schizophrenic elements within its character and tease out a sensible and solid solution to accommodate the large non reader audience that continued to wander through its gates.

#### CONSULTANTS, JARGON AND MISSION STATEMENTS

The complexities of managing an external brand, educating visitors about the collections, enhancing the on-site potential and increasing financial resources were picked up by the inspired personality of Joanna Dodsworth, Bodleian Library publications officer from 1979 to 2001. Following trends in America, the UK tourism industry was beginning to react to the increased expectations of their international visitors. Around this time, other major heritage sites in the UK were developing what we now term as more sophisticated *visitor offers*, parading their *unique selling points* or *USPs* through bespoke product, interactive educational elements and brand focus... and so the jargon of this unrealised potential hit the Bodleian in a series of commissioned consultancy reports. These looked at establishing a long term commercial objective, making recommendations for the improvement of the on-site retail and outlining additional methods of income generation going forward. The library's core remit was not to be compromised, only heightened throughout the process and the revenue gained was to raise the profile for wider fundraising issues. The Publications Department evolved into Marketing and Publishing and a mission statement was developed to secure this focus which read:

*To produce and market products and publications which reflect the Bodleian's standing as a research library of international scholarly status and world renown and to generate revenue in order to support the furtherance of the library and its core remit.*

This mission statement was to act as a reference point not only to the new department but also as a way of explanation and justification to the understandably suspicious element of librarian colleagues who viewed money making on



site dimly. The potential changes needed to be communicated as benefiting the academic cause completely. The key recommendations within the report compiled by the Pentos Retailing Group in 1989 included the researching of competition in Oxford to establish where the Bodleian could offer unique services to the visitor, an appointment of a professional retail manager to oversee the on site shop and the collation and retention of copyright of all photographic images from the in-house studio. It highlighted the need for internal co-operation from the curatorial staff, exhibition coordinators and image sources to ensure that the retail factor complemented strong elements in the collections and pinpointed key events on-site.

#### DOCUMENTING THE DRIVING FORCES

With the large amount of visitors pouring in through the doors each year, the library needing to identify systematically the specific reasons for their interest, to quantify its markets. This in turn would give the data on which to build a new product identity for the shop. The library employed local expertise in the Tourism and Leisure Studies Department at Oxford Polytechnic (now Oxford Brookes University) to undertake the market research.

Over the peak period in summer a series of visitor surveys were carried out to establish the on site visitor profile.

Information on the socio-economic profiles, attitudes and facility usage of both visitors and readers was carefully documented to establish what people would expect to purchase at the Bodleian shop. Some of the basic questions posed were: Why do visitors come to the Bodleian? Does it represent the university? Is it an interest in the library and books themselves? Is it the history and architecture of the buildings or is it simply somewhere to go? What is the role that the shop plays in this visit? It was interesting to note that the primary reason for visiting Oxford was for the buildings. The Bodleian has the most varied and famous selection in the city centre, including the first rotunda library, the architectural icon of Oxford, the Radcliffe Camera. However it soon became apparent that a large proportion of our visitors who chanced upon the library quadrangles were unaware of where they were or what purpose the library serves within the university. (Oxford University signage had a reputation for being ridiculously discreet and therefore was missed by most people. This has since been rec-

tified to some degree towards the end of the last decade.)

The location of the existing shop at the main entry and exit point to the library, although not ideal from a size and security viewpoint, did however guarantee the strongest capture area for passing impulse purchases. This coupled with the lack of alternative sales accommodation meant the shop would remain where it was. A new professional retail manager was installed as per the recommendations from the original consultancy. The next hurdle was for the Bodleian shop to analyse the market research to define its brand and what it represented to customers. This would make decisions on product offering easier and provide clear boundaries.

#### AN UNCOMPROMISING BRAND WITH UNIQUE STRENGTHS

The market research revealed a seasonal mix of readers, school parties, local trade, overseas visitors and university members, thus presenting an eclectic year round merchandising plan. This diversity called for broad price bands accommodating different degrees of spending power; low value items for school parties clearly separated from higher priced items for visitors and local trade with a few expensive replicas or *trophy* items. By the early 1990s, the library had identified basic stories or themes on which to build its product ranges using unique images from the collections including architecture, Oxford and brand logo as being obvious and safe starting points.



**Bodleian Library**  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

The library logo designed by David Gentleman and inspired by the sixteenth century John Bereblock illustration depicting the Divinity

School and Duke Humfrey's Library, translated well on ceramics, clothing and stationery. Visitors sporting Bodleian clothing and free shopping bags with this recognisable motif gave the library a great spin-off – a walking advertising campaign, so fulfilling part of the original intention to raise awareness and reach a remote audience.

Start up capital was built into very modest budgets and the gradual increase in specialisation of products derived from the collections grew largely as a result of reinvestment from the sale of suitable off the shelf products which had a high turnover. The product choice was to be steered away from book buying as Oxford already supported a flourishing general and academic book

market and the Bodleian would not be able to compete on this level. General appeal off the shelf stock was carefully selected from suppliers after close inspection of the local competition including the Ashmolean Museum, the University Shop and the high street tourist trade. Niche markets were identified for product type, style and imagery. Products derived from museum art, mainstream popular designs and unofficial university merchandise were not included for sale. They could be bought elsewhere locally. Visitors to the library should be presented with something fresh, and they were.

The Bodleian print room found itself producing quality letter paper detailing Oxford engravings from the collections on its small offset litho press. This was followed shortly afterwards by bookplates with one colour woodcut designs.

Every product was developed with quality and design factored in as standard and supported local and national suppliers. Every unusual means available was used to add value to the product; certain products carried *Printed at the Bodleian Library, Oxford!* Concentrating on the bibliophilic potential within the library brought new trophy products into the mix. Museums and galleries had Egyptian cats, statues and details from the great masters to translate into replicas. Using local craftsmen, the Bodleian responded by developing the Bodleian bookrest, an exact copy of those formally used in Duke Humfrey's Library followed by the replica of the Bodleian Windsor chair, the originals having been made for the Curators of the library in 1755. Delving into the collections, it soon became apparent that far from not having enough raw material to draw on to follow the mission statement, the challenge would be to narrow down the options.



#### ONCE UPON A TIME..

By 1995, the shop had many new ranges to offer the visitor, each one telling a story drawn from

library history, personalities or collections. The innovation and quality of cultural product development in the UK was rapidly overtaking the United States. The emergence of the more subtle branding through derived product using detail elements from the collections opened up a wealth of opportunity for the library to develop further its commercial reputation for the more unusual,



quirky and design-led giftware. The architectural theme gained two hanging grotesques, exact copies of those found in Duke Humfrey's Library and hanging over the Great Gate exterior, *Speak softly* and *Rudeness*, proving that the humorous definitely sells. Not only did the buildings provide inspiration for gifts such as the Radcliffe Camera bookends, designed with all the elevations to scale by former architect turned model sculptor Timothy Richards, but the concepts within and around the entrances served to provide ideas for the more recent contemporary Silence Please range. Do eggcups sell in a library shop? They do if they demand *Silence Please* at the breakfast table and are made in England from good quality bone china!



Attractively designed provenance explaining the relationship of the product source image to the collections was attached to all products alongside the very recognisable logo. Relevance to the archives is essential to the appeal of each item produced. The context and story behind each bespoke gift elevates the product from the ordinary, adds value and gives it Bodleian uniqueness. Themes were chosen for their timelessness; the readers' oath repeated aloud by every reader and staff member on joining the library with its pledge not to bring into the library or kindle therein any fire or flame can be seen printed on sturdy book bags, linen tea towels and state of the art mini flashlights.



The Opie collection of children's literature, acquired by the library in 1988, became the inspiration for one of the largest gift ranges in the Bodleian's

portfolio which focused on nineteenth-century book covers and spines as a graphic image. A die-cut card range was released sporting snappy English titles such as *A girl of distinction or 300 things a bright boy can do*. Carefully sequenced children's cloth covered titles were photographed and the resulting mini library called *Victorian books*. This idea spawned gifts from magnets to mouse mats and the colourful timeless appeal of the image gave the library an opportunity to enter into long term licensing partnerships. Other attractive book titles were chosen and given a similar treatment; cookery, English literature, sports and hobbies, the genre culminating in the



*Christmas bookshelf* Christmas card which sold 4225 packs in one season. This repeat book design style lends itself well to giftwrap and a recent project, *Hobbies bookshelf* has sold over 85,000 sheets worldwide within two years and been used to cover a licensed gift range by a leading stationery company.

The concept of using the physical appearance rather than the contents found within books and manuscripts was carried through in 2003 by focusing on sixteenth and seventeenth century European book bindings to produce silk scarves, ties, and beautifully crafted journals at higher price points aimed at the general gift market.

#### **PRINTED IN UK, SOLD EVERYWHERE**

The success of any product placement is absolutely dependent on the *right time, right place, and right price* mantra.

Using in-house IT resources in the early 1990s, the Bodleian developed the first web shopping opportunity within an educational site in the UK. Card ranges were selling well and allowed for a distribution mark up on reprints, so attention turned to the wider UK market. Taking small shared stands at the London Book Fair, Museum Stores Association in the USA. and Museum Expression in Paris increased awareness of the Bodleian range and forged new business contacts. The selection caught the eye of a specialist card and stationery importer in 1995 and following careful negotiations, our American distribution commenced. In

2001, a review of the wholesale operation led to a honing down to best selling lines and the establishing of a three year plan to break through into the Japanese, European and Australian markets effectively by 2004. In August 2004, an Australian distributor was on board and within three months had sold 13,000 cards to his niche market outlets. Maruzen, the Japanese booksellers, opened their Tokyo flagship store in the autumn and Bodleian product was predominant as a sub brand of their newly designed Oxford section. This bought a need to review our international trademarks and copyright status and to update our registrations accordingly. Protecting the brand both in the name and logo of the Bodleian is vital so that its usage remains tightly controlled and avoids the potential for outside companies to gain financially by association.

Alongside the growth in international wholesale, the mail order catalogue grew in five years from a very modest publication to a themed advertising tool. Mail order has been a valuable means to supplement other income gained from retail and wholesale. Timing the catalogue drop for September gives the library an average 11% take up rate due to the appeal of Christmas gift and card ranges. The catalogue can be requested via our current website, through the shop and can be picked up at specific visitor hot spots around the city centre.

#### **GREEN LEPRECHAUNS, FIZZY DRINKS AND ICE CREAMS?**

Taste is very subjective. Consumers are fickle. As a heritage retailer, the temptation to stray from the path of good taste, to stoop to the lowest common denominator of consumer buying habits, is not an option. Our sales team now consists of seven full time equivalent posts dedicated to the production, marketing and sales worldwide of excellent Bodleian product. They continue to demonstrate sensitivity to the history, function and purpose of the library and tailor the requirements to make money within these tightly defined boundaries. Some years ago, Joanna Dodsworth gave the following response when challenged as to the library's conservative approach to product development:

*The shop could sell green leprechauns, fizzy drinks and ice creams and no doubt double its profit overnight. Money is not the sole objective of our business. We have a duty to maintain the integrity of the library.*

We continue to endorse this uncompromising philosophy. Financial wars might be won by taking

the dumbing down route, but the battle to educate and inspire would most definitely be lost.

#### EXHIBITIONS, EDUCATION AND LIFESTYLE

Crossing the threshold of the new century has meant updating the product catalogue to mirror our competitors' manoeuvres and has challenged us to introduce the consumer to more unusual images, the stories behind which would never be encountered in the high street. Enter the lifestyle product. In the summer of 2004, a range was successfully introduced to support the ground breaking work achieved on the *Book of curiosities and marvels for the eyes*, a recent manuscript acquisition of immense academic importance. The manuscript was the central feature of the Bodleian's summer exhibition. For the first time, the library sought to bring difficult academic concepts and images into a popular framework. Many of the national museums have been doing this with resounding success for many years but for a library with limited financial resources and a historically non mainstream exhibition schedule, this was a first. It is an exciting concept when an image carefully chosen from an early medieval manuscript undergoing research for the first time, can be innovatively translated through design to create a domestic product becoming part of everyday life in people's homes. The significance and history is captured so that all can appreciate the colour, form and relevance to our society today. The result was the *Medieval harbour* themed gift selection using a Tunisian harbour building motif originally compiled in 1020-1050 and copied in the thirteenth century.



#### Is there anybody out there?

Developing new partnerships and becoming involved in allied associations is essential for any institution to remain in touch with its customers. In 1994, Marks & Spencers featured Bodleian product in a prime high street window for two weeks to show its support for the University and the part it plays in bringing consumers into the city centre. More recently, Oxford town and gown collaborate as part of the proactive Oxford Marketing Group which aims to attract visitors to Oxford and the Cotswolds by publicising the diversity represented by the partners; hotels, theatres, heritage attractions, golf clubs, family fun etc. Benchmarking with likeminded expertise particularly when external economic and political factors adversely affect the bottom line is invaluable. The

library also continues to benefit tremendously from its long term membership of A.C.E. (Association for Cultural Enterprise, formerly M.T.A) which focuses on networks, training and resources for all income generating disciplines within the cultural sector. In 2004 that the library received the Annual A.C.E. award for Best Derived Product Range from a collection in the UK against brisk competition. Membership of the Museum Stores Association of America ensures regular contact with other professionals in the USA., a marketing opportunity and an ideas exchange.

#### Wizards, weddings and websites

In 2001, management of the 35 volunteer guides, tour and facility hire bookings was amalgamated into Marketing and Publishing and the renaming of the department to Tourism and Trading followed to reflect this increased remit. The hitherto scholarly publishing programme entered a new and exciting commercial phase as part of the Communications and Publishing Department. This department has now merged with Tourism and Trading to form Bodleian Commercial Operations, bringing all revenue streams together. In 2003 came the development of a Bodleian digital audio tour, with new exhibition interpretation and visitor services desk as an addition to the ever popular guided tours.

A prime city centre location with awe inspiring interiors deserved to be explored more fully for hiring potential. For the past three years, the Divinity School has been host to a variety of corporate and private clients ranging from the Oxford Literary Festival, graduate presentations and publishers' conference dinners to private receptions and dinner parties. Oxford registry office has expressed interest as to the suitability of the site at weekends for weddings and celebratory events when the library is closed. The library has been used very successfully as a film location for several decades. Between 2001 and 2004, four major filming projects were secured, the most well known of these being the Harry Potter series. Managing the understandable interest this created presented another challenge to the library. Once again a policy of no compromise and an appropriately worded press release stated that the library saw the hosting of a film which had encouraged children to return to reading as an immensely positive factor. Unlike many Harry Potter venues, the Bodleian took the decision not to sell licensed Warner Brothers merchandise and references to the film on site are minimal. All filming petitions are carefully assessed and any that do proceed are monitored vigorously to minimise the impact

on the daily routines. Summer 2005 will see the launch of a new website, [www.shop.bodley.ox.ac.uk](http://www.shop.bodley.ox.ac.uk) which will include over 200 Bodleian bespoke products and pages advising on tours and room bookings.

#### MEASURING, MANAGING AND MONITORING

The Bodleian continues to reassess its provision for all who use it, both readers and visitors. Technology allows us to measure the success of most commercial ventures and to review, forecast and plan effectively for the future. Next year holds new possibilities for relocation and remodelling of the shop plus extended opening hours. These modest initiatives run in parallel with the Oxford University Libraries Capital Campaign to raise £40M for eight new regeneration projects. The commercial operations team are accountable as custodians of both the Bodleian brand and the service levels to visitors on and off site. The list of key stakeholders for the future now extends to product distributors, customers worldwide browsing the web and even children seated in cinemas. Accessibility has become the new watch word and Oxford University is determined to respond accordingly. The Bodleian's alter ego will continue to work alongside the readers' resource, supporting and providing a controlled outlet to engage the interest of the non reader. The thought that the library represents a twenty-first century working community situated in the original fifteenth century rooms where internet connections are channelled imperceptibly through ancient bookshelves, will continue to inspire and amaze.

Sir Thomas Bodley welcomed visitors to his library so that they would be encouraged to become benefactors. The Benefactors Register was laid open in the Old Library, Arts End for this very purpose. In his first draft of statutes Bodley refers to the Register

*..wherin also the munificence not onely of great and honourable personages, but of others of meane and vulgar calling must be respectively remembred... and withal to be exposed, where it may be still in sight, for every man in viewe, as an eminent and endless token of our thankfull acceptation of whatsoever hath bin given; and as an excellent inducement for posteritie to imitate those former good examples.*

He would have approved of the unnumbered benefactors the library has gained worldwide through the creative commercial presentation of his library and its collections.

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## By any means necessary: a future for multiple copy provision?



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#### INTRODUCTION

*'The area shown to be the most in need of attention was the availability of books when they were needed. There appeared to be a disparity between the demands on resources and actual provision made, particularly where assignments were set for large courses and therefore a large number of students required the same texts at the same time'*

The purchase of multiple text book copies has been a challenge endemic to education libraries for many years in terms of financial pressures and space restrictions, as the above comment from Warwick's recent student satisfaction survey shows.

*'Why are there only enough books for 2% of my course to get hold of them?'*<sup>1</sup>

As student numbers continue to increase there is a growing realisation that it is neither possible nor practical to continue to enlarge collection sizes sufficiently to meet current expectations. Demand for immediate text availability could ultimately only be met by the physical provision of one copy of each text per student. Multiple copies of textbooks are not a realistic or sustainable long-term strategy and thus other solutions to the provision of educational course support materials must be further explored. However as one colleague commented recently:

*'Physical textbooks are still very important to staff and students at a taught course level'*

## SURVEYS

At the University of Warwick the Research & Innovation Unit (RIU), is exploring a variety of different ways in which student demands can be satiated. To this end, in early 2005 a short survey was conducted via heavy traffic email lists<sup>2</sup> of higher and further education institutional libraries. Five key questions were used pertaining to multiple copy purchases, related policies and approaches to this issue.

Responses were received from 25 UK institutions, two thirds of which were primarily higher education only. However, whilst this random sampling was a useful indicator for what was considered current practice across the country, few of the responding institutions were directly comparable to Warwick.

Following an examination of the responses from this first study, similar activities within the Russell Group of institutions were examined. As appropriate comparators to the University of Warwick library, it was hoped that through examining the approaches taken at these peer institutions with regard to collection development, purchase and provision of multiple copies that some common themes would emerge. The methodology adopted for this study was slightly different to that used in the original. Rather than simply emailing a set of questions to each institution, the online statements of collection management/development policies freely available on the Web were located and examined. Where these were not clear, or unavailable, then direct personal contact was attempted with each institutional library, through the most appropriate member of staff.

This was a qualified success. Large quantities of information are freely available on most library and information service sites, and many librarians responded to emailed questions helpfully. It can be noted that of the eighteen other institutions within the Russell Group detailed information was gleaned from all but two<sup>3</sup>. The University of Warwick Library's own policies were included within the analysis set, as befitting a member of the Russell Group.

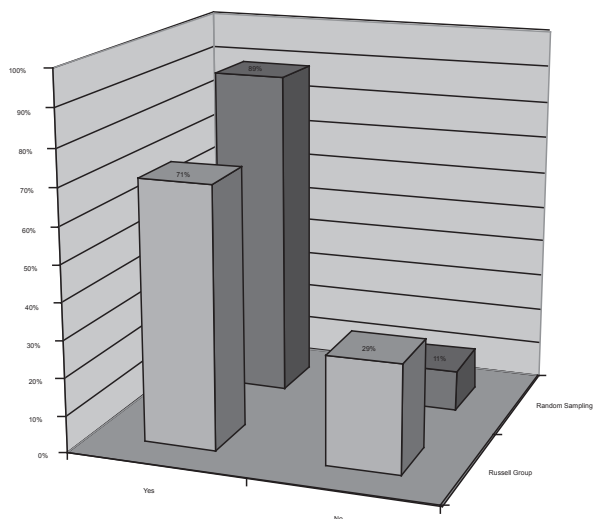
It was hoped that the results of these studies would answer or at least illustrate three key questions for the future of Warwick's learning material provision.

- How does Warwick's approach compare with that adopted elsewhere?

- What seems to be the current median approach?
- What solutions and future directions is this area taking?

## USE OF MULTIPLE COPIES

Higher & Further Education libraries using multicopies of textbooks

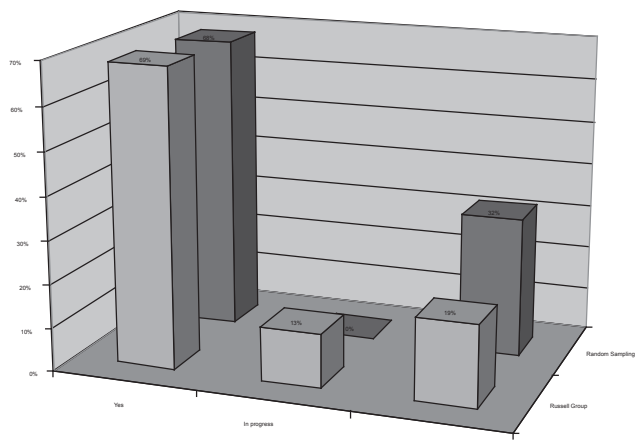


Of those Russell Group institutions who responded 71% made use of multiple copies of textbooks to support teaching and learning activities. This contrasts with the random sampling where 89% of responding institutions used them. This slight decrease in reliance may well reflect the research-led teaching approach and broad collections possessed by Russell Group member libraries.

## COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICIES

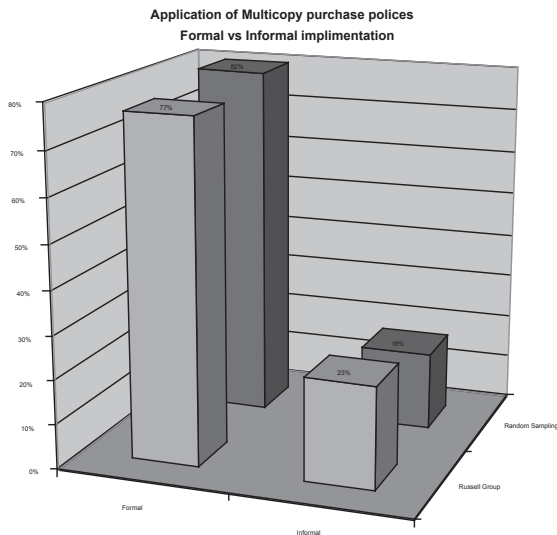
The vast majority of Russell Group libraries either have a collection management policy (69%) relating to multiple copy purchase, or they have one in development (13%). Only a small number (19%) have either no policy, or no approach to multiple copy purchase<sup>4</sup>.

Russell Group University Libraries: Collection management policies in place



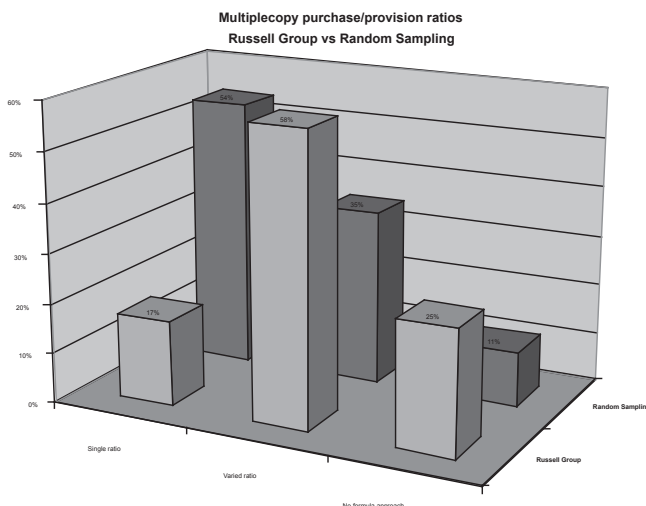
This equates neatly with the random sample where 68% of responding institutions had collection management policies in place. Thus it seems within these samplings that approaches to multiple copies are a matter of policy in two-thirds of UK institutions.

#### COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY FORMALITY



Within those Russell Group libraries who have stated collection management and analogous policies the bulk of these are formalised (77%), for a minority of institutions this is not the case (23%). Again this was close to the random sampling where 82% of policies were formally applied. Whilst the random sampling did include a number of further educational institutions, it was within the higher educational ones that the greatest formal application existed. Within the Russell Group a small number of institutions where policies have existed for sometime noted that they are in the process of revising them.

#### PURCHASE/PROVISION RATIOS



There was a significant variance when comparing the Russell Group institutional libraries' approaches with those employed in the random sampling. Within the random sampling the use of simple formulae for number of copies purchased was a very common approach, with ratios of one book per 5/10/20 etc. students common throughout the responses. Despite this level of provision, demand for more copies is regrettably continuing to increase, with institutions responding by adopting ever more generous ratios.

#### Multiple copies provided per student<sup>5</sup>

Copy : Student ratio	Percentage
No multiple copies	11%
1: <=5	11%
1: <=10	44%
1: <=20	22%
1: <=30	6%
1: >30	6%

However, some institutions were more hard-line in their adoption of no, or limited, multiple copies policies. Many did note that if reader demand proved sufficient then multiple copies would still be provided. In cases such as this, it was often felt that it was a greater student responsibility to purchase a larger part of their key reading. However this was not true for all libraries and many students depended upon them to provide texts. As can be seen in the table the vast majority of those libraries in the random sampling purchasing / providing multiple copies to a formula, tend to gravitate to one copy per ten students. Most respondents were using multiple copies in tandem with other solutions to meet student learning demands, as discussed below. For those within the Russell Group libraries, whilst a formula-based mechanistic approach was espoused by many, there was a far greater variance in the actual formulae applied. UCL has particularly clear examples of how department policies impact on this issue in a very formalised way. For other institutions, including Warwick, the guidelines are more freely adapted by the subject librarians. Not every Russell Group library believes that policies at a subject level are worthwhile, with one noting that:

*'Establishing subject policies seemed a lot of effort in proportion to the benefits gained'*

In a number of those taking a formal approach, such as Birmingham, a sliding scale of book / student ratios has been adopted, allowing a prescribed response to rising student numbers and the number of texts that will be made available

for them. Many other institutions such as Bristol and Newcastle, whilst not engaging with such complex matrix formulae, still used considerable variations of student/book ratios. Very few institutions believe that an exact formula is inappropriate, and rather set an upper limit upon the total physical number (e.g. 20) of key textbook editions stocked.

For the Russell Group, with such a degree of variance in the student/book ratios within each institution and the approaches adopted, it was not possible to say with certainty where the median ratio value lies. Since so many institutions leave the final ratio to be determined through their subject librarians' experience and awareness of demand, it is this sensitivity that seems to be a key element. However, even organisations who did purchase significantly large volumes of multiple copies expressed that student concerns remained over the availability of texts.

#### ALTERNATIVES

From this study, it seems that the following were the six main suggested alternative approaches to multicopy provision.

*Key alternatives to multiple copies*

Increased investment in and use of reference stock and short loan collections.	Introduction of an electronic reserve of digitised copies of locally held stock.
Purchase and promotion of full-text online materials (e-books and e-journals) for areas in high demand.	Expectation of students purchasing core texts.
Instigating a change in institutional educational ethos.	Formulation and implementation of an integrated Collection Management policy in partnership with academic departments.

It seems there is no single solution with sufficient acceptance that offers a cure-for-all-ills. However, with the accessibility bonuses proffered by e-collections over physical items it is of little surprise that these are commonly utilised approaches throughout the sector. Some institutions have proposed more radical solutions, requiring a very close working relationship between module and course leaders, and the respective libraries.

*'There shall be no more reading lists [as they are currently understood]! Reading lists should only contain material for which an acceptable access strategy can be provided'*

Needless to say this approach requires wholesale support at every level, from the very highest echelon of institutional management through to academic staff. The introduction of the research library approach was one that some libraries are actively exploring, with a collection's strength reflected through breadth rather than volume. The development of mature partnerships with academics was noted to be key for embracing such dynamic change, rather than attempting to enforcing such a shift upon them.

The use of reference, closed and short loan collections was a commonly used solution, as it has been for many years at a large number of institutions. However, increasingly efforts are being made to direct or guide lecturers towards increased adoption of online sources within their recommended readings. Unfortunately the availability of materials advocated by lecturers, is not always matched in library electronic holdings or even existence in this format. Where access to suitable e-journals or e-books is not possible, then a few respondents had experimented with digitising their own collections, working in partnership with the HERON Service. While digitisation of print library materials is technologically easy, the not inconsiderable copyright clearance expense remains a significant obstacle to wide scale adoption.

Unsurprisingly, most –if not all– institutions make use of commercial e-print materials as either a supplement or alternative to additional copies of text books. Users who do not like using e-prints are an important factor to consider against the wholesale adoption of electronic media. That said, this has not assuaged the ever increasing student demands for physical copies as was noted by a number of respondents. The impossibility of purchasing enough copies is an acknowledged issue at Warwick, where the recently elected union sabbatical deputy president has stated his number one priority as:

*'The first thing I'd like to do is go ahead with improving the library and the creation of space to make way for more books.'*

From this it is possible to surmise that there is still a way to go to resolve student misconceptions over what constitutes library course provision.



Solutions previously suggested by Warwick's students included shortening borrowing times, more books in general, or more books in the short-loan reserve collection (SRC) – very much focusing on traditional teaching delivery methodology.

Other options used by many institutions include changes in loan-periods as well as integration of core-texts into short loan collections. Notably within those Russell Group libraries examined only a few appear to have made the provision of course packs a serious alternative method of learning material provision. However, these institutions still supplement provision heavily through multiple copy provision. Where few multiple copies were made available students were encouraged to make greater use of document supply facilities to satisfy their demands. Others even actively encouraged their students to regularly use neighbouring institutional libraries, where this was regionally viable. Another suggestion was linking with the Students' Union to promote their second hand books sales more widely.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In terms of my original questions there are three main conclusions.

**The current median approach:** We would conclude that within all institutions the provision of multiple copies of core texts remains a key factor for meeting students' learning demands. However, in contrast with the non-Russell Group libraries, it does appear that there is an increased, if slight, reliance on collection breadth for institutions such as Warwick.

**How does Warwick's approach compare:** The library's approach of a two step multiple copies formula, amended by the subject librarians in the light of their experiences with the departments falls very much in the average region of responses. Indeed in comparison to some comparator institutions it verges on the generous. Whether the students are appreciative of this or not is matter for further investigation. This provision is naturally backed up through the provision of e-books and journals, and the present SRC. However, a pending revision in the SRC's scale will increase the need for other solutions to be engaged with.

**Solutions and future directions:** One overriding theme at virtually all the institutions examined is the major role that subject librarians play in the provision of learning materials. Even those institutions with highly developed formulae for

calculating the number of books to provide, still relied upon their subject staff. These librarians used their experience and wisdom to modify the quantities and loan categories of texts available to more closely match individual departments' teaching and learning goals. In light of recent developments in the sector, this is an important factor that must be stressed.

The overriding fact that was clear from both these studies is that the purchase and provision of multiple copies remains a topic of concern in most higher education institutions. At the University of Warwick it has been evidenced during each student election of recent years with repeated campaigning on a more books for the library ticket. Other current RIU projects are expected to shed more light on this desire for multiple copies in print, contrasted against the developing strengths of a broad research collection.

Marketing collections and services better may be one way to help eliminate the apparent current student misconceptions over current levels of library provision, and in time decrease the reliance on multiple copies to meet their learning needs. For Warwick, a wish to decrease reliance on physical textbook volume and to continue to focus upon developing a research collection may require significant promotion, if misconceptions are to be avoided. As such, the necessity of exploring all provision alternatives to meet student needs remains.

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**Acknowledgements:** With major thanks to all those people and institutions who shared their policies and comments with me.

- 1 Quote from recent interview with a Warwick undergraduate student
- 2 lis-link, lis-ucr, cofhe@jiscmail.ac.uk
- 3 Kings College London, & University of Manchester
- 4 Total of 101% due to rounding up of values
- 5 In random sampling of institutions

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# Supporting distance learners at the University of Central Lancashire



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## INTRODUCTION

The library at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) has been supporting distance learners for five years. This article looks at what has changed and the challenges that lie ahead. It also contains the results of a survey of the web sites of 92 other university libraries and compares the findings with our own service.

## THE DISTANCE LEARNING SERVICE

The Distance Learning Service (DLS) was set up in 2000, based on the experience of our very successful (and still unique) Virtual Academic Libraries of the North West (VALNOW) service to partner colleges. However, in 2003, following a university-wide 'realignment' of the support services budget, the opportunity was taken to restructure services. Following a consultation process, it was decided to split the DLS, which had previously operated as a dedicated team of staff, along functional lines, i.e. registration, document delivery and user support. This decision was also based on the realisation that a small team would find it difficult to cope with the anticipated increases in distance learners (one of the main academic objectives of the university). A split now would allow time to adapt and build on existing practice.

The process of splitting the work along functional lines was complicated and necessitated not only dividing procedures and processes but also the original team. In particular, much work was done on areas where procedures and work overlapped

across sections to ensure effective communication methods were implemented.

So far, disadvantages have mainly centred around different sections having different priorities and philosophies. However, the greatest impact has possibly been on the original DLS staff: since the restructure, out of five staff one has left, one has changed jobs and one has gone part-time. Although a number of reasons may be put forward, anecdotal evidence suggests a common factor was the change in level of work: staff in a small dedicated team become used to a level of work, responsibility and autonomy which may not be present in larger sections.

However, this should be balanced with the many benefits which have become apparent. The services offered are still the same but are delivered differently and, in some cases, benefit from access to a larger pool of staff. Cooperation between sections has also led to a greater appreciation of each other's work.

It is often argued that a specialist unit<sup>1</sup> gives a more personalised service as staff are able to get to know users better. However, we have found this depends on the part of the service being offered. It has been most difficult for department administrators who now have multiple contacts instead of a single phone number. Students have been less affected because they mostly deal with document delivery staff from the original DLS team, so benefit from the same personal contact. Also, many students already used our general telephone and email helpdesks for help and support as well as the dedicated team so the change has not affected them too much.

#### **ACCESS TO SERVICES: A COMPARISON**

Last year I was invited to co-present a conference paper about e-learning at UCLan. As part of the preparation I did a brief survey of the web sites of 92 other university libraries to ascertain how many had a distance learning service and what kind of services they offer. It is important to note that this article is not a judgement on the *quality* of service offered, just a comparison of stated facts: web sites cannot reflect the level of activity going on behind the scenes. It is clear from the literature that some libraries are particularly pro-active, especially in the areas of liaison and information skills.

As of autumn term 2004, 47 out of 92 universities (51%) appeared to have some form of distance

learning service, varying from a specialist unit to a single individual to multiple contact points. Some libraries provide their services from a central point whereas a few others provide services from different (often subject-specific) sites. Keeble and McGill<sup>2</sup> remark that the 'services offered by the Distance Learning Unit at Leicester are not very different from other distance learning services within and outside the UK' and my survey confirmed this. Where anyone offered something particularly interesting or innovative, I have noted it in the relevant section below.

#### ***Eligibility***

When offering a special service, it is essential to define who is eligible to use it. At UCLan, courses must have been officially validated as distance learning to qualify, though admittedly this has been circumvented by some courses! We do not therefore include students who are part-time, doing blended learning or simply live some distance away. Of the 47 who have a distance learning service, 11 libraries extend their services to other categories of user, the most popular being part-time and placement students. Cardiff was the only library to specify a distance (more than 50 miles) or travel time (more than 1 hour). Three libraries said their service was a pilot.

Since the restructure at UCLan, students are no longer required to register specifically to use our services. This has been made possible by the introduction of a distance learner category on our student registration system, which in turn feeds the information to our library management system, Talis. Before this, we relied on multiple ring binders of registration forms. There was a fairly even divide at other libraries of those who require registration and those who don't.

#### ***Web pages and contact points***

Most libraries seemed to offer a mixture of dedicated web pages plus links to other general library pages e.g. for e-resources or subject information. I liked Robert Gordon's idea of specifically dividing some of their pages by services for UK and non-UK users. A number of libraries have also come up with acronyms to better market their services. As well as more well-known ones such as DiLiS at Surrey, I noted InFocus (Derby), OSCARS (Greenwich), AddLibs (Bristol), and my personal favourite DALLAS (Swansea).

Again it was fairly evenly divided between those who have a dedicated email address and those who don't. Libraries were less likely to have a dedicated phone number: most commonly stu-

dents were directed to document delivery, subject librarians or the general helpdesk which was why several libraries recommended students identify themselves as a distance learner at the start of each call.

On an 'innovative' note, I was interested in Stirling's advice on telephone enquiries. If requested to contact a student by phone, they will only make two attempts during a mutually specified time period, so the student should 'make sure that you are available to answer the phone, have someone ready to take messages, or have an answer-phone operating'. I would add to that, don't have 'anonymous call' filters as they block out calls via a university switchboard!

### *Documentation*

Distance learners at UCLan receive a comprehensive A4 booklet at the point of registration with the library. This contains not just details on document delivery, e-resources, etc. but also how to access their university email and how to login to WebCT. Of other libraries, only five mentioned students would receive an information pack or booklet, while three had an A4 sheet/leaflet: the rest gave links to general library guides. Napier also produces a newsletter, Lookout, just for distance learners.

### *Document delivery*

In 2003/04, 540 out of an estimated 619 distance learners were registered with the UCLan Distance Learning Service. However, typically, it is a small hardcore group of students who make use of the document delivery service.

Writing in 2002, Gadd<sup>3</sup> noted 'there were as many different charging mechanisms as there were libraries'. Two years on from her article little had changed for either books or journals.

#### i) Books

At UCLan we charge return postage and will send a Table of Contents so the student can determine a book's usefulness before committing to the costs. There is no limit to the number of loans, except a maximum of 12 at a time. Of other libraries, 7 did not offer book loans. The most common charging models were: return postage (21), postage both ways (5), and standard fee plus return postage (9): the highest fee was £5.75. Only two libraries seem to post books overseas (Middlesex and West of England).

In 2002/03 we processed 137 book requests rising to 208 in 2003/04. However, September-December 2004 figures are showing a decrease over the same period in 2003 despite an increase in the number of courses. Is this because of the restructure? Postage costs? Or are students finding alternative sources? It is worth noting our figures pale in comparison to those quoted by Leicester<sup>4</sup> of 250 postal loans per month, even though they only charge return postage like us.

Three libraries (London South Bank, Stirling and West of England) offer an additional service of 'put asides' in which they will take material from shelves and leave it to one side to be collected. Stirling will put items aside between 2-10 days in advance.

#### ii) Journals

UCLan charges a flat rate of 50p including postage for photocopying journals in our stock. All the other libraries surveyed offered a photocopying service with the most common models varying from cost per page (5p-18p), photocopying costs plus postage to a flat fee (highest was £5). Four institutions offered a free service.

Article supply has seen a steady decline: in 2002/03 we had 99 requests, falling to 50 in 2003/04. With journals it is easier to pinpoint the reasons for low and declining usage, namely the increasing availability of e-journals (we currently have around 15000).

Whatever the usage, we seem to do a good job of document delivery if this comment from one of our students is anything to go by: 'what a fantastic, prompt service you provide!' We keep a file of testimonials for when times are hard!

#### iii) ILLs

UCLan will provide inter-library loans (ILLs) of both books and journals, and we will also post both to students (regulations permitting). However, this service is little used, probably for similar reasons to those given above. In 2003/04 usage amounted to just 11 books and 4 journal articles.

Almost all the libraries surveyed will provide ILLs, although some services did not specifically mention ILL as a service offered to distance learners so it was not clear whether they did or not. Nine have a quota system or limited the service to final year or postgraduate students. Only five would post books. A similar number mentioned books must

be collected. A common compromise was the offer to photocopy a specific chapter.

Inter-library loans often seemed to be provided by a different team to other document supply services (postal loans and journal photocopies). All our document supply is performed by the same team.

#### *Literature searching*

Offers of literature searches seem to be dying a death, probably because web-based e-resources make it so much easier to do it yourself. Although we offer this service there is very little take-up (as little as once or twice a year). Only seven libraries specifically mentioned they would do literature searches: Sheffield Hallam include detailed instructions on providing search requirements. Other libraries either made no mention of literature searches, said that enquiries would be passed to subject librarians, or a few specifically said they wouldn't.

#### *Information skills*

Most libraries, including ourselves, do not seem to offer specific information skills training to distance learners, except during residentials. Where mentioned, there was usually a link to general help sheets and freely available information skills packages such as Tonic and the Virtual Training Suite. Eight libraries had developed general online packages whether web-based or using a virtual learning package. Only Leicester seemed to offer online tutorials specifically for distance learners. However, I also noted Sunderland has an 'Introduction for distance learners' video/presentation, and Greenwich has a series of tutorial movies. For most libraries, this is clearly an area where much work needs to be done.

#### *E-resources*

Every library offers access to their e-resources to distance learners, mostly using Athens, although some use an authenticated proxy server. We changed our Athens usernames and passwords a couple of years ago to a standardised format which makes it easier to publicise and for students to work it out for themselves. We have also recently made the decision not to purchase databases from our centralised online fund which do not offer off-campus access, and will think twice about those who don't offer Athens authentication.

In addition to e-resources, Birmingham advertises software sales. This is something we also offer but don't specifically advertise to distance learners.

How many of our services are little-used because of a simple lack of advertising?

#### *Digitisation services*

These services make available texts (e.g. journal articles or chapters of books) which are not available electronically elsewhere. Our own service is called ERL or Electronic Restricted Loan and makes use of HERON. Although a niche service, it is vital for the areas it covers, particularly chapters of books. Only Birmingham and Glasgow made it obvious that they also offer this service. However, this may have been more a problem of terminology than omission.

#### *Reciprocal borrowing agreements*

Almost all of the libraries mentioned the UK Libraries Plus scheme, several mentioned local schemes (such as our NoWAL scheme here in the North West of England) and a handful specifically mentioned they would write a letter of introduction to other libraries. Sheffield Hallam will also pay membership fees if appropriate and essential. A few libraries provided links to their page of *UK Academic Libraries' Access Policies*.

Our take-up rate for UK Libraries Plus has increased since we started automatically putting the application form in our welcome pack. Previously students had to request it or print it off the web site themselves.

#### **CHALLENGES FOR DISTANCE LEARNER SUPPORT**

From a review of the literature over the last couple of years, the challenges of providing distance learner support have changed very little.

#### *Defining a distance learner*

As mentioned earlier it can be difficult to define who is eligible to use services. Boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred particularly with the growth of blended learning. Pressure is also increasing to include part-time, research students, health workers or simply those who live a distance away.

For libraries it can also be difficult to find out about new courses. Despite UCLan having an 'LLRS support for new courses' form which must be completed before validation, it is still rare to be involved in course development.

#### *Document delivery*

Although it is the most commonly offered service to distance learners, document delivery is not without its problems. Postal book loans are

expensive, even for students whose libraries only request return postage. Delivery time and the need to be available to collect deliveries is also a deterrent. Furthermore, as Kent<sup>5</sup> points out 'offering a postal loan service for overseas students would encounter too many difficulties such as time restrictions, inadequate postal systems overseas and financial constraints.'

Photocopies of journal articles bring the perennial problem of copyright and the need to obtain a signature. Until electronic signatures are more widely available and accepted, little progress will be made.

### *Help and support*

Evidence from the web sites suggests information skills for distance learners do not seem to be provided in a systematic way at most libraries. At UCLan we have started to develop a WebCT module though it is not specifically for distance learners and would not be compulsory. Some libraries are further along that route. However, only Leicester has so far developed online tutorials specifically for distance learners.

Helpdesk support is another area which needs further examination. In most libraries, including our own, there is no telephone or email support out of normal office hours or at weekends. Time differences also bring problems for overseas students. On a couple of occasions we made an appointment to ring a Canadian student at an agreed time, after normal office hours. However, due to work pressures, the student was unable to talk when phoned: this was frustrating for both the student and staff.

One initiative which has tried to get around this problem is the well-known 'Follow the sun' which links up university helpdesks in the UK, US and Australia. However as yet it is only for limited IT support. Greenwich are also trialling a live help messaging service though this is only during office hours at the moment.

### **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

These are challenging but exciting times. Students are already increasingly demanding value for money and with the advent of 2006 this will only grow. Perhaps one way forward is more collaboration with our competitors: UK Libraries Plus is a good example. Another example would be the recent collaboration of the NoWAL libraries to purchase the largest collection of ebooks in Europe (from netLibrary). Such collaboration

opens up large, expensive collections of resources to all students, not just distance learners.

It is also important that administrative procedures continue to develop flexibly to cope with new circumstances. For example, UCLan rolled out online enrolment for distance learners this academic year and is now working on a project to cascade the information to other relevant administrative systems and to introduce online enrolment for all. In the library we introduced a distance learner category on our student and library management systems to make students easier to identify.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is too soon to say if our restructure will be successful and this survey of other libraries shows that no-one has yet come up with a definitive solution. Each library has adapted its service to local conditions and circumstances as one would expect.

Keeble and McGill<sup>6</sup> write 'we do not follow the concept of equality which means 'likeness'. We strive for equity...because equitable services acknowledge diversity'. We believe we can offer this equity in our new structure: time will tell whether this proves optimistic. However, if successful, it will put us in a strong position to support increasing numbers of distance learners in the future.

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# The 'Seven pillars of wisdom' model: a case study to test academic staff perceptions



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Many British universities and colleges have used the SCONUL 'Seven pillars of wisdom' model<sup>1</sup> as a basis for the development of institutional information literacy programmes. However, little research has been done on whether academic staff can relate to the model and the implications it could have for their understanding of information literacy.

## BACKGROUND

During March and April 2004, a survey was conducted with De Montfort University teaching staff to obtain their perceptions of information literacy and to ascertain how skills relating to information and research are incorporated into student learning. The research into staff perceptions centred on the SCONUL 'Seven pillars of wisdom' model and the American Library Association's definition of information literacy.

This research was undertaken primarily for a dissertation for a MBA in Educational Management<sup>2</sup> but with the underlying purpose that it should be able to inform information skills development at De Montfort, a three-campus university based in Leicester and Bedford. The university has approximately 19,000 students and 1,600 academic teaching staff. The university is divided into 6 faculties:

- Art and Design
- Business and Law
- Computing Sciences and Engineering

- Education and Contemporary Studies
- Health and Life Sciences
- Humanities.

The research in the spring of 2004 was undertaken in order to ascertain:

- staff perceptions of information literacy;
- to what extent the library's teaching was meeting the needs of staff.

Questionnaires were sent out to 478 faculty academic staff across all six faculties and three campuses. They were chosen because they were all module leaders within the final year (Level 3) of undergraduate programmes. (At De Montfort University, a course is normally a 3-year undergraduate programme made up of 360 credit points, with each year of study comprising 120 points. The course is made up of subject modules to which are attached either 15, 60 or, more typically, 30 credit points. A module leader is the member of faculty staff responsible for the co-ordination of the module.)

Completed questionnaires numbered 98, giving a 21% response rate. The response rate was disappointing but much higher than the response rate of 14% achieved in 2003 for a general library satisfaction survey. Response rates within individual faculties were noticeably different:

- Art and Design 16%
- Business and Law 26%
- Computer Sciences and Engineering 12%
- Education and Contemporary Studies 23%
- Health and Life Sciences 30%
- Humanities 9%

## TESTING THE 'SEVEN PILLARS' MODEL

The staff being surveyed were not told anything of the SCONUL 'Seven pillars of wisdom' model so as to achieve the equivalent of a 'blind testing'. The main set of questions asked were reproduced from the model with examples given where it was felt that this might provide clarification. The staff were asked to identify which of the seven skills from the original SCONUL model were:

- a) Important for students to have acquired by the end of their course
- b) Specifically taught on final year modules
- c) Developed through student centred learning on final year modules
- d) Assessed on final year modules.

The results (see Table 1) showed a positive endorsement of the model and confirmation of the importance of the skills therein.

Which of the following skills:					
A) Do you wish students to have <b>acquired</b> by the end of their degree course?					
B) Are specifically <b>taught</b> on Level 3 modules in which you are involved?					
C) Are <b>developed through student centred learning</b> on Level 3 modules?					
D) Are <b>assessed</b> within Level 3 modules that you teach?					
	SKILLS	A)	B)	C)	D)
1	<b>The ability to recognise a need for information.</b>	97%	49%	58%	47%
2	<b>The ability to distinguish ways in which the information "gap" may be addressed</b> , e.g. knowledge of appropriate and relevant resources.	91%	53%	58%	38%
3	<b>The ability to construct strategies for locating information</b> , e.g. to develop a systematic method appropriate for the need.	89%	48%	54%	49%
4	<b>The ability to locate and access information</b> , e.g. to use appropriate indexing and abstracting services, citation indexes and databases.	92%	46%	60%	43%
5	<b>The ability to compare and evaluate information obtained from different sources</b> , e.g. awareness of bias and authority issues.	91%	59%	59%	72%
6	<b>The ability to organise, apply and communicate information to others in ways appropriate to the situation</b> , e.g. to cite bibliographic references in project reports and dissertations.	94%	71%	55%	78%
7	<b>The ability to synthesise and build upon existing information, contributing to the creation of new knowledge.</b>	85%	48%	57%	60%
	<b>Average responses to seven skills overall</b>	91%	53%	57%	55%

**Table 1 – Seven skills with overall responses given**

Overall these responses show that:

- 91% of academic staff wish the students to have acquired the seven skills by the end of their course
- 57% of academic staff are developing the skills through student centred learning on Level 3 modules
- 55% of academic staff are assessing the skills within Level 3 modules
- 53% of academic staff are ensuring that the skills are taught on Level 3 modules.

Academic staff responses to the seven activities that make up the SCONUL model show a stark contrast between an overwhelming support for the students to acquire these skills (91%) against what is done to enable this (an average of 55%).

The high level of support for the skills detailed within the model denotes a strong advocacy of the model which has so far made little impact outside the confines of academic libraries. The research undertaken at De Montfort University reinforces the desire, when the model was produced, that it could be a credible and workable framework for partnerships to support the development of information skills<sup>3</sup>. This research also confirms the diagnostic profile of a Level 3 student that was deemed a 'possibility' when Stephen Town first discussed potential uses of the model. He felt that, as final year projects and dissertations approach, students would be strongest in skills in the following order:



- Skill 1 – recognise a need for information
- Skill 6 – organise, apply and communicate information
- Skill 4 – locate and access information
- Skill 2 – distinguish ways of addressing the information gap
- Skill 5 – compare and evaluate information
- Skill 3 – construct strategies for locating information
- Skill 7 – synthesise and build upon information.

In Table 1, the responses from staff in terms of students having acquired these skills by the end of their course (column A) practically mirrors this expectation.

Town acknowledges that the model does not represent a simple progression from stage to stage but it does allow for a logical sense of development during higher education. This is reinforced

This area does warrant further research to discover whether there is a greater level of activity in the earlier years of undergraduate programmes.

Two other members of academic staff, both from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, identified skill 7 as being at a higher postgraduate level which is in line with the original thinking behind the model<sup>1</sup>.

#### DEVELOPING INFORMATION SKILLS BY 'OSMOSIS'

An analysis of how skills are viewed, at faculty level, and what is actually done to embed the skills, shows some interesting disparity between good intention and appropriate action, as illustrated in Table 2.

Faculty	Importance of skills to faculties <i>% response</i>	Actions taken to embed skills in student learning <i>% response</i>	Gap between importance & actions <i>% response</i>
Art & Design	93	56	37
Business & Law	94	48	46
Computing Sciences & Engineering	90	31	59
Education & Contemporary Studies	92	61	31
Health & Life Sciences	87	68	19
Humanities	95	70	25
TOTAL	91	55	36

**Table 2 – Faculty aspirations and actions in relation to the 'seven skills'**

by specific comments that some staff made on their questionnaire responses, e.g.

Embedding of skills (columns B to D) '*done in Level 2 to prepare students for Level 3*' (Education and Contemporary Studies)

*'To be honest, most of these should have been taught and developed at earlier stages of an academic career. Level 3 is certainly too late for this.'* (Business and Law)

Skills 1 to 4 identified as being covered '*by the end of the first term*' (Health and Life Sciences).

From Table 2, it can be seen that whilst Health and Life Sciences staff gave the lowest response in terms of wishing for their students to have acquired the skills, they do a good amount, proportionately, to ensure that the skills are embedded. The Faculty of Humanities both rates the acquiring of skills highly and effects the most to ensure that they are embedded. The Faculty of Computer Sciences and Engineering ranked the lowest in terms of teaching (20%), assessing (45%) and developing the skills through student centred learning (27%) but staff do actually value the acquiring of the skills.

The responses from De Montfort University academic staff give further credence to the conclusions of McGuinness<sup>4</sup> that staff assume students will 'pick up' the skills and Thompson<sup>5</sup> that information literacy has a tendency to be left to 'the osmosis technique'. (The De Montfort University subject librarians, who were interviewed as part of this research, were very much in favour of information skills being contextualised within modules that students take.)

#### THE LIBRARIAN'S ROLE

The faculty staff were asked to what extent they felt comfortable supporting the development of these skills and whether they felt that there was a role for librarians in this educational process. Fortunately, there was overwhelming acceptance of the librarian's role in the development of the skills highlighted within the model. There is a marked contrast between staff in different faculties as to their own comfort levels at supporting the development of the 'seven skills' (see Table 3). The faculties of Art and Design, Business and Law, and Education and Contemporary Studies are in the 90% range whilst Computing Sciences and Engineering staff are only acknowledging a 29% (that is, 2 out of 7 respondents) comfort level.

upon the definition produced by the American Library Association<sup>6</sup> in 1989 and used because, at the time of the research, the United Kingdom did not have a nationally accepted definition of information literacy. This research suggests that there may be wide acceptance of the American Library Association's definition since 97% of the De Montfort academic staff, who responded, were in agreement with the statement (see Table 4).

When asked whether undergraduate students should have achieved this state by the end of their course, 93% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, as shown in Table 5. The lowest level of agreement, at an overall 86% (which, unfortunately, was only 6 out of 7 respondents), came from the Faculty of Computing Sciences and Engineering. With hindsight, it would have been interesting to also ask the question – whether undergraduate students do actually achieve this state by the end of their course. (This is planned for an update of the research in April/May 2005, focusing on Architecture staff.)

	Percentage (%) of staff comfortable supporting skills development	Percentage (%) of staff who feel there is a role for librarians in skills development
Art & Design	90	100
Business & Law	92	96
Computing Sciences & Engineering	29	100
Education & Contemporary Studies	92	100
Health & Life Sciences	81	94
Humanities	75	100

**Table 3 – Staff and librarians' roles in skills development**

#### ACCEPTANCE OF INFORMATION LITERACY

Another major aspect of the research was to ask the academic staff to what extent they agreed with the statement – '*An information literate student is one who can recognise when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information*'. This statement was based

'An information literate student is one who can recognise when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information'	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not stated
Art & Design	40%	60%			
Business & Law	72%	28%			
Computing Sciences & Engineering	86%	14%			
Education & Contemporary Studies	67%	33%			
Health & Life Sciences	64%	28%	5%		3%
Humanities	62.5%	37.5%			
TOTAL	65%	32%	2%		1%

**Table 4 – ALA definition of information literacy**

Undergraduate students should have achieved an information literate state by the end of their course	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not stated
Art & Design	80%	20%			
Business & Law	60%	40%			
Computing Sciences & Engineering	43%	43%	14%		
Education & Contemporary Studies	59%	33%			8%
Health & Life Sciences	38.5%	50%	5.5%		6%
Humanities	75%	12.5%			12.5%
TOTAL	54%	39%	3%		4%

**Table 5 – Responses regarding information literate graduates**

It could be suggested that academic staff equate the SCONUL model with information literacy given:

- the overall 93% agreement that students should have achieved an information literate state by the end of their course (Table 5), and
- the overall 91% agreement with the need for students to have acquired the 'seven skills' by the end of their course (Table 1).

However, this may be a supposition too far?

#### **FUTURE WORK**

The next step at De Montfort University is to work on how to negate the observations of McGuinness<sup>4</sup> and Thompson<sup>5</sup> and to further develop a philosophy where:

*'Collaborative partnerships between academic teachers and academic librarians are built on a mutual understanding of how collective expertise can enhance student learning'*<sup>7</sup>

This is being advanced in ways such as:

- progressing the principle of an information literacy framework within the University, using the 'seven pillars' model as a basis (this is currently in preparation and will be taken through the University and Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees);
- market our services further, exploring all areas for collaboration, especially highlighting subject librarians' expertise in developing Skill 4;
- endeavour to get information skills to be more contextualised and assessed, especially within the university's Blackboard VLE and web based teaching;

- provide more opportunities for academics to update their skills to become information literate themselves: a focus here is with Computing Sciences and Engineering who have shown such a low confidence level with the 'seven skills' themselves.

A future direction for this research in 2005, to be progressed as already mentioned with Architecture staff, within the Faculty of Art and Design, is:

- to test whether staff feel that students are information literate by the end of their course;
- to test the CILIP definition of information literacy<sup>8</sup> and to see whether this is as warmly received as that of the American Library Association.

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# Staff Information skills: workplace support and development



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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Bruce states that 'Information literacy is about peoples' ability to operate effectively in an information society. This involves critical thinking, an awareness of personal and professional ethics, information evaluation, conceptualising information needs, organising information, interacting with information professionals and making effective use of information in problem-solving, decision-making and research. It is these information based processes which are crucial to the character of learning organisations and which need to be supported by the organisation's technology infrastructure.' (Bruce, 1999).

In 2003, the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) held a seminar to discuss the development of information skills for all staff employed in the Higher and Further Education sectors. Previous research had focussed on the development of student skills. However as discussions progressed it became apparent that there was a pressing need to explore how staff develop techniques to manage their information requirements, their approaches to information-seeking and the resources they use. In response the JISC commissioned three parallel projects:

- 1 **Big Blue connect:** An investigation into the information seeking behaviour and skills sets of staff working in further and higher education
- 2 **Staff Development Provision Study:** A study to provide an overview of existing staff development provision for information skills in FE and HE, including an assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- 3 **Drivers for Staff Development Study:** A generic study to identify the drivers for staff

development with specific reference to the implications for information skills for staff

Output from each of these projects can be found on the JISC website at <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/cpdresources>. The results of their research highlight the following issues:

## Defining information skills

- general confusion exists over definitions and terminology used to describe information skills, and there is an accompanying lack of understanding of their importance to both an individual and an institution
- there is a tendency to conflate information skills with ICT skills
- these issues mean that information skills needs tend not to be recognised and addressed in their own right.

## Skills gaps

- relatively few staff interviewed demonstrated the skills and confidence to apply information to best advantage
- the majority of staff interviewed adopted a 'getting by' approach
- in many institutions information skills for non-academic staff (other than staff working within a library/information service) are not currently addressed.

## Lack of strategic framework for information skills

- there is a lack of institution-wide ownership of information skills issues; it is often seen as a 'library thing'
- it is not accredited or linked to career progression or recognised by any of the main professional organisations e.g. Higher Education Academy
- there is little or no evidence to suggest that staff developers either recognise information skills as a priority or as a development area to support individual skills.

## Fragmented provision, poor take-up

- existing training provision is fragmented with ad hoc courses and events run mainly by libraries and a small number of external agencies
- courses often tend to take a 'one-size fits all' approach in the absence of any defined progression path for information skills

- take-up is patchy making it difficult to justify running additional courses.

**DOES THIS ANALYSIS SOUND FAMILIAR?**

In a brief and fairly unscientific survey of colleagues through discussion lists and at various events I found that the summary above did, in general, reflect the current state of play.

The JISC has recognised the importance of mainstreaming information skills for all staff and its first step is to raise awareness of the importance of this activity to the whole community. This approach builds on much of the valuable work which is on-going at local and regional levels, mainly led by library and learning resources staff who have the expertise to act as advocates for the strategic development of information skills for staff.

Opportunities are being taken advantage to:

- 1 set up new working partnerships;
- 2 market the institutional library or learning resource centre as the centre of expertise for the delivery of information skills to all staff;
- 3 re-position information skills as a keystone of staff development activity;
- 4 promote information skills as essential teaching and/or research tool if institutions are to maximise investment in their information resources.

The JISC's current contribution to this process takes the form of two key documents. The first *'Investing in Staff i-skills: a strategy for institutional development'* aims to:

- present evidence to support the argument for investment;
- examine the potential risk little or no action is likely to have on the effectiveness of an institution;
- provide an example of an institution-wide framework to progress i-skills.

The sister publication *'Improving Staff i-skills: an Introductory guide'* aims to help individual staff:

- define i-skills;
- understand why they are important to individuals and institutions;
- recognise i-skills in context;
- make a start on an i-skills development plan;
- develop ideas to help you deliver i-skills provision for your own institution.

**WHY INTRODUCE A NEW TERM?**

i-skills has been introduced to provide staff who perhaps have been uncertain about existing definitions and use of terminology, with the concept of a broad, generic term. For those introducing i-skills its importance lies not with the use of the term itself, but in understanding how a range of skills can be applied in the context of an individual's work role.

**PROGRESSION VERSUS DIFFERENTIATION**

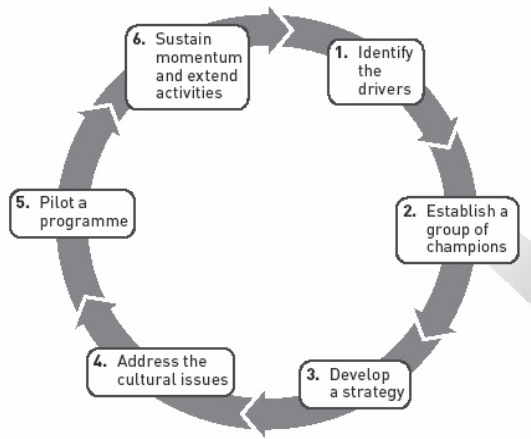
All student information skills programmes are based on the premise of progression. Irrespective of point of access, there is an underlying assumption that as a student proceeds through their course of study that there will be an accompanying enhancement of their information skills.

The development of workplace skills is more likely to be characterised by personal context and workplace needs. The information skills that one individual takes for granted may be the very skills that another needs but cannot master without some support. It is also the case, that unlike students where the expectation is that, to a greater or lesser degree, all students will develop expertise across the whole suite of information skills, individual staff may need only to become expert in selected activities and may rely on the expertise of others to complete the process.

**DEVELOPING A PROGRAMME: MOVING FORWARD**

It is quite a daunting prospect to consider the development of an information skills programme for all staff which is both tailored to meet individual and workplace needs. However it is an ideal opportunity to develop new partnerships and use information skills as a vehicle to encourage collaboration and innovative ways of delivering training.

The model below, adapted from the 6-step model provides a framework for the development of an information skills programme.



*Step 1: Identify the drivers*

What can you hang information skills to which will drive it forward and align it to a key institutional objective? What will motivate staff to spend time on information skills training?

*Step 2: Establish a group of champions*

Pull together colleagues from academic and central services and examine the potential for building an integrated delivery team. Collaborating over the delivery of information skills has the potential to enhance recognition of information skills as a professional development activity, improve content and relevance of the material and, in avoiding duplication of effort, maximise existing resources and expertise.

*Step 3: Develop a strategy*

Articulate the key objectives of an information skills plan. Can those objectives be mapped to institutional objectives? Are the links clear?

*Step 4: Address the cultural issues*

What are the political, social and cultural features of your institution? Are there any prevailing attitudes which need to be taken into consideration? Are there any initiatives or developments which will assist with the development of a programme?

*Step 5: Pilot a programme*

Why not try to gather a group of colleagues from across your institution to test your programme? Choose them on their ability to assess the effectiveness of the course and as potential advocates for further uptake and development of information skills.

*Step 6: Sustain momentum and extend activities*

Use as many channels as you have at your disposal to further promote the programme. Have you gathered feedback and evaluation? Have you considered any performance measures that can be used to assess impact? What level of support

do you have from senior managers? Can information skills be mainstreamed as a professional staff development activity?

**IS THIS APPROACH ANY GUARANTEE OF SUCCESS?**

Perhaps the most critical step in this model to achieving any level of success lies in Step 2. Developing new working relationships with staff who already deliver training in either related areas or as part of mainstream staff development will play a key role in broadening ownership of information skills. It may also begin to counter the perception that information skills is only for students, or for technophobes, or for those engaged in research. It may encourage all categories of staff to view information skills training as an investment by their institution in their personal and professional development. What is clear, is that there exists an attractive opportunity to both promote the expertise and knowledge already existing within many libraries and use it in new and innovative ways to shift the delivery of information skills for staff from its current fragmented position, to one based on strong foundations for strategic development.

For copies of the two JISC reports on Staff i-skills please visit the JISC website <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/cpdresources>

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# My VLE at Maynooth: e-learning and the library

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## INTRODUCTION

Libraries have been involved with Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) for some time. As a result it is not surprising that the library at the National University of Ireland Maynooth welcomed the opportunity to become involved in a three year campus wide pilot project to evaluate e-learning and Virtual Learning Environments from 2002-2005. This opportunity expanded further when the library became the main source of training for teaching staff on managing their VLE content in year three of the project. This development strengthened the library's contribution to not only the e-learning pilot project but also allowed the library to become involved at a strategic level in negotiating the future of e-learning on campus.

## PILOT PROJECT EXPLAINED

### Years 1 and 2

The first two years of the pilot project focused on Blackboard, a well-established VLE. A core group of departments expressed an interest in e-learning and were invited to take part in the pilot project. They made their material available to their students via this platform. The Quality Promotion Office, who co-ordinate many teaching and learning initiatives on campus, administered the VLE, including the issuing of usernames and passwords, over a two year period. It was used mainly to supplement existing teaching practices. Students now had an additional place to source lecture notes and interact with one another via discussion forums.

### Year 3

For the third year of the pilot project the university used an in-house system. The

Department of Electronic Engineering has a VLE in place to support their distance education students. The Degree Extension for Technicians (DEFT) programme provides an opportunity for electronics technicians already working in industry to study off-site by allowing them remote internet access to course modules. These students only attend campus for laboratories and examinations. For the pilot project it was decided to expand the DEFT VLE model for more general use. The Department of Electronic Engineering heroically took on the challenge of developing a sophisticated, yet simple-to-use, system that could offer similar services available from larger commercial systems to our student body. The result was MyVLE. An evaluation of the two systems at the end of the project would inform the university how to proceed down the electronic highway.

## Registered users – Figure 1

	Blackboard	MyVLE
Staff	50	78
Students	720	2636

## LIBRARY INVOLVEMENT

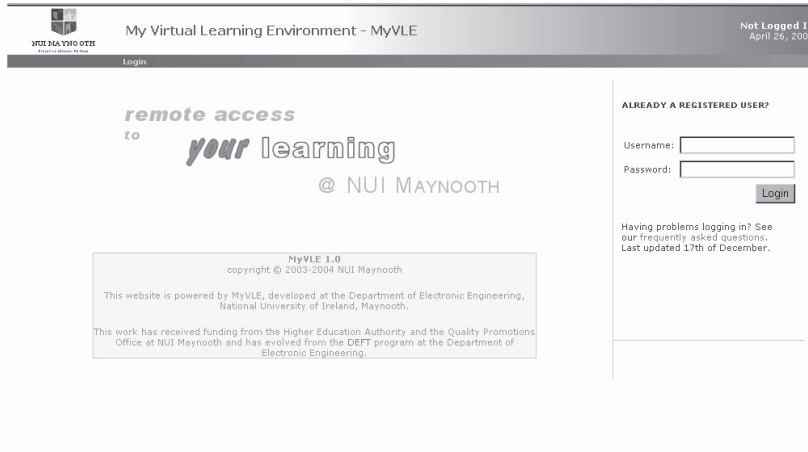
Due to the changing interfaces at the start of year three, further training was needed for those involved in the pilot and this opened up an opportunity for the library. All those who registered an interest in e-learning on campus were invited to attend training sessions given by the Library. While in principle many features are similar to Blackboard there are some key differences between the two systems that needed explanation:

- MyVLE integrates with existing systems - students and staff no longer need a separate username and password but can log on using their university identification;
- the preferred e-mail for correspondence was university e-mail accounts with occasional exceptions being made for certain part-time and off-campus users;
- all queries are sent to a local support e-mail address and answered by a technician in Electronic Engineering with a remarkably high turnaround time in response to queries;
- the library provides guides to support both staff and students and supplementary support material was designed to meet needs as they arose;



- an in-house system provides a unique opportunity for teaching and learning staff, the library, the Department of Electronic Engineering and the Computer Centre to work together on the operations of this project;
- existing staff in the university now have to provide all the support for the system and this at times can be a huge draw on time and resources.

**Figure 2 – MyVLE logon screen**



#### FEEDBACK FROM USERS

From early on the interest in MyVLE was phenomenal. The Library provided 13 optional training sessions from August to December to 56 teaching staff demonstrating how to upload and manage material in MyVLE. Other staff registered with MyVLE and uploaded material successfully without attending any training session. Mandatory attendance at this initial training and also at some e-learning pedagogy training is a recommendation from the pilot project to ensure that maximum benefit is gained. Simply making “paper” lecture notes available in electronic format is under utilizing this powerful resource.

From August to December 2,636 students were registered on the system and this soared exceedingly beyond expectations. The pilot project certainly had no shortage of participants! Student queries on printing, saving and downloading material turned up everywhere on campus as they began using this resource. The volume of queries at times was staggering but showed clearly that this was a highly used resource. Expectation rose among students that all their course lecture notes would be available for downloading. Despite the high usage and the ensuing demands the system worked well. Once staff and students became accustomed to managing or sourcing information the queries lessened.

#### INITIAL EVALUATIONS

Initial evaluations indicate that essentially both Blackboard and MyVLE were used to support existing teaching. Lecture notes were made available for students to download and some links to library resources were put in place. The literature on ensuring library links are used in VLEs is widespread and references at the end of this article go into this discussion in more detail.

The more advanced features -such as online quizzes and assessments- were used rarely, as were the discussion forums. However, those departments who used these resources found them very useful, indicating that low usage does not make these features invaluable. The pilot project raised awareness among the university community of e-learning and e-learning tools, and this is now a

strong foundation to build on. The pilot project included academic departments from across the campus including Science, Social Science and the Arts. Student and staff evaluation in the form of questionnaires and focus groups are now taking place and this will determine how useful each subject or faculty sees these e-learning tools.

#### LIBRARY CONTRIBUTION

Being involved at this early stage has been particularly useful for the library. By not being involved the library would have missed out on the provision of a service now being used by almost half the student population. The queries alone that this generated in the library would have been very frustrating for desk staff and subject librarians to handle had we not known of this initiative. Rieger reports that “academic librarians may be losing new opportunities to contribute to improving student learning and faculty research on campus”<sup>1</sup> by not being involved in e-learning projects and certainly this could have been the case at NUI Maynooth. The Department of Electronic Engineering were very open to hearing the opinion of the Library as they developed the product before it was launched and also to hearing feedback from users once it was in operation. This willingness to consider such opinions certainly contributed to the creation of a highly successful service. Academic librarians should be confident that their years of evaluating

electronic resources and teaching users how to use these resources will give them skills that can extend beyond the library as the use of technology continues to increase in teaching. If librarians are not involved not only will their skills be under utilised but also there is every chance their libraries will also.

#### CONCLUSION

As we are reaching the end of the three-year pilot project the next step is to evaluate what the three years has taught us about e-learning. One clear lesson already visible is that libraries and e-learning can have a symbiotic relationship. Serious decisions regarding e-learning must be made here at NUI Maynooth. The library values our involvement at both the pilot project stage and beyond.

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#### NOTES

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# Just what I wanted! The perfect Christmas gift – Google scholar - or is it?

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Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com>) was launched as a beta product during November 2004 and instantly hit the headlines. I suspect I was not alone in receiving a considerable number of requests from colleagues in academic schools asking the library to put up links to this new search engine or even circulate details of its arrival to the entire university. I suppose I should be grateful that the library was even viewed as the 'gatekeeper' when many of our users often turn to search engines ahead of our catalogue and various databases. While most information professionals rightly respect the provenance of Google, few would regard its search capabilities as the elusive 'Holy Grail' of literature searching in an academic context.

The nomenclature of Google Scholar implies more. The good points of it are:

- Easy access open to all (no membership or login, direct URL link) and it's free
- One step, one stop searching
- Simple 'free text' searching supported by an advanced search mode; a concept well understood by the vast majority of users of web search engines
- Proven development path in a short time span (e.g. advanced search options and 'preferences' added since the launch); supported by a massive organisation
- Academic in outlook – avoids the huge, and often irrelevant 'hits' of Google
- Links include respectable academic sources including Ingenta, Crossref and OCLC WorldCat

- Offers citation information (thereby extending to online references for print-only resources)
- Results are relevance ranked so you see the most appropriate resources first
- Potential – there’s a developing world of institutional repositories which will need inter-linking plus new initiatives in digitisation (such as the non-copyright, nineteenth century collections at the Bodleian which Google is closely involved with in addition to other, similar projects)<sup>1</sup>. The recently-announced Common Information Environment<sup>2</sup> has also made reference to the potential of Google Scholar in helping improve access to content for the maximum number of people.
- Add-on’s. A number of third-party ‘extras’ have been developed such as the Firefox extensions developed by Peter Binkley<sup>3</sup> and regionalised for the UK by Andy Powell<sup>4</sup> at UKOLN. The two mentioned maximise the potential of passing OpenURL data to local resolution servers.

Unfortunately for everyone, there are also serious limitations:

- Apart from the current pilot of ‘preference sites’ which deal with site authentication issues, Scholar only crawls the open web. This is, of course, the iceberg effect as estimates put the ‘hidden web’ at seven times the size of the open web<sup>5</sup> – and the hidden bits are often academic resources protected from unauthorised usage. It is possible to find a resource in Ingenta, be prompted to ‘pay per view’ and eventually find that you have free access via your own institution.
- It isn’t possible to undertake a sophisticated, set-based search akin to what a researcher might use on a truly academic database such as PsycINFO.
- The limiting ‘academic’ criteria employed by Scholar are not widely known and the results are less than comprehensive – even for ‘open web’ resources. Users may find Google a more successful tool than Scholar - if taken in context. Scholar defines its coverage as ‘including peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, preprints, abstracts and technical reports from all broad areas of research’.
- Searching doesn’t always find what it should. A significant (and excellent) survey of Scholar’s search capabilities was carried out by Jacso<sup>6</sup>. Admittedly, Scholar has developed further since that work was completed but

most of the findings still hold true. It is clear that the search results are often not as accurate (comprehensive and relevant) as they ought to be.

- Some references are ‘empty’.
- It is clear that the offerings from Crossref, and OCLC, in particular, are very limited versions of their full products. Scholar also has agreements with a number of publishers with a strong leaning to science disciplines.
- The OpenURL content of most data passed from Scholar is very limited making the third party extensions of far less value than they might be when many libraries are investing in OpenURL technology.

While ‘limited’ adequately describes Scholar’s current capabilities, it does have potential. However, much of this will only be realised through specific negotiations at institutional level direct with Google to allow the profiling of local resources. At present, metasearch engines do a much better job for academia in this area although those carry a heavy financial cost and profiling load and also lack perfection in areas such as search syntax sophistication.

For anyone intending to use Scholar, I would offer the following advice:

- Read the Jacso review referred to above
- Read the help screen first<sup>7</sup>
- Familiarise yourself with the advanced options.
- Experiment with an area you know well and compare the results from Scholar with other search systems such as metasearching tools, online databases and even Google or Yahoo.
- There is much further discussion at the [Web4LIB] archive<sup>8</sup>

In recent months, there have been a number of search engine announcements. These include offerings from Microsoft<sup>9</sup> and an academically-orientated development from Yahoo. The latter provides a drop-down ‘library’ option on the search screen to link to WorldCat records<sup>10</sup>. Whatever the drawbacks in an academic setting, search engines have a significant role to play in the seamless delivery of information and have the confidence of our users. At the current time, however, it would seem that a pair of socks would have been a more welcome Christmas present than Google Scholar. There is much room for improvement in this system but I’m sure that will come in time as already demonstrated in the development path and external interest since the beta launch.

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# Selective web archiving in the UK : a perspective of the National Library of Scotland within UK Web Archiving Consortium (UKWAC)

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The following article describes the National Library of Scotland’s (NLS) experience of web archiving within the UK Web Archiving Consortium (UKWAC), and provides a summary of the work of the consortium, which is in the early stages of building a UK national web archive for present and future generations.

## BACK IN THE BEGINNING ...

... for the NLS web archiving began at the end of the last century, when the library carried out a small web archiving pilot to cover the 1999 election of the first Scottish Parliament in almost 300 years. This was a relatively modest affair, focusing on the 14 websites of the parties who stood in the election, but with a very similar permission-based approach to that of UKWAC outlined below.

Both the British Library (BL) and the National Library of Wales (NLW) were carrying out similar pilots around this time, with the British Library’s 2001 Domain.UK project covering, amongst other topics, the last UK general election – as you will find, parliamentary elections are very popular in web archiving circles.<sup>1</sup>

Globally, systematic web archiving has been carried out as far back as 1996, with organisations

such as the Internet Archive and National Library of Australia (NLA) creating publicly accessible web archives, and the more recent Nordic web archive building on the earlier work of the Royal Library of Sweden and the other Scandinavian national libraries.<sup>2,3,4,5</sup> More recently national libraries around the world have taken up the challenge, with the Library of Congress Minerva project in the US being a notable example.<sup>6</sup>

#### **BUT WHY ARCHIVE THE WEB?**

It has been claimed that the average lifespan of a website is 44 days<sup>7</sup>. Some might say that this is already far too long for much of what is on the web, and that 'important' sites will have far longer life spans. However, it is clear that significant content, whether it is social, cultural, political or topical, is being lost from the web on a daily basis. The lack of systematic collecting of web content can be likened to a potential dark age for digital information, with huge gaps in our recorded knowledge of what is being said, created and published in this medium. Even scientific knowledge is being lost, with a recent survey reporting a 'decay rate' of 33% for online citations.<sup>8</sup> If information is being lost for today's web researchers and browsers, how much more so for future generations, unless efforts are made to maintain and preserve unique, born-digital web content?

#### **THE CREATION OF THE UK WEB ARCHIVING CONSORTIUM (UKWAC)**

Owing to this increasing awareness that a 'dark age' of electronic information may result from a lack of action, as well as recommendations from a JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee)/Wellcome Trust feasibility study, the UK Web Archiving Consortium was formed at the end of 2003, and charged with tackling UK web archiving on a collaborative basis.<sup>9</sup> The consortium consists of the British Library, the National Library of Wales, the National Archives, JISC, and the Wellcome Library, as well as the National Library of Scotland. All partners have an interest in collecting websites for future posterity, and have pooled resources to pilot the UKWAC project.

The project was officially launched in June 2004, following selection of the appropriate software and support environment. As a two-year pilot, the membership remains fixed for the duration of the project, but, assuming successful outcomes, it is expected that the work of the consortium will

continue, and that collaboration will be extended to new partners.

#### **COLLECTION AND SELECTION POLICY**

Under this collaborative framework, each member will select websites according to their own collection policy, but will collaborate and coordinate efforts to avoid duplication, increase efficiency, and to provide as wide a coverage as possible for what is effectively a single web archive. The National Library of Scotland is collecting websites of Scottish cultural significance, with culture being interpreted in its widest sense.<sup>10</sup> For the NLS, although selection criteria inform the process, nothing on the web is excluded from consideration: from local community sites and arts festivals, to national organisations and events, nothing is too big or too small.

#### **AIMS OF THE PROJECT**

In essence the pilot aims to test the feasibility of selective, permission-based web archiving within a consortial framework, and to build an archive of at least 6000 websites within the two years of the project. The key aims of the project can be summed up in the following:

- to test the feasibility of selective web archiving in the UK
- to test the feasibility of permission-based web archiving in the UK
- to explore the benefits of a partnership approach
- to test the methodology and software used
- to define a sustainable, long-term solution
- to create a searchable and public web archive.

Given the acceptance that no single organisation can hope to archive the web effectively on its own, and that wider collaboration and partnerships will be necessary, finding solutions within the consortia based approach is very important to the project.

#### **THE TECHNOLOGY – PANDAS<sup>11</sup>**

Following extensive evaluation by consortium partners, UKWAC selected the PANDAS system. This is an integrated web archiving management system, and one of the few solutions suitable for the aims of the project. Developed by the National Library of Australia, and available via open source, it has been used by them to build their Pandora web archive (see above) over the last eight years on a similar selective, permis-

sion-based model. The system uses Oracle to hold the metadata, whilst the gathering of sites is handled by the open source web crawler/harvester HTTrack.<sup>12</sup> The consortium has contracted Magus Research to host, maintain, and provide a support environment for the PANDAS system.<sup>13</sup>

#### **THE ARCHIVING MODEL**

As detailed above, UKWAC is using a selective approach to web archiving, similar to the NLA model. This aims to archive a selection of websites within UK web space (and in some cases outside the UK domain), in line with partners' collection policies, and does not aim to be comprehensive. This is opposed to whole domain archiving – as carried out by the Internet Archive and others – which aims to archive everything within a particular domain or area of the web, e.g. all sites within the '.uk' domain, or indeed all sites within the web.

It is generally accepted that neither approach is adequate: selective archiving by its very nature will not be comprehensive, whilst global/whole domain archiving is unlikely to achieve the depth or frequency required for archival quality collections. A combination of approaches is likely to be necessary, and indeed two of the UKWAC partners are involved in whole domain archiving: the National Archives have been working with the Internet Archive since 2003 on '.gov.uk' sites to build the UK Government web archive<sup>14</sup>; and the BL is exploring a similar approach to providing '.uk' snapshots.

#### **LEGAL ISSUES**

As a website is in effect a publication, and to archive a website is to create (at least) one complete copy of the publication, this falls within international copyright law. With only a small number of countries having passed legislation permitting blanket web archiving – see New Zealand as an example<sup>15</sup> – whole domain archiving in particular could be challenged on legal grounds. In the UK, some organisations, such as the National Archives and the National Archives of Scotland have a legal mandate to archive government websites, but in most cases organisations must obtain formal permission to archive, and in some cases third party copyright makes obtaining permission more complex. In addition to archiving the site, permission must also be obtained to provide public access to the archived copy.

#### **LEGAL DEPOSIT LIBRARIES ACT 2003**

Although the UK has as yet no legislation permitting formal archiving of websites, the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 lays the foundations for legal deposit of electronic publications, including websites.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the Act specifically allows for exemption for both copyright and database rights in future regulations, and this may allow for more effective archiving, with safeguards being put in place for commercial and restricted web publications. The UKWAC project provides a valuable test bed for some of the issues future regulations will need to take into consideration.

#### **PERMISSION-BASED ARCHIVING**

In the meantime UKWAC is adopting a formal permission-based approach to web archiving. This is in part due to the legal issues outlined above, but is also to ensure that, at this early stage of web archiving in the UK, we build up trust and dialogue with the web publishing community, which is made up of wide and diverse interests.

#### **OTHER ISSUES SURROUNDING SELECTIVE, PERMISSION-BASED WEB ARCHIVING**

Other issues include:

- labour intensiveness, involving selection, evaluation, cataloguing, permissions, harvesting, and maintenance of the public archive
- illegal content, e.g. libellous or inflammatory content
- requirement for interoperable descriptive, technical and preservation metadata
- limitations of current (and future) web archiving technology
- long-term preservation of digital objects
- territoriality ('place' of publication/jurisdiction)
- frequency of harvesting.

It is the aim of the pilot to identify and evaluate further issues, and to work with colleagues in the UK and around the world to identify the most appropriate solutions and strategies for dealing with them.

#### **CURRENT PROGRESS**

Archiving began in earnest at the very end of the 2004, with each partner archiving sites within their respective collection policies. The following

are just a couple of the areas that the consortium has focused on so far:

- The Tsunami Disaster<sup>17</sup> One of the first pilots within a pilot that the consortium tackled was to focus on the tsunami crisis in December, and to collect sites covering the disaster. Despite the unfortunate circumstances, this provided the consortium with a valuable test case of how we could tackle significant, but unexpected events, and how methodology could be adapted to deal with circumstances.
- UK General Election 2005 Party, constituency, candidate and other election-related websites are being selected as a number of the partners focus on this year's general election, building a picture of how the election developed on the web, before, during and after the 5 May.

#### PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE UK WEB ARCHIVE – TODAY!

By the time you read this article, the fledgling UK web archive will have gone live.<sup>18</sup>

Although still in its infancy – only 5 months old – and with the size of the archive still relatively small, this will be the first chance that users, and the archived publishers themselves, will have to search for and view the websites archived by the consortium, and see how the archive will work in practice.

Fig 1. Home page of the UK web archive



The public interface of the archive (see fig 1 above) provides simple keyword searching and alphabetic browsing, supplemented by straight-

forward subject navigation, and the ability to access sites via collections, such as the tsuanmi disaster, which helps to bring together otherwise unrelated sites.

To supplement resource discovery via the web archive, the majority of partners are also providing catalogue records within their information management systems. This helps to integrate the archived sites into the traditional collection, as well as providing potential for greater interoperability and openness of the metadata.

#### THE FUTURE

UKWAC is looking at web archiving very much into the long term, and the partners are committed to carrying the work of the project forward post-pilot. In terms of technological developments, UKWAC has been working with the International Internet Preservation Consortium (IIPC)<sup>19</sup>, who are developing a suite of tools for web archiving and digital preservation. Part of this work includes developing a possible successor to PANDAS, and this should bring benefits to the web archiving community as a whole.

Other bodies around the world are carrying out interesting research into the different areas that affect web archiving and digital preservation. For a taste of the many issues not covered in this short article, the website of the first International Web Archiving Conference – attended by a number of the UKWAC partners, including NLS – is a good starting point<sup>20</sup>.

As both UKWAC and IIPC demonstrate, collaboration will be key to success in this area, as in so many others. As such, the NLS is keen to work with partners within Scotland, and we have been in discussions with a number of key players, such as the National Archives of Scotland, to ensure that important parts of our national heritage are not lost forever. Collaboration with web publishers and authors is also key to ensuring such an important enterprise is a success, and we must not over-

look the intended users of the archive. Whether they be mainstream commercial publisher, or small website owner, professional researcher, or

curious public, their views, needs and wants must sought and listened to, and we invite interested parties to get in touch with either ourselves, or a relevant member of the consortium.

In the meantime the National Library of Scotland, with the other members of UKWAC, will continue to build a UK web archive for users of today, and tomorrow, and consult and work with colleagues, publishers, and the public to make the UK Web Archive a success.

From 9 May 2005 you can view the UK Web Archive at: <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/>. The project website is available at: <http://info.webarchive.org.uk/>.

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## Bridging the evidence gap - the eVALUEd toolkit training project

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Say the word 'toolkit' and people usually think of a box of spanners and hammers wielded by a person in blue overalls, but for the last few months we have been introducing higher education institutions to our online evaluation toolkit (no overalls required!) in order to inspire a new qualitative approach to evaluating electronic resources.

Evaluating electronic information services (EIS) is an essential part of the library planning cycle for a number of reasons, including helping to ensure that objectives are met, identifying successes and providing evidence of the benefits and impacts of EIS. The drive to equip our libraries with the latest EIS resources has placed a new burden on those holding the purse-strings and without well formed evaluation strategies library managers run the risk of making expensive ill-informed choices and decisions about where to invest and develop user services.

The toolkit has been developed by a research team from **evidence base** research and evaluation services, based in Library Services at the University of Central England. The development has been funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) through its fund for good management practice.

The toolkit, which is available free of charge online, is designed to support information services staff in higher education institutions in the evaluation of electronic information services. The toolkit takes a user-focused approach to the evaluation of EIS mainly through the use of qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, focus

groups and questionnaires and encourages a 'people first' approach to ascertaining how useful and effective electronic information services are.

Having a toolkit is, however, only half the story and rather like aiming to live a healthier lifestyle, investing in that smoothie maker and cycling machine doesn't in itself ensure that we get the results! In order to avoid the eVALUED Toolkit ending up stuck at the back of a metaphorical cupboard, the final part of the project has been the rolling out of a highly interactive training and coaching support package designed to demystify qualitative evaluation, enthuse and inspire library staff to regularly run evaluation projects, and encourage the embedding of evaluation into the participants' work lifecycle.

With this in mind, the training phase was designed specifically to complement the existence of the toolkit by promoting confidence and clarity around the process of evaluation. In order to ensure that the participants have had a thorough opportunity to explore the Toolkit online, a pre-course quiz and slogan competition is sent out with the joining instructions, and there are prizes for the best slogans added to the phrase 'Electronic Information Services are essential to my library because... in less than 15 words'. Recent winners include, 'if you are a distance learner they are right up your street!', 'they offer 24x7 access to resources for the 24x7 society,' and our personal favourite 'without them we would be virtually nothing'!

The training has been touring the UK and so far has visited London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Birmingham, Manchester, Huddersfield and Warwick training over 100 people from 39 different institutions and has another five venues on its list before the project ends. In addition to the training days, all participants have access to project coaching support and follow-up from the project trainer, Fiona Mullany and Sarah McNicol, the eVALUED Toolkit researcher. This ensures that participants really have the opportunity to put their learning into practice with practical support and advice.

The training day begins by encouraging participants to explore the difference between quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods. Once an understanding of the relevance of qualitative evaluation is reached, we go on to look at the various methods: interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires, cover the recruiting of subjects in an organisational context, the effect of incentives, and how the methods link together.

The second part of the morning teaches practical communication skills and explores the interpersonal skills needed to gain good qualitative data from people in interview and focus group situations. We have discovered that many people have actively avoided face to face evaluation methods such as focus groups and interviews simply because they lacked confidence and so this section of the training is designed to address that and ensure confidence in these areas. Feedback from participants has been excellent with over 95% reporting that their confidence in conducting qualitative evaluation had increased as a result of the training, and many noting that they had been inspired to consider using focus groups for the first time; as one participant said 'Previously I would not have been brave enough to run a focus group!'.

Good project management is an essential part of any evaluation project and so the day continues with a session on how to plan an evaluation project and provides participants with a simple method for checking that they have set themselves achievable targets. One of the participants said 'It has given me confidence and a structure for approaching qualitative evaluation as I wasn't sure where to start before!' and others have reported that learning this method has inspired them to re-engage with projects as diverse as setting up complex databases and finishing long standing MA dissertations!

Rounding off the day we return to some of the resources of the toolkit and participants complete a group exercise based around selecting real qualitative evaluation questions from four different evaluation areas and planning an evaluation project from start to finish. This gives them an opportunity not only to learn how to identify relevant questions from the toolkit resource but also to 'dress rehearse' the project plan for running the evaluation. The groups then present their plans back to each other, and this results in each participant seeing up to four project plans and four 'ready to go' sets of questions for evaluation by interview, focus group or questionnaire.

Participant reactions have been highly enthusiastic with many people reporting that they would be taking what they had learnt straight back into the workplace to share with colleagues. This means not only that the toolkit will gain a wide audience, but also that the good practice encouraged by the training is currently reaching over 500 people within the libraries and information services of higher education, a fact that

indicates the project has the power to make a real and positive difference to the sector.

Over the next few months we will be developing further training packages for information services in evaluation and evidence-based practice which in the EIS area will include 'e-measuring' quantitative evaluation of electronic services, and more generally outcomes and impact assessment and general service evaluation at a variety of levels. In addition, we are expanding our provision courses to cover other skill sets including interviewing, presentation and training skills, and project coaching which will be tailored specifically for the needs of academic libraries.

We are greatly enjoying running this training project and are confident that as a result our 'toolkit' will not remain stuck in its box. We are constantly seeking to update and improve the access to training in the areas of evaluation to ensure that people are confident users of qualitative evaluation methods and really get the best out of their resources because as the following story illustrates, being effective is not just about having access to the right tools, but about knowing how and when to use them:

'A man rang a plumber to come and fix his boiler which had been making a terrible noise. The plumber arrived, selected the biggest hammer he had, ran his hand along the feeder pipe, gave it a mighty whack and the noise stopped. 'That should sort it.' he said to the bemused boiler owner and quickly departed. A week later the man was astonished to receive a bill from the plumber for £200 and was so outraged he was straight on the telephone demanding an explanation – 'You only gave it a whack with a hammer! I have a hammer! I could have done that! How can you justify your bill?'. The plumber simply sighed and said 'You're right Sir, hitting the boiler pipe is free of charge... but knowing exactly where to hit it; that costs £200.'

If you would like more information about the eVALUED Training and an opportunity to learn where to 'hit' in terms of qualitative evaluation or you would like to be kept informed of other training packages we will be providing at evidence base please contact Fiona Mullany on 0121 331 6253 or by email [fiona.mullany@uce.ac.uk](mailto:fiona.mullany@uce.ac.uk).

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## How do others see us? - mystery visiting as a tool for service evaluation



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### BACKGROUND

University libraries are constantly seeking new ways of evaluating the quality of service provided to their customers. Public libraries have taken the lead in the use of mystery visiting where an unidentified member of staff from one library visits another to assess the levels of service received, using a carefully prepared proforma which clearly outlines the service areas to be evaluated. Feedback from these visits provides very useful information on how a library is functioning from the perspective of first time users.

In autumn 2003, Leeds Library and Information Services (LLIS) invited the libraries of the University of Leeds (LUL) and Leeds Metropolitan University (LeedsMet) to join them in a mystery visiting project. The public library service, LLIS, was already well acquainted with this means of evaluating library services, having carried out their own internal mystery shopper exercise early in 2003. For the university libraries this was uncharted territory. The result was a very successful cross-sectoral project, the first in the UK, which provided a wealth of qualitative information about each library service.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Mystery visiting is an ideal tool for management to discover the real customer experience. It can be used to identify the strengths and weakness of an organisation, particularly the experience of customer care. It provides an opportunity to praise work well done and make suggestions for areas of improvement. Using visitors from similar organisations ensures that they can make objective assessments while having some prior knowledge of the environment. In addition, the visitors are able to look round another organisation's library, bring back good ideas to be used at their own workplace and learn some new skills.

The project required a great deal of planning and coordination. The participating institutions had to decide which areas of service they wished their mystery visitors to assess. After much discussion we agreed that visitors from one library would assess the following services at another

- External environment – signposting, directions to premises, ease of access, cleanliness
- Internal environment – overall feel of the environment, noise, lighting, furniture, appropriate layout
- Documentation available – leaflets, notices
- Use of computers (public libraries), self-service facilities (university libraries),
- Service experience / Customer care – via enquiries at desks and by telephone
- Overall experience of the visit

Detailed documentation was prepared for all these. We were fortunate that LLIS had run their own project and were willing to use the paperwork from that as a model for the new project. The mystery visitors were to ask questions at enquiry desks and over the telephone. These had to be written and model answers provided. Each service area was graded as commendable, satisfactory or unsatisfactory, but far more important than any grading are the comments made about services. The mystery visit is very much a qualitative tool, and volunteers were urged to write up their visits as comprehensively as possible.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

While the planning was taking place volunteers were recruited from the staff at each institution and allocated a library to visit. Thirty-five volunteers were recruited across all three services. We had initial worries that library staff would

be apprehensive about being part of the project, not wishing to be subjected to mystery visits themselves. These fears proved unfounded and at Leeds University Library we had 22 volunteers from all levels of the organisation, from portering staff to middle managers.

The project organisers and some of the volunteers attended a cross-sectoral training session given by a professional mystery visitor. They then cascaded the training to the volunteers at their own institutions.

## **Visits**

Each visitor carried out one visit and made one telephone phone call. The university libraries specified the time of day the visit should take place: weekday, evening, or at the weekend, so that all levels of service would be covered. Visits took place over two months in the spring of 2004. To ensure confidentiality, the evaluation sheets were sent straight back from the visitor to the project managers of the visited institution where detailed analysis took place.

## **RESULTS**

The project provided all three libraries with some very useful information on the services they offer, from the view point of a new user. In some cases these have resulted in changes to services. At Leeds University Library a new library telephone enquiry office was put in place at the beginning of session 2004/5 as the mystery phone calls demonstrated what had long been suspected, that phones were often left ringing for long periods, or were not answered at all.

Debriefing sessions were held for the volunteers when the visits were completed in April 2004. This allowed staff to report back on their experience, identify details of good practice from other libraries, some of which have been adopted by their own libraries, highlight any problems with the documentation and make recommendations for how to improve the project for next session.

Although the results identified some areas for improvement, they also provided evidence of high quality service in all the libraries visited. The praise for the high level of customer care experienced by some visitors was passed on to staff and has resulted in many positive comments about the process. New volunteers have come forward for a repeat of the project this academic session.

## CONCLUSION

The 2004 mystery visiting project was very successful. It provided all participants with some very useful feedback on the services they offer. It confirmed that all three libraries are providing high quality services, some areas of customer care receiving particular praise. Some scores and comments confirmed suspicions about areas that we already knew needed improvement. Other comments highlighted specific areas where more training is necessary.

All the participants gained something from the experience. Volunteers found visiting another library a challenging but useful experience. Many of our staff came back with ideas from other libraries on how do to things better.

It demonstrated that cross-sectoral collaboration can be efficient and useful to all concerned. It has provided us with the contacts to continue working with colleagues in both the public library and higher education sectors. We have already had several enquiries from other higher education libraries about the project.

The second year of the project is already under way, new mystery visits will take place in spring 2005. The results will provide us with two sets of comparable data and indicate any improvements in service.

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# Taking a planned approach to evaluation

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The importance of adopting a coherent approach to library evaluation cannot be overstated. All too often, time and other resource constraints mean that libraries are forced to conduct evaluations on an ad hoc basis. This regularly results in a failure to make use of existing data; inability to learn from previous experiences; and duplication of effort. Rather than see evaluation as something which is carried out as a knee-jerk reaction to demands from senior management or external funders, libraries need to build a rational evaluation plan as an integral part of their planning cycle and which exploits the range of sources of evidence available to support decision making. This is the approach which has been undertaken during the last year by UCE Library Services.

Evidence base the research and evaluation unit which joined the library service in February 2004, has been working with Library Services to develop a wide-ranging ongoing evaluation plan that will be embedded into service development. In addition to carrying out externally funded projects, the staff of evidence base have worked with the library staff on a range of evaluation activities, including a survey to evaluate students' experience of the induction process; a survey of academic staff; and a survey of students in all faculties to try to identify why some students make limited use of the library.

The approach taken was to develop a plan that would:

- be ongoing and provide the context and framework within which specific evaluation activities can be placed

- support a rolling programme of evaluation that can be used year on year
- be flexible, in order to take into account external factors such as the university and library planning cycles and internal factors such as the changing evaluation needs of the service.

As a starting point, staff at evidence base developed a methodology for conducting an 'evidence audit' for the library service. The evidence audit was broad in scope focusing both on information collected and available within the library services and that produced and available externally. The evidence audit sought to elicit information in the following broad areas:

- what research and evaluation activities are already taking place in UCE Library Services
- what other research and evaluation activities are taking place outside the library that may provide useful sources of evaluation data for the library
- what types of data are required within the library and externally
- what are the critical points at which evaluation data could feed into the decision making process
- what are the key processes which generate a need for evaluation data
- who is using, or likely to require evaluation data
- who are currently the key producers and users of evaluation data.

A key stage of the planning process asked the library management group to list previous evaluation and research undertaken and other data collected. The aim of this exercise was to identify where existing data could be utilised to inform planning and where the gaps were. One section asked for details of any problems experienced in previous evaluation activities and what had worked well in the past. This would enable a knowledge bank of successes and challenges to evaluation to be developed over time, which any member of staff undertaking an evaluation activity could draw upon.

In order to make use of the data collected through the evidence audit to develop the evaluation plan, additional context –setting and forward– planning activities were undertaken. The library management group were tasked with identifying the key strategic and operational themes that were anticipated to be of importance to the library service and the university in the short and medium term.

This included analysis of the library strategic plan and other university documentation as well as reflection on the likely trends affecting the external environment. This included themes such as contributing to student progression and retention; widening participation; developing electronic services and staff development. They also reflected on the types of information which they were regularly asked to provide, for example, internal budget plans and SCOUNL returns, in order to identify key dates in the evaluation cycle. This information was recorded in a systematic way in the audit document, which was then used to develop the evaluation plan. Undertaking the audit also proved valuable as it allowed the library management group to reflect and take stock of the evaluation activities which had been already done, in addition to allowing evidence base to gauge the extent of previous and current evaluation activity.

The audit was then used as a basis to decide on a programme of evaluation activities, which would provide data relating to the themes identified. As one of the Library Services' main areas of development was student progression, it was decided to focus initially on carrying out surveys of academic staff and students to try to identify why some students were low or non-users of Library Services and what might encourage them to make better use of the services available. Of course, most libraries carry out regular student surveys, but these are often extremely general and although this can be useful to identify longitudinal trends, it does not allow issues of immediate concern to be investigated in depth. As UCE Library Services were specifically interested in reasons for low and non-use of services and whether this had a relationship to student retention, a survey was devised to ask students in detail about their current use and perceptions of library services, for example: which services they used; how often they visited or used the library from off-campus; their impressions of the faculty librarians; whether they used other libraries; and whether they had attended an induction session. In April 2004, this survey was piloted with two faculties. Faculty librarians were actively involved in supporting this exercise. They were asked to suggest ways in which the survey might be distributed in order to get the highest response rate, including from low and non-users of library services. It was decided that handing out surveys at the end of lectures and, if possible, collecting them in as students left, was most likely to achieve a high response rate. The faculty librarians worked closely with academic and admin-

istrative staff in their faculties to secure their support and try to reach the maximum number of first year students.

The survey was analysed and a report prepared which was initially shared with the library management group and later all relevant staff. This raised a number of interesting issues which the library management group is currently in the process of responding to. Responses and actions are being shared with staff of the faculties concerned. A paper will shortly be produced identifying areas for action arising from these surveys and the solutions planned. Actions will be included in the next revision of the library's development plan.

Learning from the experiences in the two pilot faculties, this survey, with slight revisions, was rolled out across all faculties in November 2004. The same process of considering the issues raised and identifying responses which can be built into the library operational plan will be carried out for these surveys.

To complement these student surveys, an online survey open to all academic staff at UCE was carried out. This asked staff about a number of topics, including: their impressions of the library; whether they encouraged their students to use the library; what use they made of library services and resources in their teaching; and what factors they believed prevented students from making greater use of library services. As with the student surveys, a report has been prepared and presented to the library management group who are currently considering the issues raised and deciding how they might best respond. The information from this survey has helped to inform a series of brown bag lunches organised by Library Services to which staff have been invited to share their views in more depth.

The final, and perhaps the most interesting, aspect of the evaluation plan for 2004 involved a survey of all first year undergraduates attending library introduction sessions. It was felt that as this was the only occasion when a significant proportion of students would have contact with library staff it was crucial that this session was as effective as possible and encouraged students to make use of library services in the future. Again, the faculty librarians were actively involved in this activity, handing out surveys at the end of each introduction session. When the results of this survey are analysed, they will be used to identify possible improvements to the current induction process.

Taking a long-term strategic approach to evaluation means that evaluation activities are not planned in isolation and single activities can be used to provide data against more than one of the strategic themes. In addition, the cohesive approach is enabling evidence base to develop a bank of staff and students who can be approached to provide evaluation data for other activities in the future. For example, the library introduction survey asked students to provide their contact details if they were prepared to take part in further evaluation activities in the future. As part of the structured evaluation plan, it is intended to contact students later in their course in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the information they received at induction with the benefit of hindsight. In addition, the library service plans to set up an evaluation user group who can be contacted in the future to take part in further evaluation activities such as focus groups and act as a test group for new initiatives.

The evaluation plan has been updated at regular intervals throughout the year as new activities have been carried out and now functions as an ongoing working dynamic document. Although most activities to date have focused on using surveys, evidence base staff will be working with the library service in the future to conduct evaluations using a number of different methods. UCE library service has, therefore, made huge steps forward over the course of the last year in terms of its approach to evaluation. There is now a coherent plan which, while flexible enough to allow for changes in institutional priorities, external demands and so forth, provides a framework and gives a clear focus to evaluation activities. Evaluation planning has now become an integral part of the library planning cycle.

For more information on the evaluation planning framework adopted at UCE, contact Pete. Dalton@uce.ac.uk.

# The M25 Consortium: advocating a success story

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## BACKGROUND

The M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries is an organisation open to library and information services within the higher education sector (or to collections of particular relevance to the research community), within and extending beyond the geographic area bounded by the M25.

The raison d'être of the M25 is the belief and commitment to collaboration as a way of building relationships around libraries, users and collections to bring added value to services. Whilst its direct customers are member libraries, indirect customers include students, academics, and researchers of member institutions (and beyond).

## PUTTING THE CONSORTIUM ON THE MAP

The M25 Consortium is a membership organisation based on a subscription system. Last year the Advocacy Working Group (AWG) ran a survey to assess the extent to which member libraries and staff working within them were aware of the organisation and its range of services.

The survey was designed to inform and influence the Consortium's future approach to publicising its main activities. We were also able to measure the extent to which the profile had been raised by the AWG, by comparing results to an earlier survey conducted in 2001. 780 staff in member libraries took part (a 44% increase on the 2001 survey response rate).

## WHAT OUR MEMBER LIBRARIES TOLD US

- 94% of respondents had heard of the Consortium.
- Both awareness and usage had increased for Continuing Professional Development (through the CPD25 training programme); and Inform25 (simultaneous access to over 150 catalogues)
- Increased awareness of the M25 website in general
- Slight decrease in awareness and usage of access arrangements.
- Decrease in usage of the disaster control planning advice.

## THE OUTCOMES

- CPD - the awareness survey confirms a view, widespread within consortium members, that the CPD25 activities are flagship services offering great value for money: 'The range of training courses and the ample opportunity offered to library workers to attend them is extraordinary'.
- Inform25 - qualitative data gives a ringing endorsement to the service. However there is room for improvement in both awareness raising and further guidance to help users get the most from the service. The launch of the [inform25.ac.uk](http://inform25.ac.uk) domain may go quite some way to addressing the awareness issue.
- Access arrangements – the slight decrease in both awareness and usage may be attributed to the scaling up of the original M25 Access and Borrowing Scheme with others into a national scheme (SCONUL Research Extra). The Consortium can now build on the success story with SCONUL Research Extra and the streamlining of arrangements by which taught students can access the British Library. The M25 Consortium has had a real impact in changing the culture and promoting resilience in access arrangements. As one respondent commented, 'any work which simplifies regional access arrangements is welcome...'.  
■ Disaster control planning – the awareness survey highlights the need for greater promotion of this very valuable tool – something the Disaster Management Working Group and the AWG will work on. It is also worth noting that the survey was carried out before the launch of the current re-designed M25 Disaster Control Plan.
- Web service – it is recognised that a lot of the content held within the main business part



of the Consortium's website is not easy to find and a major review of the website is now under way.

#### VALUE TO MEMBERS

The survey reveals a picture of a mature, thriving, highly regarded consortium with a well used set of services which has had real impact on the delivery of information services to its communities of users. This could be summed up by one of our respondents who said:

*'I think that the Consortium does excellent work and feel that we benefit both as an organisation and as individual professionals from its existence.'*

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## News from SCONUL

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### 'What's occupying you?' SCONUL top concerns survey 2004



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At its meeting in October 2004, the SCONUL Executive Board (EB) approved a new 'top concerns survey' along the same lines as recent ones run by UCISA ([www.ucisa.ac.uk](http://www.ucisa.ac.uk)) and CONUL (Consortium of National and University Libraries in Ireland).

This was one of a number of consultation exercises undertaken since the summer of 2004 designed to feed into the future SCONUL planning process. The others include the ORC International study and SCONUL Vision 2010 exercise, details of which are all available on the SCONUL website, as well as discussions with Chairs of the various groups.

A 'concern' can be defined as something relating to anxiety and worry, but also to care and support. In carrying out the survey EB members hoped to identify issues high on the agenda of senior management as a means to:

- ensure EB is aware of members' current key issues/concerns
- help identify where there are gaps in current services and so inform our priorities
- help members to know about other people's main concerns
- help towards internal communication

- complement work to set a new agenda for SCONUL activity based round a formal review of groups and committees and a major financial strategy review
- complement work on improving influencing/ partnership
- help plan services/ activities/ events  
SCONUL will engage in over the next two years.

The email survey itself was aimed specifically at directors. Sent out on 12 October 2004, it asked two questions:

- 'From the perspective of your 'day job', please identify what have been your three top concerns over the last three months'*
- 'Do any other professional bodies/groups already support you in handling these concerns? If so, which one(s)?'*

Some 49 responses were received and collated. The key issues raised in the survey were as follows, given in a composite (A-Z, unranked) list. As expected these are wide-ranging but not earth-shattering, but they do give an insight into the wide, and ever-widening, range of things that directors are expected to cope with at the present time:

### 1 Access to services

- o collaborative provision; participation in collaborative schemes; widening access (including diversity, disability, etc.); licensing electronic resources to those not clearly defined as members of the institution. For example: 'how do you cost library support to ensure you are funded to provide services to people who have signed up to a range of inventive contracts with your university?' and 'what should our relationship be with partner institutions and their students?'
- o demand for extended opening hours and changes in the nature of library use: the 'student experience': library as potential whipping boy for institutional shortcomings?
- o delivering remote services (to further education colleges and NHS sites)

### 2 Compliance

- o freedom of information, including the impact on the library service
- o records management

- o copyright: ensuring staff and students keep within guidelines particularly in relation to electronic resources and VLEs
- o health and safety issues in the current legislative environment – local accountability – burgeoning risk assessments

### 3 E-resources, e-learning, e-environment

- o escalating costs, procurement and value for money of e-resources
- o lack of time to evaluate e-deals
- o procuring e-books, particularly for nursing
- o managing user expectations in the context of escalating costs and standstill budgets (and staffing)
- o constructing and exploiting linkages between library management systems and e-resources
- o portal development, including the presentation of hybrid resources to integrate with VLE/MLE concept
- o website management and migration to new content management
- o dealing with the challenge of user behaviour: searching the web, especially via Google, in preference to using library services
- o access to e-resources for courses run at partner colleges; for example 'It causes friction with academic colleagues who don't understand why we cannot get the resources'
- o dealing with the challenge that e-delivery makes access easier, but restricts the public access that was offered in the print environment
- o engaging senior management and academic staff in the library's role in embedding e-resources and information literacy as a component of e-pedagogy
- o VLEs (including procurement) and the impact of e-learning on the library; for example 'I am concerned that our institution has not yet decided on which VLE it will have and has gone the way of e-learning programmes which can sit in any VLE - to my mind they are putting the cart before the horse!'
- o lack of money and staff to exploit the e-learning environment
- o developing a VRE and supporting e-science
- o institutional repositories: raising awareness, and the associated issues (copyright, IPR, open access)

- o uncertainty over the role of the Research Libraries Network in relation to current university library provision

#### **4 Funding and financial management**

- o budget cuts
- o funding insufficient for purchase of resources or to sustain services
- o funding levels affecting staffing and development
- o formulating a development plan drawing attention to relatively poor funding
- o budgets in the context of a library company
- o dealing with new institutional budget allocation processes, and determining an acceptable political solution to allocating funding to a reorganised academic structure
- o fund allocation
- o fundraising: for building developments, cataloguing special collections, maintaining services
- o impact of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee report on the future of scholarly publishing

#### **5 Higher Education reconfiguration**

- o establishing a merged service and rationalising provision of information resources

#### **6 Institutional issues**

- o balancing the workloads of the Librarian's library and institutional roles
- o being expected to contribute to/be an expert on data protection, freedom of information, records management, information strategy and institutional repository development
- o retaining full involvement in academic planning and developments at a time of institutional change
- o planning how the library should develop in the light of institutional change: for example 'In the light of the changing character of the University, fundamentally what kind of library is this, how should we develop our collections, both printed and electronic, over the next five to ten years, and how should we allocate funding?'
- o establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with other support services, including working with Estates on large-scale projects
- o convergence of library and IT services

- o the drive to improve the institution's position in league tables (directly related to spend on IT and information resources)
- o dealing with the tensions between institutional competition and the service benefits of collaboration
- o dealing with complex institutional politics

#### **7 IT issues**

- o introduction of a new library management system
- o student access to PCs; laptops and wireless connectivity

#### **8 Management issues**

- o change management issues: new ways of working with academic colleagues; repositioning the library in the university
- o getting communication processes right in a large converged department
- o completing projects on time and within budgets
- o integration of front-line services, including enquiry services and IT support delivery

#### **9 Policy and strategy**

- o collection policies
- o developing a financial strategy
- o information strategy revision
- o reviewing the Library's vision
- o redrafting space and collection management strategy, driven by the need to house ever growing research collections

#### **10 Quality issues**

- o performance measurement, quality measurement, benchmarking
- o preparation for institutional audit
- o preparing for Charter Mark reassessment

#### **11 Space and buildings**

- o space planning and management including
  - (a) capacity and configuration issues; for example 'LRCs were set up to provide a specific approach to support (from desks) and one-size-fits all design. We want to move to a new service culture (issues under discussion are self-service, 24x7, a triage approach to enquiries, etc.). We also want to design different bits of the buildings to support different clienteles, e.g. we've just launched a research sup-

- port area - and if (feasible) the ground floors would become total cyber cafe and group work areas.'
- (b) making headroom in existing space, planning for future demands
- (c) impact of growing student numbers, while research print publishing continues at a high rate
- o building projects - developing case and options appraisal; securing funding, finalising M&E and structural works, preparing tenders for contractors; delays; dealing with a project that went into financial meltdown
- o closing a campus library
- o planning and funding collaborative remote storage
- o defending the need for library and information resources space as a physical entity in a 'virtual' environment

## 12 Staffing and HR management

- o cultural change amongst a wide range of staff, and their ability to respond to it
- o performance management
- o dealing with difficult HR issues including disciplinary issues, redeployment, preparing for redundancy and negotiating with trade unions
- o increasingly seeming to do more and more of what would once have been 'central HR Dept' work
- o new institutional HR policies
- o new appraisal scheme
- o skills development, including IT skills, advocacy, marketing, awareness raising, thinking creatively, communicating effectively; for example 'We need database skills, library system skills, deep data mining etc. E-learning also requires a different and more co-operative approach to service provision with teaching teams, etc.' and 'Creating and maintaining the right skill mix \awareness for all IS staff in order to embrace and develop new technological applications for the delivery of services.'
- o job evaluation
- o leadership and management development, especially for senior managers; succession planning; addressing lack of management expertise at senior/middle levels
- o remuneration, status and conditions
- o transfer to new single pay spine

- o staff restructuring, staffing structures and deployment, job design,
- o staffing levels, especially management
- o failure to recruit - especially professional staff
- o an ageing, and relatively conservative, staff
- o staffing service developments - electronic library services, 24x7, promoting self-service, increasing learner support

EB discussed and rejected a proposal to identify a final list of concerns for issuing to directors for them to rank each in order of importance using a five-point scale, which would then be processed using SPSS (or other) to produce frequency, mean score and standard deviation to provide final results and final ranking of concerns so as to reach an opinion on the importance of each to the whole SCONUL community. The areas were considered too diffuse to be concertinaed in this way.

One clear output from the survey (and other consultation exercises) has been to help EB identify and plan the services, activities and events SCONUL should provide for members over the next two years. The results were fed into the (ongoing) review of SCONUL activity and will inform the activities of many of the Working and Task & Finish Groups. For example, early changes will be seen in the refocus of the Buildings group onto wider issues related to space planning and in the raft of new work related to e-learning.

Lastly, it is now planned to run such an email survey every year – it will be interesting to see whether the areas identified above are repeated or disappear ...and what new issues appear on the horizon.

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# Benchmarking the standard SCONUL User Survey – report of a pilot study

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## CONTEXT

Standard user surveys are widely used in the public library sector – indeed there is one which is effectively mandatory, as some of the new public library standards are based on it.<sup>1</sup> User survey data are also routinely included in the CIPFA *Public Library Statistics - Actuals series*.<sup>2</sup> SCONUL has never prescribed a standard survey instrument or methodology in this way, and does not include survey data in its annual statistical return. However, one purpose of a standard user survey template is not to prescribe what libraries should be asking their users, but rather to suggest a form of words which they may find useful, and to allow for comparisons to be made where several institutions ask the same questions in the same way.

In December 2003, a brief survey of SCONUL members was carried out into their practice concerning user surveys.<sup>3</sup> Of 65 respondents, 62 (95%) carried out user surveys, and 39 of these (63%) did so on an annual basis. Although not specifically asked, 16 respondents (26%) indicated that they used the standard SCONUL user survey template, and the author of the report suspected that this was an under-estimate of the true position.<sup>4</sup>

One of the key findings of the report was that the ability to benchmark user survey data was thought to be one of the strengths of the ARL LibQUAL+ instrument.<sup>5</sup> Given the continuing popularity of the SCONUL satisfaction survey template, the report recommended that SCONUL's Advisory Committee on Performance Improvement (ACPI) should consider easy mechanisms for

libraries which use the template to benchmark data.

During 2004, ACPI initiated a pilot study into the feasibility of benchmarking the results from the standard user survey template. Approaches were made to individual libraries to ascertain the level of interest, and LISU at Loughborough University was commissioned in September to carry out the study, with funding contributed by the participating libraries.

## PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Nine members eventually supplied data to LISU: University of Wales Aberystwyth; Bolton Institute of Higher Education; De Montfort University; Glasgow Caledonian University; St Martin's College; University of Northumbria at Newcastle; Southampton University; University of Wales Swansea; and York University.

## METHODOLOGY

Summary data were extracted for all participants and entered in a standard form in an Excel spreadsheet. Given that this was a pilot exercise designed to test the viability of benchmarking user survey data, no account was taken of differences in survey periods. It was clear at the start that there were variations in the closeness of the adherence to the standard which would affect the analysis. Small differences in wording (e.g. to 'personalise' the template using local names for particular services) were felt to be insignificant in this context.

It was clear that not all participating libraries had used the standard template in its entirety. Some had omitted questions, or parts of questions; others had added elements of particular interest to their circumstances. These variations are not thought to invalidate any comparisons which might be made. Of more concern, however, is the way in which the samples were selected for the surveys. It seemed likely that at least one participant had not administered the survey within the library, as a high proportion of its respondents were infrequent users. There had also been some inconsistency over the use of the 'don't know' categories as pre-fillers for questions which might otherwise have been left blank. While such inconsistencies do not invalidate the process of comparison, for a more focused exercise they would need to be carefully monitored, as they will affect the interpretation of the results.

More seriously, one institution had used the SCONUL template questions but reduced the rating scales from five points to four, and so could not be included in any comparisons. Another questionnaire bore little resemblance to the standard template, and only one question could be benchmarked.

LISU's preference when undertaking any statistical benchmarking exercise is to look at trends over at least the previous five years, wherever possible. However, in this case, no trend data were available, so the analysis concentrated on providing a set of graphs illustrating each institution's pattern of responses on each question, compared to the others in the group. Average 'scores' were also calculated for each of the rating scale items in the survey. In order to provide a flavour of what is possible, the average for all participating institutions was included. It is recognised that the participating institutions form such a diverse group that average figures are likely to be of little value in this context.

#### **RESULTS AND COMMENTARY**

A full report was provided to participants, and to the ACPI. Below is a brief summary of the findings, with some examples of the graphs and tables which were provided. All results are here presented anonymously, as the data were supplied to LISU in confidence.

There was a wide range in the number of responses included, from just 118 in library D to 1,532 in library F. Some of these sample sizes raise the question of whether any valid or reliable information can be gleaned from such small surveys.

#### **CONTEXTUAL DATA**

It was interesting that the questions relating to the respondents' role within the institution (e.g. whether staff or student, full time or part time, undergraduate or postgraduate), were not used in their original form by any of the participants. The wording of these questions is likely to be revised in an updated template currently being considered by the ACPI.

Contextual data are important descriptors for any benchmarking exercise, as no two libraries are ever truly alike. Knowledge of the background can help to explain unexpected or unusual results. In the data included in the pilot, Library D did not survey staff, and the proportion of staff responses was relatively low in library B. Staff and students

are likely to make different demands on, and have different experience of, library services which could affect comparisons between institutions.

The majority of respondents at all participating institutions were full time, from 79% at library B to 95% at library H. Similarly, the majority of student respondents were undergraduates, with a range from 76% at library E to 87% at libraries D, F and A. Respondents at library B were noticeably older than those at the other five libraries which had included this question in a comparable way.

All but one participant included a question on frequency of library use, with some allowing a more detailed breakdown than the standard template. There were some interesting variations in response patterns – in particular, at library A almost half the responses were from infrequent users, suggesting that its survey may have been carried out on a different basis from the others. Library H also had a significant proportion of infrequent users (20%), while at the other extreme, under 2% of responses at library B were from those who used the library less often than once a month.

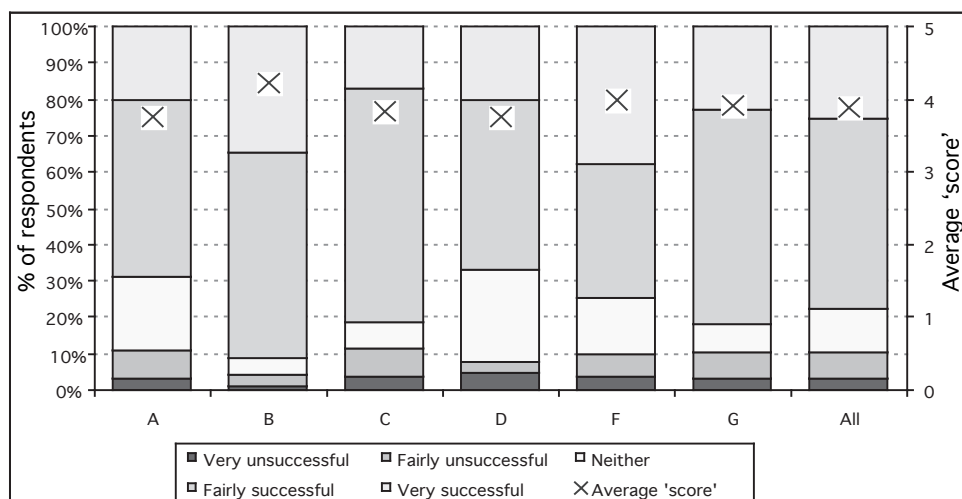
#### **ACTIVITIES DURING CURRENT VISIT**

The template lists five activities – looking for material on the shelves, using electronic information services, the catalogue or a computer, and seeking help from library staff – with respondents asked to rate their success on a five point scale, or indicate that they did not participate in the activity. This last option was not apparent in the data received from library A, again suggesting that the survey was conducted differently there. The analyses for this section omit the 'did not do' category, so library A's data have been included in the analysis.

Graphs were produced showing the proportion of respondents giving each rating, together with an 'average score'. This was calculated by scoring 'very unsuccessful' as 1 up to 'very successful' as 5, and averaging over all responses. Such an average allows participants to be ranked, if required, and gives a single figure overview of performance. In general, high scores were achieved throughout. Fig 1 gives an example of the results, showing success in looking for material on the shelves.

**Fig 1: Success in looking for material on the shelves**

	A	B	C	D	F	G	All
Very unsuccessful	3%	1%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Fairly unsuccessful	7%	3%	8%	3%	6%	7%	7%
Neither	20%	5%	7%	26%	15%	8%	12%
Fairly successful	49%	56%	64%	47%	37%	59%	52%
Very successful	20%	35%	17%	20%	38%	23%	26%
<i>No. included</i>	446	126	970	90	942	665	3,239
Average 'score'	3.75	4.21	3.84	3.74	3.99	3.91	3.90



There were some clear differences in performance between the libraries for all of the activities compared, although there was little consistency between the activities in those libraries with better or poorer results. For example, Library B recorded the best performance among those who looked for library material on the shelves, with an average score of 4.21, and 91% of users 'fairly' or 'very' successful, while Library C performed best for users of electronic information services, the only library with less than 10% unsuccessful, and an average score 3.93. However, library D had the highest proportion of respondents reporting they were 'very' successful in this activity, but the poorest success for use of the library catalogue; the only respondent to average a score of less than 4 on this activity. Only 70% of users were 'very' or 'fairly' successful, compared to over 80% in all the other libraries.

**FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

In the standard template, users are asked to rate both their satisfaction with a wide range of services provided, and its importance to them. Seven of the participating libraries used this question in whole or in part, with one using only the satisfaction element of it. Some libraries did not include

all the standard services; some included additional services of particular relevance to themselves. As above, average scores were presented, together with the distribution of responses. Both satisfaction and importance ratings were generally high, although there were some notable exceptions. 'Don't know' and 'not applicable' responses were omitted from the analysis.

Average scores on the satisfaction elements were generally below the success scores described above, with only three – the library catalogue and the two items concerning staff – achieving average scores above 4 overall. Few institutions stood out as having particularly high or low scores on any items:

- Library B scored particularly well on the provision of course books, with 25% 'very' satisfied and 49% 'fairly' satisfied
- Library B also scored well on provision of photocopying with an average score of 4.13, while library H had the poorest rating, achieving an average score of just 3.16
- Library B performed best on printing, with 81% of users 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied,

compared to 71% in library C and 67% in library D

- Library H recorded a particularly low score for the provision of computers, of just 2.88 – the only average score below 3 on any item. Just 9% of its users were ‘very’ satisfied with this service
- There was a wide range of satisfaction levels with library opening hours. Libraries E and B had the most satisfied customers, with 48% and 46% of users respectively ‘very’ satisfied with the opening hours.

It is also interesting to relate some of these differences to the absolute levels of provision as recorded in the *SCONUL Annual Statistics* – although this may invite further questions, rather than providing answers. For example, although library E has the longest general opening hours of the group and so a high level of satisfaction might be expected, library B has the shortest, by a considerable margin. However, library B has much longer opening hours for those areas with

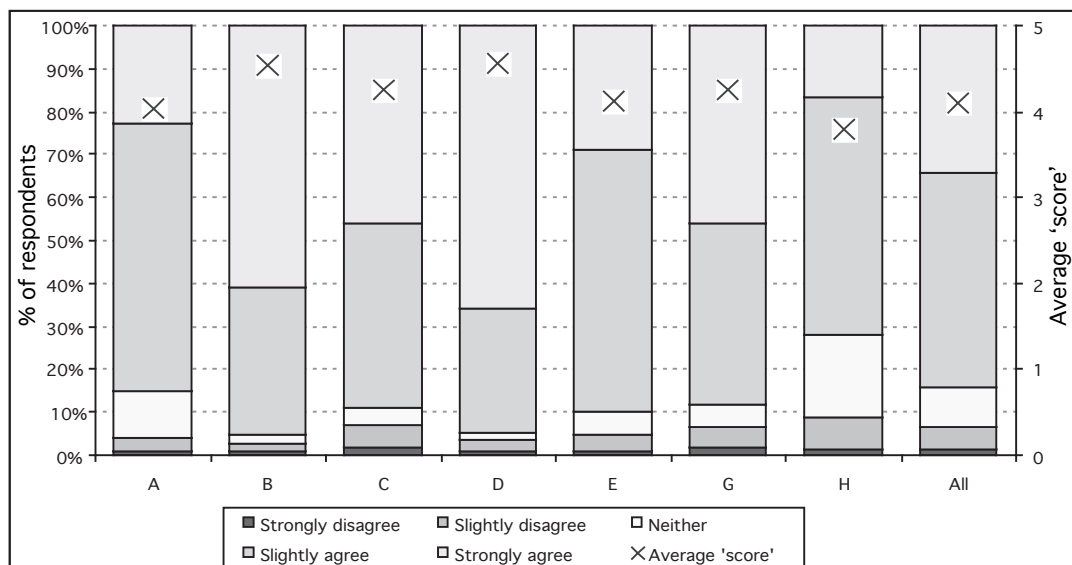
computer workstations, and it may be this provision which is being rated here. It seems likely that the picture is even more complex, related to the convenience of the hours and the range of services available during extended hours.

The importance ratings given to individual items tended to be rather higher than their satisfaction levels. It is noticeable that for almost all items, the lowest importance ratings were recorded at library A, with a high proportion of infrequent users. The highest rating for any item was the importance of the range of books at library B, where 92% of respondents thought this ‘very’ important, and the remainder thought it ‘fairly’ important.

Also interesting is the importance rating for computers at library H. 18.2% of respondents thought this ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ unimportant. This may suggest that improving the poor level of satisfaction noted above with this service might not be the highest priority for this library. Users at library H also placed a relatively low importance on the range of electronic information services.

**Fig 2: Overall, the library provides a good service to me**

	A	B	C	D	E	G	H	All
Strongly disagree	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Slightly disagree	3%	2%	5%	3%	4%	5%	8%	5%
Neither	11%	2%	4%	2%	5%	5%	19%	9%
Slightly agree	62%	34%	43%	29%	61%	42%	55%	50%
Strongly agree	23%	61%	46%	66%	29%	46%	17%	34%
<i>No. included</i>	483	121	1,022	117	581	802	1,143	4,269
Average ‘score’	4.03	4.53	4.26	4.56	4.13	4.26	3.79	4.11





## OVERALL SATISFACTION

No library scores particularly poorly on the final question from the SCONUL template, 'overall the library provides a good service to me', illustrated in Fig 2. Fewer than 10% of respondents disagree with this statement at any library. Libraries D and B have the highest levels of overall satisfaction, with average scores of 4.56 and 4.53 respectively, and 95% of users 'slightly' or 'strongly' agreeing with the statement. Library H shows the poorest results, with an average score of 3.79, and 72% of users 'slightly' or 'strongly' agreeing with the statement.

## CONCLUSIONS

This pilot study has shown that it is possible to use the data from the standard SCONUL user survey template to make valid comparisons between libraries. There are a number of areas where care must be taken in order for the analyses to have the greatest value, for example in the choice of comparators. It is also important to ensure that the survey methodology has been applied in a consistent way in all institutions included. Variations in the time period over which the survey was conducted, or the physical medium through which it was administered are acceptable, however. Making such comparisons – benchmarking – is a useful addition to the information gleaned from user survey data, and if a time series element could be incorporated, further benefits would be gained. One aspect which has not been explored here in any detail is to inform the results with additional information from the SCONUL *Annual Statistics*.

Following on from this pilot study, LISU has offered to provide an analysis and benchmarking service, at reasonable cost, should there be sufficient interest from SCONUL members who are using this survey in whole or in part. Librarians are invited to contact LISU<sup>6</sup> if they would like further information.

Note that since the surveys analysed here were carried out, the ACPI has considered a revision to the standard template which will take into account the increase in use of electronic services both within and beyond traditional library buildings. It will also revise the contextual data collected about respondents. This revised version is expected to be published during 2005.

- 1 Department of Culture, Media & Sport (2004) Public library service standards. Available at [http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive\\_2004/library\\_standards.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2004/library_standards.htm)
- 2 Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (2003) Public library statistics 2002-03 actuals, ISSN 0260-4078, London: CIPFA
- 3 Christopher West, User surveys in UK and Irish HE libraries, January 2004. Available at <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/performance/papers/>
- 4 Available at <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/performance/papers/>
- 5 See <http://www.libqual.org/Information/index.cfm>
- 6 Contact [lisu@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:lisu@lboro.ac.uk) for more information

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# 'The Shape of Things to Come'

SCONUL Conference 2005, Brighton, 6  
– 8 April 2005

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When I phoned up the SCONUL office and asked for directions to the Old Ship Hotel, the home of this year's conference, I was told to merely walk out of the railway station and it would be 'down hill all the way'. Down hill all the way, eh? A less appropriate description of a SCONUL Conference would be hard to find. This was an excellent conference that began on a high and somehow seemed to just get better and better, culminating in a paper that –as one delegate remarked to me– just blew us all away.

## DAY ONE

Blown away *is* actually an appropriate phrase to use for this event. When I told colleagues that I was going to Brighton for three days you could (to nearly quote Morrissey) see jealousy in the eyes of the ones I left behind. In truth, this was not a sunny Brighton but a rather windswept, wet and –at times– even snowy Brighton that became the home of some 130 librarians, a record attendance for a SCONUL Conference, this April.

Any icy feelings, though, were soon melted away by the warmth of the reception we all received. Suzanne Enright, Chair of SCONUL, welcomed us and Debby Shorley (Librarian of the University of Sussex, co-host institution along with the University of Brighton) set the tone by explaining what Brighton means to her. It is (and am I really including these as bullet points?):

- vulgar
- very creative
- forward looking.

As these phrases already felt familiar to me from my school reports, I quickly felt at home. And, we were told, all the speakers were going to take a

strategic approach. *And* they were all tried and tested orators who had proved themselves to at least one of the organisers. I already had a good feeling about this conference.



My warm glow got even brighter as we were addressed by **Kay Raseroka**, President of IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions). Kay's approach can only be described as elegant, and her paper 'Shaping the future: libraries and the knowledge society' provided a most thought-provoking start to the programme. Kay began by saying she wanted to review some of the 'beautiful things' but also consider the problems we face. She focused her thoughts by describing the Three Pillars of IFLA:

- the members
- the profession;
- Society.

Of greatest concern is Society. We need advocacy to effectively support society. We need to celebrate success but monitor areas where development is needed. We need unity so we can influence policy makers and politicians. Kay made a plea for IFLA and SCONUL to work more closely to do just this. More cooperation is needed on a more practical level if we are to really extend access of e-resources into the Developing World. Other themes explored seemed quite familiar ...but Kay gave them a whole new perspective. Information skills are paramount not just so our students make better use of our resources: there is a deeper, darker reason. Learning packs are 'a disaster' because they lead to spoon-feeding. We need information skills if we are to think for ourselves and really have democracy. I must admit, I had never really followed this through to its natural conclusions of totalitarianism and unthinking acceptance of oppressive political regimes. Other new perspectives came on diversity and copyright. We address disability, but isn't illiteracy just a form of disability? And isn't copyright often a barrier to addressing illiteracy in the Developing World? We need to work together to address

these issues and build on the good work already undertaken. Advocacy and cooperation were –for me– the big messages of Kay’s eloquent speech, and indeed the whole conference.

Next up was **Chris Batt** who spoke on ‘Investing in knowledge’ from the perspective of his work with MLA, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council ([www.mla.gov.uk](http://www.mla.gov.uk)), in his usual inimitable style. Chris focused on MLA’s five year strategic review. Echoing the rest of the conference, advocacy came up as a key theme (Chris’s aim is to turn Government’s perception of museums, libraries and archives from ‘mostly harmless’ to ‘totally wicked’) as did regionalism (see review of Mike Hopkins’, workshop below). Like Kay, Chris saw three key parts to his work:

- collections
- delivery mechanisms
- audiences.

Alternatively:

- collections
- customers
- connectivity.



MLA’s mission is to build a successful and creative nation by access to information. It has branded its three constituent parts as ‘knowledge institutions’, the memory banks and raw materials for the future, ‘The Knowledge Bank of England’. He then explained the steps taken to make all this a reality. Chris concluded with some of his more long-term aspirations, especially in relation to the ‘digital futures’ project. He quoted the figure:

96:50

What this ratio represents is the percentage of the UK population who have access to the internet against the percentage who actually use it. Chris is keen to boost both figures, but especially the second, to ensure more people connect ...and use

it productively. Not for the last time this conference, Google was mentioned. We need to use the strength of design that Google offers but back it up with the trusted quality information that we can supply.

For those of you who have not yet attended a SCONUL conference, the organisers wisely break up the lecture programme with other activities. Punctuating the formal talks were a host of workshops covering many of the themes that are impacting on us now and are likely to be of greater significance in the future:

- ‘The effects of forthcoming changes in higher education on university library services’
- ‘Partnerships and further education’
- ‘Implications of top-up fees’
- ‘Regional collaboration’
- ‘The future of libraries in the blended learning age’.

Reviews of these (from a variety of people attending) are given below.

#### **The effect of forthcoming changes in higher education on university library services, David House, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Brighton**

Rapporteurs: Scott Robertson, University College Chichester and Steve Rose, University of Oxford

This workshop provided a rare opportunity to hear from an experienced university senior manager whose previous role had been managing Libraries and Learning Resources. David House, Deputy Vice-Chancellor from Brighton University, was able to provide insights into the current higher education agenda with an awareness of how these might affect library management.

HEFCE’s principal policies at the moment were the pursuit of excellence and widening participation (in reality the development of Foundation Degrees) and the concentration of research in the Russell Group.

A major problem for HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) was the financial security of institutions. At present 12 institutions are being financially monitored by the funding council. Many institutions are operating with tight margins. There is certainly not a level playing field across the sector. We were provided with some interesting funding comparisons – the teaching unit of resource is being increased by 2.9%, research funding is up 10.8% and being concen-

trated in even fewer institutions; £900M capital has been made available for research and £550M for teaching.

Prevailing government policies included:

- 50% participation through Foundation Degrees
- an instrumental view of education
- employer involvement
- strategic job losses
- less trust in autonomous universities
- new monitoring tools (space management/charging, HR policies as an analytical tool)
- pressure for stratification and collaboration
- lifelong learning and partnership with further education (the Wisconsin model).

The situation regarding funding for teaching was now to be one of non-variable fees, providing extra funds, 20 to 30% of which would be recycled in bursaries, leading to greater competition and confusion.

Turning to libraries, House noted that institutions had ignored the student survey findings that library funding was the top priority. Indeed there had been the disturbing example of Bangor's move to prune the professional library workforce. HEFCE's recent e-learning strategy document had no mention of the library's possible role. Recent documents on professional standards referred to an appropriate learning environment and resources to support learning, but with no reference to libraries. Librarians in higher education had a lot of ground to recover.

He went on to list a few challenges for higher education libraries:

- justification of cost and space
- attracting a share of new funding streams which tended to be earmarked
- the situation facing all academic-related staff in the new common pay framework with the job evaluation exercise leading to a 10% increase in the pay bill
- the e-learning agenda (do we embrace, ignore or resist? – libraries may not be seen to have a role in VLEs)
- the difficulties posed by partnership/collaboration in a competitive environment, including regional approaches to research resources.

A wide ranging discussion then ensued.

The atmosphere of lack of trust and transparency was seen as a major difficulty for the development of a methodology for identifying services for research and learning. The TRAC (Transparent Approach to Costing) exercise was seen as spurious and the devolution of resources to faculties meant less power to libraries to manage resources effectively for their institutions.

On the other hand, it was suggested that the current emphasis on a more inter-disciplinary approach to research offered libraries more of a role in supporting this activity, particularly in relation to the Research Libraries Network, e-deposit of all research output and subject repositories.

There was then an exchange of views on e-learning and e-research. Some felt that it was not appropriate for standard nineteen-year-old undergraduates and others felt that the concept of institutional repositories was too wedded to the traditional publishing model. It was suggested that libraries needed to get across our information agenda for the twenty-first century to academics who don't want to change their methods. It was noted too that many academics are the driving force behind the development of e-learning initiatives, and so partnership here is crucial. The fact that HEFCE appeared not to recognise the library role in the e-learning strategy was alarming and SCONUL was urged to help in the process of promoting our essential role in this context. The recent HEFCE funding, earmarked for e-learning was noted, but it was considered that this was insufficient, it was not targeted directly at libraries and there was little time for consultation as to how it should be spent. It was considered that those managing merged services may have an advantage over those managing library services in obtaining funds for e-learning. Reference was made to SCONUL's e-learning task force. The e-learning agenda was seen by one delegate as a pedagogical debate, at the centre of all institutions' learning strategies, and it often offered an opportunity for libraries to lead.

David House felt that libraries needed to contribute more to knowledge management in their institutions.

Reference was made to the Bangor situation and the SCONUL vision, and the belief that the academic library community needed to be more informed about teaching and research and to market that knowledge and involvement. Some higher education institutions had embedded their professional information skills into the curricu-

lum; others found it difficult to recruit librarians with appropriate professional skills. The latter was a cross-sectoral difficulty that SCONUL was attempting to tackle jointly with CILIP.

Discussion took place about the future role of academic-related staff following on from the job evaluation exercise. Many participants are currently going through the HERA (Higher Education Role Analysis) exercise. Feelings were mixed. At one level, it was considered that the potential to achieve an upgrade in salaries for library and IT posts is positive (one delegate noted 50% of such posts had been upgraded as a result of this exercise). However, there was also concern as how the sector will handle a projected 10% rise in salary costs and it was feared that specialist posts (e.g. research librarians, cataloguers) may be discriminated against as a result.

The lively debate sparked off by the well-informed and provocative challenges provided by David House's presentation could have continued well beyond the allotted time in this lively workshop.

**Partnerships and further education, Margaret Coutts, University Librarian, University of Leeds**  
Rapporteurs: Jon Purcell, Newcastle University and Lyn Turpin, University of Brighton

Margaret Coutts delivered a stimulating and fascinating workshop on partnerships and further education. Although based largely on her experiences at the University of Kent, and in particular, the collaboration with the University of Greenwich and Canterbury Christ Church University College to establish the joint Medway Campus, this workshop also explored some of the challenges and opportunities of further and higher education partnership working and discussed various partnership models currently operating in the UK.

Workshop participants were familiar with many of the issues involved in partnership working – defining 'access', availability of study facilities, collection development and acquisition policies, funding, quality assurance, parity of provision and esteem, operational staff understanding of policies and provision .... the list goes on! Some of the solutions discussed included commitment at all levels within the library and the institutions involved, a pragmatic approach to problem solving, keeping the service focused primarily on user needs, creative 'out of the box' thinking, and the provision of seamless services.

Margaret discussed some of the unique challenges and opportunities from operating shared services in the form of the new joint learning resource centre at the Medway Campus. These included the need to establish reality with regard to shared premises, ICT, staffing and dual management; the complexity of a single staffing structure; compromises on collection management principles, the irreconcilable needs for library management systems and the need to reconcile numerous differences in the detail of service levels.

The most interesting and relevant part of the workshop was the discussion of various operational models with a recognition that a franchising (and similar) partnership will be different from an equal or shared partnership arrangement. Key variables for a franchising model include: a clear understanding and agreement of institutional commitments; definition of user groups, access to collections/ICT/study facilities; collection coverage, enquiry and training services. Clarity with regard to the financial resources and the need for staff training were also deemed crucial. An equal partnership model involves a clear definition of ownership vs. provider/customer issues; the need to reconcile differences and the clear message that the needs of the user in any model are paramount. Often the most intractable differences are those relating to institutional operating systems and library management systems – there is only room for one of each in any joint provision of services.

During the discussions, various other models were also considered including those with the NHS (the direct provision of services, shared facilities and a complex NHS/higher education partnership) and various other exemplars between further and higher education. It was also evident that a variety of partnership models between further and higher education have been established and will continue to meet government, regional/local and institutional needs. To Margaret's initial question, 'do we have to think of solutions every time?', the answer appears to be 'probably' but there is sufficient good practice and models available to both guide and inform new developments.

**'Top up fees': our changing service context, Di Martin, Director of Learning and Information Services, University of Hertfordshire**

Rapporteurs: Antony Brewerton, *SCONUL Focus* and Julie Parry, Bath Spa University

Di Martin began the session by pointing out that she is not an expert on this matter, and –indeed–

we are all learning fast about the subject. More darkly, she asked the question: Is this session really about top-up fees ...or the power of money?

Over the next few minutes Di showed that if she really is no expert she certainly isn't a novice. In a quarter of an hour she gave a very comprehensive overview of the issues and really got our brains going for the brainstorm element of the session:

- **Funding changes** - Di reviewed the current situation by looking at student outgoings (£3,000 pa for the next five years ...and after that?) and income opportunities (models of grants, bursaries and scholarships), along with monitoring bodies (the Office for Fair Access, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and the role of the National Student Survey).
- **The wider Higher Education (HE) Strategic Context** – Di reviewed the wider drivers for change: Government pushes for 50% participation in HE by 2010; the shifting balance between Learning and Teaching, Research, Business and Community, and Widening Participation as the key drivers; the need for institutional differentiation/a Unique Selling Point; plus the usual suspects (RAE, and so on). To this familiar list she added funding as an effective change agent, reminding us of the effects of Thatcher's plans for HE growth in the early 1990s.
- **Student Expectations** – Herein lie the big questions. Will student expectation change? Tuition fees are already in place. Was there a huge upheaval when these were introduced? Will students' attitudes change? How about their parents? Where will the money go? The Unite Report shows that many students (31%) favour monies going to libraries. Do Vice Chancellors hold the same view? Will students increasingly see themselves as customers who can take their custom elsewhere if they do not get the education they wish to buy? How will external factors affect expectations (eg. the views of international students, changes in retail and demands for a more personal service in the de-personalising Internet Age)?
- **Key considerations for us** – To sharpen our minds further, Di posed more questions. What is our existing reputation? How can we find out? Do we know our customers? Are we really customer-focused? Do we

have customer service policies? Is the library clearly part of the 'brand' of its host institution? Is the library seen as 'relevant'? Can we anticipate change? What can we learn from others? How can we equip our staff to successfully deal with change?

Di ended her introduction with a slide posing the biggest question of all:

'If you were investing £30,000 in your future over the next 3 years with this university, what would you expect?'

So are there any answers? Or just more questions? In truth, the debate that followed brought up both. The key points raised were:

- Students' expectations are difficult to second guess ...but they are likely to be huge. The up-coming generation have had the Internet from birth. They are used to –and expect- a 24x7 world, with instant access and personalised services. We need to develop more of a Client Relationship Management approach.
- It was felt that some universities will become stronger and some weaker as a result of these changes. Funding is likely to go to the more popular areas. How will others survive?
- Will we –as librarians- get any money of this extra money at all? This was the most discussed element. 31% may wish for more library books, but most institutions are likely to divide monies up between bursaries, academic salaries and infrastructure (which usually means buildings). The need for revenue, not capital, funding for libraries was also raised. Are libraries perceived as important for investment?
- Staff will face new demands, new challenges. We need to train our staff to provide a more flexible workforce to cope with the changing environment. We need to exploit self-service in some areas to provide a more personalised offering in another. We need to develop the presence and role of subject librarians. We may need to even consider their titles to sound more dynamic and break down barriers.

In the end, the clock was against us so discussions were brought to an end earlier than we would have liked. What the future really holds, only time will tell.

Some additional points/questions raised at the other meeting included:

- There was special concern for smaller institutions where it may be necessary to promote the library even more than at present. Libraries are becoming more brand conscious in their own right. To what extent do we really know what our customers want/need?
- Student expectations – ‘I’ve paid my fees – why should I have to return my books on time/pay for other services.’ ‘I can afford it – I’ll just pay the fines.’ ‘I’m already in debt – I can always get deeper in debt.’
- One institution is providing a number of bursaries of £1,000 p.a. to students in exchange for 5 hours ‘meaningful’ work in the library each week. This is meant to contribute to the students’ employability skills but does not actually meet the needs of the library which would prefer security staff to work overnight.
- Suggested actions for SCONUL to undertake:
  - o Consider the longer-term implications of top-up fees e.g. impact on alumni
  - o Provide advice and guidance on what should be the norm for services for which charges are made
  - o Provide advice on how institutions should spend money on libraries

**Regional collaboration, Mike Hopkins, Director of Information Services, University of Wales, Aberystwyth**

Rapporteurs: Antony Brewerton, *SCONUL Focus* and Tony Lamb, Swansea Institute of Higher Education

Mike Hopkins, very much wearing his WHELP (Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum) hat, introduced the topic of regional collaboration by stressing how varied models of local cooperation can be. First up was the question of what defines a region. Is a *physical* region the most appropriate model? If, so, what size works best? What other qualities make regional collaboration work? For Mike, Wales is a good unit because it is ‘sufficiently distinctive’, ‘sufficiently large’ to bring benefits and ‘sufficiently small’ to be coherent and manageable.

He then moved onto a more detailed look at the local environment. How do geographical factors make a difference? In Wales, communication links

are good east to west, but less effective north to south. Perhaps, then, it is more appropriate for Cardiff to link with the south west of England, and north Wales to work with Liverpool/Manchester? What about the professional landscape? Are institutions of similar type and size lumped together? And what of politics: how will devolution affect us?

The organisation of regional bodies was raised as an issue too. On one level, there seems to be much work going on locally but it is only known about by those taking part. We lack knowledge and are missing opportunities to learn from the work of our peers. A national overview (by SCONUL?) would be welcomed by many, then we could more easily share good practice in how to effectively manage, finance and promote regional schemes, as well as monitor the effectiveness of initiatives.

Mike rounded his introduction off by bringing together some of the key issues as he saw them:

- When is a national, regional or local approach the most appropriate?
- How can we ensure financial sustainability?
- How can we promote what we do (to get maximum impact and share good practice)?
- How can we effectively coordinate activities to avoid duplication of effort?

After this whirlwind introduction, debate was opened up to the floor. Representatives of the M25 Group, SWHELs (South West Higher Education Libraries), SWMLAC (South West Museums, Libraries and Archives Council), SCURL (Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries), NoWAL (North West Academic Libraries) and other regional bodies were all present to give their views on the current collaborative environment. Below is a flavour of the issues raised:

- It is important to know what is already available so we can avoid duplication
- It is more difficult to create a sense of identity for the English regions: Wales, Scotland and Ireland are ‘neat’ areas
- What is the optimum size for a grouping? Has the M25 Group, for example, just got too big and is in danger of losing its identity?
- Are there perhaps too many groups in some areas ...whilst others remain neglected? Do we need more coordination?
- We must be aware that sometimes it is more appropriate to deal with issues nationally –or more locally– than at the regional level

- A forum for regional groups to talk about challenges and solutions would be most welcome
- The cross-sectoral element of collaboration is especially valuable as it encourages fresh solutions to old problems
- Opening up access for the non-higher-education community usually provides a win-win situation: politically this is a good move but the actual impact on day-to-day work is invariably limited and quite manageable
- Librarians have always been into collaboration, it is institutions that are into competition
- Regional access schemes are good for supporting Widening Participation initiatives
- Funding is an issue. Regional collaboration often leads to added costs. How are these to be funded? Subscription fees are becoming more common; but will these always be deemed worth investing in, given increasing financial constraints?
- This leads to asking the Big Question: why be involved? Are we clear about the benefits? Collaboration per se is not a benefit. We should have improved services for our customers, opportunities for staff development, an improved political profile and perhaps even the opportunity to raise funds as a result of collaboration. At the end of the day, can we do things better?
- Is the regional approach always the best way to achieve such benefits? Should we avoid being too tightly tied to our own region for support?
- Finally, what are the likely barriers to effective collaboration? Competition, the lack of a risk-taking mentality, the fear of being overwhelmed or (worse still) underwhelmed can all prevent us from making the great leap forward.

The main point to come out of the workshop was the need for a mapping exercise to be carried out into the number and location of regional consortia. It was felt that this was something that SCONUL could undertake which would help all members. It was also felt that SCONUL could host a forum of such groupings or have regular sessions at the Conference to allow input from regional consortia.

#### Postscript

Colleagues might also be interested to see a report of a WHELP Conference on the theme of Regional Collaboration and Academic Libraries held in Cardiff last September. Details of the papers

presented can be found at [www.glam.ac.uk/lrc/whelf/collaboration.php](http://www.glam.ac.uk/lrc/whelf/collaboration.php) until 14 October 2005.

Normally at this point, I would include an extremely brief paragraph saying that the **SCONUL AGM** happened. Usually these are shorter than John Prescott's temper, but this one was (nearly) longer than Labour's time in office. In truth, this was because the AGM saw several major developments for the organisation. After looking at the new, improved Annual Review (a key tool for advocacy) and the accounts, we came onto a new financial strategy (to bring savings, raise income and increase transparency) and a review of subscription levels (to bring greater equity for institutions of different sizes) plus a review of actions required by individual advisory committees. There were lengthy papers to consider and much discussion. For details of the key developments agreed upon see Suzanne Enright's summary included in this issue.

The day ended with a reception in the Grand Parade Gallery Bar at the University of Brighton, hosted by Vice Chancellor, **Sir David Watson**, who pointed out that the University had –in recent years– opened three (soon to be four) renewed libraries, and each time it does this footfall doubles at each site. Standing under an art installation that looked like a totem pole made of diving suits we were then treated to an amusing review of life under New Labour, where some people/policies were treated like fruit flies and other were turtles. We were urged to be turtles!

#### Day Two

Like the good turtle I am, I did wander down to water's edge on the Brighton seafront first thing on Day Two. But the wind was too ferocious to stay long, and anyway, I did not wish to miss any of the day's programme of speakers. First up was **Jan Wilkinson**, Head of Higher Education at the British Library. Jan's paper 'Supporting the higher education researcher' began by looking back to the 1990s. Whilst higher education (HE) was doing relatively well for once (Follett money and all that), for the British Library (BL) it was the worst of times, and the library was felt by many to be the 'library of last resort'. She likened the BL to Miss Havesham, waiting for the lover –higher education– that would never come. Since then, things have improved, with (for example) the creation of Jan's post and moves to provide a more strategic alliance between the BL and HE. Most importantly, the British Library has developed a new vision and strategy, based on market



research undertaken from 2001 onwards, when Lynn Brindley took up post. Jan then gave a quick overview of some of the challenges (Google, cooperation and, most significantly, staying relevant to a new generation of library users ...or non-users) before the substance of her paper: a sneak preview of the BL's six strategic priorities:

- enriching the user experience
- building a digital research environment
- transforming search and navigation
- growing and managing the national collection
- staff development
- achieving financial stability.

I hope these issues will be covered in an article from Jan in a forthcoming issue, alongside other exciting issues the BL is exploring such as the UK electronic license and opportunities for closer collaboration with university librarians.

Jan was followed by **Bill Simpson** reflecting on his own experiences at Manchester. Some of his themes are covered elsewhere in this journal so I will not spoil your delight of reading that by giving away too much of the plot here, but it was good to get the full picture of why the universities (and hence libraries) merged, the vision and strategy for change, the practicalities and outcomes. All this activity was guided by a clear sense of direction. A key message to come across for me was that 'nothing has any value unless it contributes effectively to academic excellence'. Bill delivered his paper in his usual good-humoured and (above all) inspirational style. It was only at the end that he gave away that –on top of everything else– they were also developing a visitor centre. No wonder 18 hour days got mentioned...

The final paper of the day (following another workshop session) came from **Trevor Potten**, Director of Information Technology Services at the University of Sussex. Various speakers had mentioned the Google Generation, now it was time to look at enabling the Mobile Generation, a generation who choose where they want to work or play, what device they want to use, and what specific personalised approach they desire. Access used to be tied to a box tied to table. Now we are freed up (and becoming more and more free). Once students had to move to the books. Now the tools are moving to the students. For Trevor, an obvious evangelist, it is imperative that we get on this (can I call it this?) broadbandwagon. This will enable us to improve quality, give our institutions the competitive edge, create collaborative

learning environments and make better use of existing buildings. He finished with a case study of Brighton ('Wireless Brighton'). Highlights for me were the mobile library (that provided both access to the internet via PCs inside plus a hotspot around the van to provide wireless access for residents whilst parked in the locale) and the buses (which transmitted signals to bus stops so they could say when the next bus was due). I was less convinced about the dust carts and their needs for wireless. I would have thought CB radio would suffice. Then again, I still buy vinyl.

My love of simple technologies partly informed my choice of visit for the afternoon part of the programme. Some colleagues checked out the buzzing new public library, Brighton City Jubilee Library (a must by all accounts and a definite future visit for me), whilst others opted for Preston Manor, the Brighton Museum, the Regency Town House or even a guided walk around Brighton. I plumped for the **Mass-Observation Archive** at the University of Sussex, partly because Brookes is starting to develop special collections, but partly out of an interest for the subject that has existed since my first degree in history. I was not disappointed and particular thanks must go to Dorothy Sheridan, head of special collections and director of the archive, who gave an excellent overview (of the collections and issues) and allowed us to handle 1940s and 1990s documents. One of the most popular boxes she showed us covers citizens' views on 'having an affair'. These ranged from diatribes on politicians (notably Bill Clinton!) to a beautiful and touching description of a lost love ('I held her hand as she died') in the second world war. A real privilege.

The evening witnessed a privilege of a totally different kind, a **Reception in the Royal Pavilion**. Following an address from the Brighton and Hove City Major and a group photo (which involved very senior members of the profession sitting crossed legged in the front so we could cram everyone in!) we were offered a tour around the Royal Pavilion. If Brighton is very creative, forward looking and (above all?) vulgar, this is Brighton at its best. A wonderful building with over the top décor: something to visit rather than live with. The evening was rounded off with the conference dinner and an after dinner speech from **Professor Alasdair Smith**, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex. After giving us his personalised history of Brighton (*Brighton Rock*, dirty weekends, mods and rockers: 'Brighton is a city that is helping the police with its enquiries'), we moved from petty car crime to real villainy:

journal pricing, and the history of this particular 'caper'. A most entertaining talk, arguing for Open Access publishing from an economist's perspective.

### DAY THREE

So far this SCONUL Conference had seemed to get better and better. It was with a rather heavy heart that I packed my bags on this last morning. Surely today could only disappoint, after so much, so good? How wrong I was.



Day Three started with a paper on institutional repositories from **Bill Hubbard**, SHERPA Project Manager at the University of Nottingham. I feared this might be a case study only of interest to the techies. Bill wisely took a wider view, put his project into context and (most importantly) drew out the themes that were likely to prove issues (read: 'challenges') to us all. Bill was the only speaker to really go back to HG Wells and the conference title. After looking at a fictional view of the future he looked at another vision of things to come: the SCONUL Vision 2010 ([www.sconul.ac.uk/pubs\\_stats/pubs/vision%202010](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/pubs_stats/pubs/vision%202010)). He then gave an excellent overview of definitions, benefits (to publishers, authors, institutions and society as a whole), challenges (concerns of academics and administrators) and possible barriers to adoption (copyright issues, publisher embargoes, cultural resistance). One questioner raised the issue of poor adoption of IR in his own institution. Whereas 79% of academics are more than willing to store pre- and post-prints, very few get round to it. Again we need to promote the benefits. Again, we need an advocacy role. Bill's talk neatly led into a paper from another international speaker, **Gail McMillan** from Virginia Tech. Gail's talk was similarly evangelical, this time promoting the joys of e-theses. Gail

has been involved with e-theses for an incredible ten years and is keen to highlight the good work undertaken by the US Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations ([www.ndltd.org](http://www.ndltd.org)). Gail started with the somewhat depressing statistic that the US produces over 400,000 masters and doctorate theses a year and these (on average) get consulted three times in their life on the shelves. By adopting a policy of submission and storage of electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) we can improve services, save space and save money. The process is low cost (we have most of the infrastructure in place to start our collections) and results in high usage (Gail showed us various charts with figures going up to 3,000,000 downloads in 2004). Most importantly, students (unlike some of the academics mentioned earlier) seem to prefer this approach, with only 7% of the students at Gail's institution wishing to restrict access (for reasons of patent or publication negotiations).



These were two excellent papers and –despite my adherence to vinyl– I was keen to hear more. I hope to publish articles from both speakers in the next issue of *SCONUL Focus*.

We had begun with Kay's pleas for collaboration between professionals in general, and between IFLA and SCONUL in particular. SCONUL must have been treating this as one of Alasdair Smith's dirty weekends as today she was accepting advances from CILIP. Sparing us the sordid details, **Suzanne Enright** (SCONUL Chair) and **Maggie Haines** (Past-President of CILIP by the time you read this) reported on the CILIP and SCONUL Joint Declaration (see [www.sconul.ac.uk/news/sconul\\_cilip](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/news/sconul_cilip)) and other collaborative activities. The four key points for future action will be:

- CILIP and SCONUL will work closely together in areas of mutual interest
- CILIP and SCONUL will concentrate joint policy development on areas of mutual interest

- CILIP and SCONUL will work together on various activities (committees, conferences, etc)
- CILIP and SCONUL will encourage involvement of library staff in professional activities.

All this will be delivered via a joint steering group and mutual representation. Joint responses to Government initiatives (e.g. VAT on e-publications) will hopefully give the profession more muscle ('unity is strength' I scribbled in my notes). Again, collaboration and advocacy shined through.

The conference was brought to an end by **Eugenie Prime**, who also very nearly brought the house down. It is very difficult to convey just how brilliant this talk was: Eugenie seemed cool and collected as an attendee of the conference, but on stage she was a fireball. You had to be there to really experience the heat, so apologies if this review can only hint at the effects of her explosive show. Eugenie started by pondering the future (which isn't what it used to be!) and why we should be interested in it. The reason is because we are not passive spectators but players and we should have a role in fashioning the future. We complained about our profile 50 years ago and we will still be complaining 50 years hence if we don't do something about it. We need to make a contribution which is of value and perceived to be of value to others. She quoted Andy Grove's management text book *Only the paranoid survive* at length. Professions, organisations, even individuals often will come to a 'strategic inflection point'. From here we can go up ...or down into decline. More poetically, she turned to Shakespeare and Brutus:

'There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea we are now afloat;  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.'

(*Julius Caesar, Act 4, Scene 3*)

Eugenie surveyed the drivers for change: the customers; suppliers; competition; and sustainability. The big challenge is that someone can do what you have been doing but differently, better,

cheaper and quicker. AltaVista? Google? Google Scholar? The tide is here.

So how can we survive? We need to rethink the role of the library in our institutions. We need to 'expose ourselves'. We are good at talking to each other ('professional incestuousness'); we need to start talking to politicians and policy makers ('professional promiscuity'). We need to create ambidextrous organisations, on the one hand doing all the old stuff, but at the same time experimenting with new ideas.

But the most impressive suggestion Eugenie put forward was that we should let go of emotional baggage, let go of the things we do not need to do any more and do things of importance. Imagine you left your job today. What role would they replace you with? Then, go out of your office and walk back in. Now, do that new job...

Phew!

This was the perfect end to a brilliant Spring Conference. So much to think about. So much to do. Next year's is in June in Newcastle. But as an unnamed Geordie librarian said, that will be spring in Newcastle....

#### POSTSCRIPT

For PowerPoint pages relating to many of the above papers go to [www.sconul.ac.uk/event\\_conf/agm2005/presentations/](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/event_conf/agm2005/presentations/)



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# Report on the SCONUL Annual General Meeting, 6 April 2005



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This report focuses on the strategic outcomes following discussions at the AGM. A full report of all proceedings will be made available to members in due course.

The two key strategic issues that members were asked to address at the 2005 AGM were:-

- (a) what type of organisation members want SCONUL, on their behalf, to be in future
- (b) what strategic opportunities members wished SCONUL to undertake on their behalf in order to address feedback from various consultation exercises undertaken since the summer of 2004

Members were presented with proposals for a new SCONUL strategic framework and development programme, including an holistic review of SCONUL activities and strategy. The rationale being to:-

- Support SCONUL to become a more strategic organisation and ensure its aims of influencing and leading are given a sound foundation
- Enable a step change increase in SCONUL's activity levels so as to support enhanced delivery of its strategic agenda and to increase the value for money for members
- Respond to members' comments about SCONUL's visibility, impact and value for money and so bring together activities and plans which are currently disparate in order to improve their accessibility & visibility to members,
- Respond to Advisory Committee Chair concerns about capacity and sustainability issues associated with the work of the groups

Members at the 2005 AGM **considered a number of recommendations for action** which covered the following and included some far-reaching decisions:

- 1 A raft of papers were discussed in relation to **financial matters**:
  - 1.1. It was confirmed that a small group was being set up by the Executive Board (EB) to review SCONUL's **risk assessment and risk management arrangements**. Following the meeting two Representatives were asked to join that group.
  - 1.2. It was agreed that SCONUL **move to a new hybrid financial strategy** (Doc.05/53), predicated upon increasing income levels and simultaneously reducing certain designated areas of expenditure. The rationale for this is to enable SCONUL to move beyond the current financial constraints to support enhanced delivery of a strategic agenda.

Broadly, the approved outcomes of the new financial strategy fall into 4 groups:

- 1.2.1 Implementation of a **one-off tariff to kick-start development of a strategic fund** given that 2005 subscription levels have already been set. This will raise approximately £23,000 on current membership levels. The invoices will be sent out in the near future for **£150 for current standard rate members and £50 for other members**.

*Members are again invited to comment on the proposed new investment and expenditure priorities for use of the strategic fund to support all members and to suggest any additional projects they would like considered by the Executive Board. Such priorities for deploying any additional income raised will need to be considered carefully, not least because it will only be possible to deliver on a limited number of proposals*

- Commission work to develop a **toolkit, based upon sound methodologies, to enable members to demonstrate to their institutions the value for money and impact provided by library services**. This could potentially, for instance, assist members when submitting new resource bids or when struggling to maintain existing information resource portfolios given budgetary constraints.)

Such proposals could be internal to SCONUL or could be developed in conjunction with other parties

- Commission a **study on future professional hybrid skills requirements and anticipated job design issues and future working models** (including case study research from across the sector illustrating specifically the roles of library and information staff in e-learning (feeding into the HEFCE e-learning strategy actions and the work of the Higher Education Academy))
- Fund work to **integrate existing co-operative access schemes within an overarching managerial framework**
- Invest in the further **development and implementation of a marketing and communications strategy** to improve SCONUL's visibility and branding and to ensure members are well informed of activities being undertaken on their behalf, thereby reinforcing membership benefits including investment in the SCONUL **website** to make it more user friendly and to provide direct support for the development of the groups' websites. This could also include a means to make improvements to the **buildings directory**

#### 1.2.2 **developing actions to increase income from other sources** to help support the recommended increase in SCONUL activity, including:

- introduction of a **new corporate membership category**, with a target of 10 members in 2005 rising by an additional 15 members for 2006. The proposed corporate membership fee of £1500 was passed and it is hoped this will be attractive to potential corporate members in return for the identified benefits.
- developing a **sponsorship strategy** with an initial target for 2005 of £20,000 rising to £30,000 in 2006.
- **development of a strategy for conference exhibitions**
- recovering a **higher rate of contribution towards the full costs of staging events** so that in future any event charges reflect more closely the real

costs of the Secretariat's input by including a 20% overhead

- proactive **targeting of appropriate external funding opportunities** to support strategic developments. No target for such income is proposed given that opportunities may vary considerably from year to year on an unpredictable basis.

It is difficult to identify potential maximum income from these sources and clearly figures cannot be included at this stage. But it is clear that without extra income any strategic developments identified cannot be delivered.

#### 1.2.3 **reviewing current or future opportunities for reducing central costs** including

- using most cost effective methods of holding group meetings provided group numbers are manageable and the agenda appropriate.
- a review of modus operandi and costs of EB meetings by the end of 2005.

#### 1.2.4 **moving to a transparent, multi-year business planning process** so that

members are informed of proposed plans and their anticipated cost. In future financial reports to both the Executive Board and members will include: dis-aggregated data on income raised from the various membership categories; data on annual sponsorship targets and sponsorship income raised; data on income secured from external funding sources

- #### 1.3 **In 2006 SCONUL will introduce a moderated variable subscription model based on JISC bandings (as indicated in section 5.2 of Doc. 05/52)**, in order to provide a fairer model that reflects the wide variance in institutional income across the SCONUL membership. EB has been asked to **integrate the Irish university members on the basis of institutional income** and to continue discussions with the **national libraries on how best to assimilate them into the new model**. There will be a formal review of the new subscription model in 2010.

1.4 Members also elected Alun Jenkins (Cardiff University), as SCONUL's new Honorary **Treasurer**

2 Members approved the proposed **realignment of current committees and groups based on introduction of a revised portfolio of fixed Working Groups and shorter life Task and Finish Groups reporting to the EB** (Doc.05/54), and which are designed to lead on the following high visibility areas of work.

- Access
- Advocacy and lobbying
- Communication and marketing
- E-Learning
- Fundraising and sponsorship
- Health strategy
- HR issues
- Information Literacy
- Performance improvement
- Quality assurance
- Scholarly communications
- Space planning

This will be underpinned by a clear shift to EB owning operational planning and by the **introduction of an annual planning/strategy meeting**, attended by group officers and EB members, in order both to improve coordination between the Board and the groups and to provide an input for strategic priorities (informed by 'top concerns' surveys, etc.).

New terms of reference for every group will be publicized as part of an updated Operational Plan which builds on former success and which will outline for members the key actions that SCONUL might undertake over the coming short term period in these high visibility activities. (NOTE: Some of this is still subject to resource availability, especially where proposed work would include commissioning).

In addition Members agreed to:

2.1 **move the locus of many steady state activities within the Secretariat** (such as awards, ongoing staff development events, build-ings events etc), supported as and when needed by small sub-panels (1 or 2 people) who would be asked to initiate and direct activities.

2.2 **implement recommendations arising from the review of current group procedures** designed to ensure transparency, clarify processes (e.g. on becoming a member of a group, membership tenure etc.) and support increased effectiveness of all groups.

2.3 move onto the **next stage of strategic review of structures, which will cover the review of the 3 continuing groups** (Health Strategy; Communication and Marketing and Joint Scholarly Communications) which are outside the current review, **EB itself and the Secretariat** in order to improve their fit against strategy, strategy development and implementation by evaluating them against the question 'how does this group/body demonstrate strategic fit' and by setting them in context against other EB activity and the vision, mission and role already articulated by SCONUL.

2.4 move to a transparent, multi-year **business planning process** and use the opportunities presented by the financial review to improve financial support to support strategic activities undertaken by EB and groups so that members are informed of proposed plans and their anticipated cost.

3 **A new look annual review for 2004** was received and will now be finalised for publication. It is intended to send this to Representatives and to Vice-Chancellors (or equivalent) of Member Institutions and to other stakeholder bodies in the near future.

4 **Business matters:**

A number of **changes to SCONUL's Articles of Association and Rules for the conduct of business** were approved to support the above changes

5 **Future meetings of SCONUL**

5.1 **The Autumn Conference in 2005 will be a one day meeting to be held on 29 November 2005 at the British Library Conference Centre in London**

5.2 **The 2006 AGM and Conference will be held on 21—23 June 2006 in Newcastle** under the auspices of the University of Northumbria and the University of Newcastle.

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# Trading in knowledge?

The World Trade Organisation and Libraries

2-3 March 2005, Møller Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge

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*Photos taken by Anders Ericson*

Twenty-five people from twelve countries, including the celebrated journalist George Monbiot, met in Cambridge from 2 to 3 March for the EBLIDA / SCONUL seminar on trade agreements and libraries. The venue was Churchill College, in the prestigious Møller Centre, designed by the leading Danish architect Henning Larsen, an appropriate setting for an international conference, since it was funded largely as the fruit of Anglo-Danish cooperation. The little explored subject of international trade agreements, and their potential effects on libraries, has for two or three years been on the agenda of EBLIDA (the European Bureau of Libraries, Information and Documentation Associations). But until now EBLIDA has found it hard to assemble sufficient information about the background, and a prognosis for future developments has been even more problematic. The situation is complex and rarely discussed. Only when rioting erupts on the streets (as it did in Seattle in 1999) are the meetings of the World Trade Organisation considered newsworthy. Yet the gathering of librarians in Cambridge soon discovered the far-reaching potential implications for education and libraries of the WTO's deliberations, especially in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (or GATS).

## INTRODUCTION

Kjell Nilsson of the Royal Library of Sweden opened the conference, welcoming the delegates and explaining that trade agreements can indeed affect libraries, and that this message needs to be spread amongst the information profession. The World Trade Organisation, with over 140 members, is a powerful body, aiming to promote and to simplify international trade. Trade may

include not only goods but also services, where libraries may become involved. Questions the seminar hoped to answer included how the General Agreement on Trade in Services might affect publicly-funded libraries, whether that might be harmful to their current arrangements, and what librarians might do about it. University libraries, though usually funded from government sources, might equally be affected through a possible acceleration of privatisation in education. The General Agreement was not the end of the story, since governments were entering into bilateral trade agreements, and even within a single country the trend may well be for public monopolies to be broken up. Within Europe, libraries would do well to examine the proposed Directive on Services in the Internal Market [COM(2004)2 final/3] which aims to present more compulsion and less choice for Member States in opening up state enterprises to competition.



*Frode Bakken, President of the Norwegian Library Association and keynote speaker, George Monbiot*

## GEORGE MONBIOT

The keynote speaker, the author and journalist George Monbiot, argued that corporations are currently seeking to expand their opportunities for profitability by enhancing economies of scale and expanding the frontiers for capital. For the most part they achieve these aims by persuading governments to deregulate corporations, to widen their global reach and to allow corporations to conduct activities traditionally carried out by governments (privatisation).

Regulation is invariably presented as wholly undesirable, 'red tape' and 'bureaucracy' being invoked as targets for reform, whereas in fact much regulation has been introduced for the protection of consumers, workers, and citizens generally. When the UK government reduced inspections of workplaces in the 1990s (with regard to health and safety regulations) by 25%, deaths at work increased in proportion. Deregulation

brings advantage to international companies, as against smaller companies which know local conditions and markets. Some obstructions to such processes have occurred, for example in October 1998 when the French government caused the collapse of the 'Multilateral agreement on investment' by refusing to host the ratification ceremony. That agreement would have allowed companies to sue governments in respect of any legislative restriction having a negative effect on their notional future profits. However, just such an action was successfully pursued under the North American Free Trade Agreement when a US petroleum company sued the Canadian government for banning the inclusion in petrol of a compound believed to be a neurotoxin, thus inhibiting the company's exports. The Canadian government was required to pay compensation.

George Monbiot advised that the only antidote to a carefully orchestrated corporate campaign is a carefully orchestrated publicity campaign by people interested in the survival of public services. Even if privatisation were beneficial in economic terms (which in most cases it was not), public ownership remained an important principle on the grounds of the accountability it provides.

#### **DALE HONECK**

The next speaker, Dale Honeck, gave his opinions in a personal capacity, though he works for the WTO. He described how the organisation acts as a forum for negotiations and administers trade agreements. It reviews trade policies, and Dale Honeck observed how interesting it was that nations frequently have more than one, sometimes conflicting, trade policies emanating from different ministries.

Trade agreements usually work by countries making 'offers'; announcing to their trading partners that certain kinds of trade will be open to competition from foreign companies. The WTO operates on the 'offer' principle. (Before it joined the European Union, Austria, for example, made the offer that library services were candidates for foreign competition. No country has yet responded to that offer.) Transparency is an important principle for the WTO, which insists that its trade agreements be publicly known. Under GATS, so far most offers have been in respect of tourism, with health and education having the lowest number of offers. However, WTO policy is for trade to be 'liberalised progressively', so a steady increase in offers can be expected. Once a country has made an offer,

another country can take advantage of it, creating a mutual trade agreement for competition in that field.



*Ruth Rikowski and Dale Honeck*

A complication discussed by Dale Honeck is that the General Agreement on Trade in Services does not include 'services supplied in the exercise of government authority'. Inter-library document supply, for example, would therefore appear to be open for offer within GATS, since both libraries and commercial entities engage in it and it therefore cannot be regarded as part of the government's tasks. A major difficulty for libraries is that international civil servants may not have a clear idea about what modern libraries do. It is important for trade agreements to be made on the basis of a full understanding of the service in question.

A note of caution was raised in the final discussion after Dale Honeck's presentation. It is a well-known feature of political economy that the benefits of trade reform are relatively concentrated, whereas the people affected may be very numerous and diverse. Here is the reason for libraries to become involved – their very diversity makes them weaker than the relatively few commercial interests which might stand to gain from trade in library services.

#### **SUSAN ROBERTSON**



*Susan Robertson*



That point led the meeting naturally to the presentation from Professor Susan Robertson of the University of Bristol. She traced recent developments in trade policy which showed, since the 1980s, the deregulation of many protected industries (such as railways and telecommunications) so that various public or social activities had come to be regarded as elements of trade. The trend continues. Australia and New Zealand, for example, have seen very big increases in their trade in educational services. Interestingly, the government department promoting such trade is not the education department, but the trade ministry. Susan Robertson argued that such proceedings may be seen as antidemocratic – in Canada the trade negotiations are necessarily national whereas education is politically within the sphere of the provinces. From experience in New Zealand (where education earns more as an export than the wine industry), Susan Robertson argued that when services are placed firmly in the global economy they become vulnerable: some New Zealand schools became bankrupt during the recent downturn in the Asian economy. Further anxieties were the possibility of companies controlling the acquisition of knowledge; and the failure of the free trade process to help the poor. Despite the theoretical advantages of free trade, poverty may not be alleviated by it. New Zealand, often regarded as a success story since the 1980s in market reform, now has one of the highest levels of income inequality amongst OECD countries. Susan Robertson presented figures indicating increasing inequalities in income within developing countries. Poor countries, she added, are at a disadvantage through the location of the WTO offices in Geneva, where it is expensive to maintain or even send a delegation.

#### **RUTH RIKOWSKI**

Ruth Rikowski is Visiting Lecturer at London South Bank University and the author of a recent book entitled *Globalisation, information and libraries: the implications of the World Trade Organisation's GATS and TRIPS agreements* (Oxford: Chandos, 2005). Her topic was the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) whose copyright provisions are significant for libraries and information. TRIPS, drawn up in 1995, will come into effect in 2005. A complex agreement, it provides that any copyright protection extended by one country to the citizens of another country must be available to all citizens of the WTO member countries on an equal footing. TRIPS differs from most international copyright agreements by excluding any reference to moral

rights. Since moral rights can only be enjoyed by individual creators, it suggests that TRIPS is more concerned with corporate copyright than the concept of copyright itself. TRIPS requires member countries to have laws and enforcement measures in support of the agreement – such legal arrangements have existed for many years in industrialised countries but may be new to developing ones. A statement signed in 2001 by a wide variety of non-governmental organisations questioned the legitimacy of TRIPS: 'Contrary to the WTO, TRIPS is being used as a protectionist instrument to promote corporate monopolies over technologies, seeds, genes, and medicines [and] represents a significant shift in the balance in intellectual property rights protection that is too heavily in favour of private right holders and against the public interest'. Ruth Rikowski argued that since TRIPS is designed (through its exclusion of moral rights) with corporations rather than individuals in mind, we may be witnessing a move to greater control of copyright materials by larger companies. Since copyright is by definition a monopoly right, this may cause concern to librarians who have already seen inexorable, above-inflation, price rises for publications carrying scientific information.

#### **PAUL WHITNEY**

The second day of the seminar begun with an expert summing up of the issues facing libraries, conducted without notes by Paul Whitney, former President of the Canadian Library Association, and official delegate (representing IFLA) to the famous meeting of the WTO in Seattle in 1999. Paul Whitney has been following the topic ever since. He foresaw that with a ministerial WTO meeting scheduled for December 2005 in Hong Kong, the next few months will be important for libraries. Education may become a key issue for WTO, since in educational institutions public and private enterprise have long been intertwined. Libraries may be caught in a pincer movement,



*Paul Whitney*

with the WTO aiming to deregulate and privatise government services, while international copyright law is simultaneously increasing the regulation and protection of privately-held intellectual property.

Paul Whitney pointed out that copyright and IPR generally is the one large trade area where the USA and the European Union hope to generate large trade surpluses. (Computer-based activity is already shifting, through 'off-shoring', to countries like India and China.) GATS allows member states to regulate trade in services within their jurisdiction and there is a vigorous negotiating environment with lots of give and take. International trade treaties can certainly affect public services. In order to avoid decisions taken remotely and catching libraries unawares, pressure should be applied at the domestic political level.

Acting on this advice, the seminar converted itself into a forum for practical action. Delegates to the seminar would raise awareness in their own countries. First they would need a 'manifesto' or statement, drawing attention to the situation and to the dangers of losing a publicly-run library service through misguided bargaining by negotiators who do not appreciate a modern library's functions. The message of the statement must help library associations tackle their governments. It must be jargon-free and call for a robust public sector. It would be drafted by the organisers of the seminar and presented, informally if not formally, to EBLIDA's annual council for members in Cork, Ireland, 13-14 May.

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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 February/April 2005. 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.*

## **CURL/SCONUL DIGEST OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION NEWS - FEBRUARY 2005**

### **Looking back at 2004 and forward into 2005: a personal view from the digest's editor**

Most members of the library community are looking for some kind of change in scholarly communication, be it a fall in journal prices, better licensing conditions or more fundamental structural changes. How did we fare in 2004? All of our concerns received more publicity in 2004 than they have done for many years, largely through the UK Parliamentary Inquiry, which reported on a wide range of possible changes from improved purchasing arrangements through to open access. Media attention largely focused on the more radical changes, particularly open access, but library concerns in general gained a higher profile. Did this higher profile result in any real change or has the moment passed?

The UK general election seemed likely to divert the attention of Members of Parliament away from the concerns of librarians. The Government Response to the Science and Technology Committee Report has not helped to maintain the momentum for change but on the other hand there is no evidence that it has delayed changes already happening. The university repositories already established are continuing to acquire content, the number of open access journals is still rising, and organisations such as JISC are maintaining their scholarly communication programmes. The pressure to secure improvements in pricing and licensing of electronic journals is continuing, and a more determined approach in 2003 not to accept steep price rises did lead to marginally-improved offers from publishers for 2004 subscriptions. In brief, we cannot rely upon external forces to shape the future; if more is to be achieved in 2005 the power is in the hands of the library community.

On the international stage, there were significant steps during 2004 in several European countries to support open access, and authorities in continental Europe appear more ready to accept change in scholarly communication than those in the UK. The US situation was dominated by the debate over the proposal by NIH (National Institutes of Health) for deposit of journal articles in PubMed Central, and that debate demonstrated the power publishers can exercise through (probably high) expenditure on lobbying. Naively, perhaps, the UK library community underestimated the power of the lobbying machine over decisions following the parliamentary report, but that power was seen at its most naked in the debates in the US. If we want change of any form in pricing, licensing or in the structure of scholarly communication, the library community must pay more attention to advocacy and lobbying. The forces arguing for the 'status quo' or for accepting what is offered are very powerful.

#### **Final word on the Parliamentary report?**

What could be the final document on scientific publications from the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee has been published as HC249. The brief document contains responses to responses to responses, i.e. a further exchange of views between the Committee and the Government, revealing that nothing much has changed in their attitudes. Perhaps the most hopeful sign of a change in the Government attitude comes in the following paragraph: 'The action the Government has decided upon is to facilitate a level playing field... This includes working with RCUK

(Research Councils UK) on a common policy that allows scientists to publish in an author pays journal when they want to do so'. This is the first acknowledgement that a level playing field does not already exist in the current system, and if the DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) is willing to work constructively with RCUK and not block developments RCUK wishes to see, the Science and Technology Committee's recommendations may yet bear fruit. The document also contains a brief and predictable note from the Office of Fair Trading delaying any comment on the market for scientific publications until the study established by the European Commission has reported. Shades of 'Yes Minister'?

#### **National Institutes of Health publication policy**

As yet no official announcement has been made about the NIH proposal to recommend or require deposit in PubMed Central of copies of articles based upon NIH-funded research. An article appeared in the Washington Post of 18 January 2005 stating that the policy had been revised following pressure from publishers. If the article is accurate, the revision takes the form of extending the deadline for authors to deposit their work from six months to twelve months after publication, a situation which will not help those who require access to the research their taxes have paid for because many learned society publishers already allow free access after twelve months. The losers from this change are the US taxpayers, particularly those who have medical conditions for which they or their doctors require access to the most up-to-date information. Nobody gains from the change because the evidence is that a six-month deadline would have presented no greater threat to publisher income than a twelve-month deadline.

#### **JISC repositories programme**

The Call for Proposals under the new JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) Repositories Programme was published on 22 February. JISC has received a review of existing repository development conducted by AHDS (Arts and Humanities Data Service) and UKOLN (UK Office for Library and Information Networking) and the recommendations in this review are helping to finalise the shape of the Call for Proposals. Neil Jacobs has been appointed as Programme Manager.

### **JISC grants to publishers for open access transition**

Following the success of the first year of the JISC open access transition programme, the decision has been made to award five publishers funds to support open access delivery for their journals. A total of £150,000 will be awarded to some of the key scholarly publications in their fields. These journals are: The new journal of physics (published by the Institute of Physics Publishing); Nucleic acids research (Oxford University Press); Journal of medical genetics (BMJ Publishing Group Ltd); the journals of the International Union of Crystallography (IUCr); and The journal of experimental botany (The Society for Experimental Biology). JISC funding will ensure the waiving of all or part of the submission/publication fees for all UK HE authors. The new journal of physics, the IUCr and the Journal of experimental botany were successful bidders in the first round of funding, these further funds enabling them to consolidate the considerable gains made during the first year of the programme. Preliminary results from the first year of the open access programme show that JISC funding has enabled significant advances to be made by the successful publishers and their journals in terms of submissions, access, visibility and costs.

### **JISC-negotiated free access to IOPP archive**

JISC and the Institute of Physics have announced an agreement that will make the contents of the IOPP (Institute of Physics Publishing) Journals Archive between 1874 and 1998 permanently accessible to all UK HE and FE institutions. The Archive contains over 110,000 articles with information on some of the most important developments in physics research in the past 130 years. Full details on registering to receive the archive can be found by visiting the JISC website at [www.jisc.ac.uk/coll\\_ioparchive.html](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/coll_ioparchive.html). Registration for the Institute of Physics Journal Archive requires that a licence agreement is completed and if an institution is not already registered to receive electronic access to IOP journals, registration for the service is required.

### **JISC usage and business models studies**

The JISC Journals Working Group has received draft reports on two important studies carried out by consultants. The study on usage of electronic journals looked at usage of packages of journals from several major publishers in a wide range of libraries, while the business models study analysed the strengths and weaknesses in existing

business models as well as looking at the potential strengths and weaknesses in possible new models. Both draft reports are being looked at in detail by working parties of the Journals Working Group and will be published in some form later this year. The studies are part of an overall strategy to provide JISC and the library community with a more reliable factual basis for decision-making in enabling access to electronic content. Other studies are being commissioned by the JISC Scholarly Communication Group.

### **Endangered Archive Programme**

The British Library has launched a major new Endangered Archive Programme, a £10 million joint initiative between the British Library and the Lisbet Rausing Charitable Fund to help save the world's endangered archives. The largest of its kind ever undertaken in the world, the programme will be administered by the British Library in conjunction with a panel of international experts deciding on the allocation of the grants. Institutions and academic researchers will be able to apply for grants to help identify endangered records and re-locate them to institutional archives in their local region. A copy will be maintained in a master archive at the British Library. This will ensure no original material is removed from its cultural home and copies will be accessible on an international basis. The Programme will also provide bursaries for overseas librarians and archivists for work attachments at the British Library to foster better archival management and preservation in the longer-term.

### **Google announces programme to scan older library books**

The announcement that Google has negotiated the right to scan older books from five major research libraries has attracted considerable interest as well as raising a number of questions. The libraries involved are the university libraries of Harvard, Michigan, Oxford and Stanford as well as New York Public Library. Michigan and Stanford are placing no limit upon the number of volumes Google may scan. The New York Public Library is allowing Google to include a small portion of its books no longer covered by copyright while Harvard is confining its initial participation to 40,000 volumes. Oxford wants Google to scan all its books originally published before 1901. Scanning the number of volumes involved will be a daunting task, even for a company the size of Google. Some of the difficult issues involved are potential damage to rare volumes, the problems in scanning

text in obscure foreign languages and (of course) copyright. The proposal appears to be to include the metadata for the scanned books in Google's general search engine, providing links to the full-text if the volume is in the public domain. If successful the project could transform access to older monographs.

#### **And finally, a message for publishers ...**

Acknowledgment to RLG's 'Shelflife' for this item:

##### *Putting books online can bump up sales*

While many publishers fret that putting text online will cannibalise sales, many experts say that making books available electronically will actually motivate people to search out hard copy, either in the library or for purchase. 'People don't sit at a computer and read a book much,' says Carol Pitts Diedrichs, dean of libraries at the University of Kentucky. 'What we hope it will do is drive users to us to use our collections.' And Peter Givier, executive director of the Association of American University Presses, is equally optimistic: 'Most small publishers specialise, and what this does is put your specialty in front of a new audience.' Indeed, Amazon reports that after it started allowing shoppers to access book excerpts, sales for those books rose 9 percentage points more than those without in the first five days the feature was offered. (Kansas City Star 6 Jan 2005, <http://www.kansascity.com/mld/kansascity/news/nation/10579743.htm>)

#### **CURL/SCONUL DIGEST OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION NEWS - APRIL 2005**

##### **Open access still in the public eye**

Attention on public policy statements regarding change in scholarly communication has largely shifted towards the new RCUK publications policy, expected to be revealed any day now. The ability of RCUK to determine its own policy without undue influence from the Office of Science and Technology has become a political issue through the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee report on 'The Work of Research Councils UK' (HC 219 <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/scrutinyreport.pdf>.) Referring back to the DTI's control over the Government Response to last year's report on scientific publications, the Committee report that 'Lord Sainsbury told us that Research Councils are 'totally independent' in their capacity to make policy on this front'. With a General Election imminent, it

seemed unlikely that the Government would risk another political row, and there were signs that the DTI is willing to take its commitment to create a 'level playing-field' in scientific publications seriously. One Member of the Science and Technology Committee, Dr Brian Iddon, also took the opportunity of a Debate on overseas development policy on 17 March to point to the importance of easy electronic access to scientific publications for researchers in Africa. Again referring to last year's report, Dr Iddon said: 'The Committee has been fighting—although, unfortunately, the Government are not yet convinced—for open access publications so that people in developing countries do not have to pay to access the most up-to-date scientific and medical information produced throughout the rest of the world.' ([http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmhansrd/cm050317/halltext/50317h01.htm#column\\_143](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmhansrd/cm050317/halltext/50317h01.htm#column_143)).

##### **Progress in Scotland**

Changes in policy appear easier to achieve in Scotland, although the appearance of ease belies considerable effort by the Scottish library community working to influence political and academic leaders. The Scottish Declaration on Open Access last October (<http://scur.ac.uk/WG/OATS/declaration.htm>) has been kept in the public eye through an article in The Guardian of 14 March 2005 (<http://education.guardian.co.uk/elearning/story/0,10577,1437377,00.html>). The academic support for the Scottish Declaration is indicated in the words of Timothy O'Shea, Principal and Vice-chancellor of the University of Edinburgh: 'The University of Edinburgh wants to ensure that its research is as visible as possible within Scotland, the UK and the world. This open access initiative provides an important route to deliver this.'

##### **Finnish Ministry of Education recommends open access.**

On 18 March the Open Access Scientific Publishing Committee of the Finnish Ministry of Education issued a 38-page report on open access, of which an abstract is available in English at <http://www.minedu.fi/julkaisut/tiede/2005/tr08/kuvailu.html>. The Committee recommends the establishment of institutional repositories and the deposit by researchers of their publications in those repositories. The Committee also recommends that funding agencies should pay publication charges for publication in open access journals and that librarians should support these

developments by making open access metadata available. The Committee also makes its reason for supporting open access very clear: 'The aim of the recommendations is not to change the traditional standards used for evaluating the quality of scholarly publications, but to improve access to and the availability, distribution, visibility, usability and usefulness of the publications'. An article on the new report in CSC News, March 2005 by Kimmo Kuusela is available at [http://www.csc.fi/lehdet/cscnews/cscnews1\\_2005.pdf](http://www.csc.fi/lehdet/cscnews/cscnews1_2005.pdf).

### **French research agencies adopt repository policies**

France's Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) (<http://www.cnrs.fr/>) - one of the world's largest national research institutes, covering virtually all scientific and scholarly disciplines, in a distributed network of individual research units - has now registered its commitment to implementing a CNRS institutional self-archiving policy. Another French research agency, INRIA (the French National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Control) (<http://www.inria.fr/>) is also about to launch an Open Archive dedicated to its scientific publications. About 2500 INRIA scientists will be strongly encouraged to use the INRIA repository for their research reports. In order to assist readers in tracing the research reports they need, France's Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (INIST) has created a series of portals that give researchers in CNRS access to subject-specific scientific and technical information. In 1999, INIST launched BiblioSciences, a multidisciplinary portal that provides access to a range of general and specialised bibliographic databases, and - following user-demand - INIST then developed subject-oriented portals. These portals make available the full text of open access and subscription articles. INIST also provides access to research assessment tools through another portal targeted at CNRS research assessors.

### **More evidence of higher citations through open access**

As open access publication is relatively new, evidence of use and citations will take time to emerge, but the signs are that open access results in heavier use and more citations than conventional publication. Much of the research on this topic is being conducted at the University of Southampton, but a recent report by a Canadian researcher confirms the initial Southampton findings. The Canadian researcher is Chawki Hajjem and his French-language web-site is at [www.crsc.uqam.ca/lab/chawki/ch.htm](http://www.crsc.uqam.ca/lab/chawki/ch.htm).

Particularly interesting amongst the Canadian's findings is that the higher citation levels for open access articles in repositories are not related to the impact factor of the journal in which the article is published - i.e. the reason for higher citation-levels is not that researchers are only depositing articles which appear in high-impact factor journals.

### **Launch of Beilstein open access journal**

The Beilstein-Institut has announced the launch of the first major Open Access journal for organic chemistry. Beilstein Journal of Organic Chemistry will be published by the Beilstein-Institut in co-operation with BioMed Central. The peer-reviewed online journal will begin publication during 2005, and a call for papers will be issued in May. Director of the Beilstein-Institut Martin Hicks made the announcement at the American Chemical Society Annual Meeting in San Diego (a nice touch, given the ACS opposition to open access!). Professor Jonathan Clayden, of the University of Manchester, has been confirmed as the editor-in-chief, and an international editorial advisory board is also being appointed. The Beilstein Journal of Organic Chemistry will publish outstanding original research on all aspects of organic chemistry and related disciplines. As an Open Access journal, the Beilstein Journal of Organic Chemistry will offer the international community of organic chemists the opportunity to make their research results freely available immediately on publication. Supplementary data will also be published. The journal will be made freely available online, while an annual print archival edition will be available for purchase at cost.

### **New JISC scholarly communication studies**

The JISC Scholarly Communication Group has commissioned four new studies to assist the academic community in understanding the changes taking place. The studies are: a guide to trends in scholarly publishing (to be undertaken by Key Perspectives); learned society open access business models (Mary Waltham); open access citation information (EPIC and Southampton University); and disciplinary differences and needs (RightsCom). The study reports are due late-June/early-July and will probably be made available through the JISC Website later in the summer.

### **Kaufman-Wills study for ALPSP, High-Wire and AAAS**

Three publisher organisations – ALPSP, High-wire Press and AAAS – commissioned the Kaufman-Wills Group to study the effect of full open access and delayed open access business models upon publication policies. Preliminary results from the study are available in a Powerpoint presentation given at the London Book Fair ([http://www.alpsp.org/2005ppts/oa\\_study\\_results\\_lbf.ppt](http://www.alpsp.org/2005ppts/oa_study_results_lbf.ppt)). The study is based upon replies received from 85 delayed open access and 248 full open access journals. Twenty-two for-profit and not-for-profit publishers were also interviewed for the study. It is difficult to summarise a very full study, but one noticeable feature is that in terms of business models, the distinction between full OA and delayed OA journals is not as black-and-white as might be supposed but more varying shades of grey. For example, delayed OA journals seems to rely upon a certain level of payment from authors while many full OA journals are not totally-dependent upon income from authors.

### **Google scholar and CrossRef**

Many organisations are talking to Google Scholar, and – if it succeeds – the importance of that service to everybody in the information world is recognised. Publishers are recognising the value of Google Scholar links to their content through CrossRef in order to attract users away from repository content. The latest CrossRef Newsletter states that 'Google agreed with the principle that if there are multiple versions of an article shown in the Google Scholar search results, the first link will be to the publisher's authoritative copy. Google would like to use the DOI as the primary means to link to an article so CrossRef and Google will be working on this as well as a template for common terms and conditions for use of publishers full text content'. (Ed Pentz, CrossRef Newsletter, 14 February 2004, <http://www.crossref.org/01company/10newsletter.html#anchor8>).

### **And finally...**

Thanks to the Research Libraries Group's *Shelflife* (now sadly ceased publication) for this item:

#### *Pew study finds searcher misconceptions*

A new study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project has found that only 1 in 6 users of Internet search engines can tell the difference between unbiased search results and paid advertisements. All of the major search engines return a

mix of regular results (based solely on relevance to the search terms entered) and sponsored links (for which a Web site has paid advertising fees). Only 38% of Web searchers are aware of the distinction, and of those fewer than half can always tell which are paid – even though they're usually labeled by the search engines. Pew researcher Deborah Fallows says: 'We're still in the infancy of the Internet. People are still kind of so pleased that they can go there, ask for something and get an answer that it's kind of not on their radar screen to look in a very scrutinising way to see what's in the background there.' (AP, 24 January 2005, <http://apnews.excite.com/article/20050124/D87QEK3O0.html>).

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# Other news from SCONUL

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## **SCONUL AND JISC**

When Sir Ron Cooke, Chair of JISC, spoke at our conference in London on 8 November 2004 he invited SCONUL to engage more closely with JISC. Accordingly Suzanne Enright, Anne Bell and Toby Bainton (Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary) met Sir Ron in January. The most important outcome of the useful meeting was agreement that SCONUL should send Sir Ron a letter indicating our priorities for JISC's work. The letter was sent in April.

## **SCONUL AND LIBER**

Very early in 2005 (6 January), the Executive Board of LIBER (Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche) invited Suzanne Enright and Toby Bainton to a strategic planning meeting, held in Cambridge University Library. LIBER is reviewing its own priorities in the light of what similar organisations were planning or already doing. Also present at the meeting were Duane Webster of the Association of Research Libraries (USA and Canada), Clare Jenkins of CURL, and Nancy Elkington of the Research Libraries Group (world-wide). The wide experience of those present made for useful discussion and liaison.

## **HOUSE OF COMMONS EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE: ON THE E-UNIVERSITY**

On 3 March the Education and Skills Committee published its report on the UK e-University (Third Report from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2004-05, HC 205). See

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmenduski/205/205.pdf>

## **UK GOVERNMENT AND THE SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS ISSUE**

On 1 February the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee published its Third Special Report of Session 2004-05, 'Responses to the Committee's Tenth Report, Session 2003-04, Scientific publications: free for all?: Responses to the Committee's 14th Report of Session 2003-04' (HC 249). The text of all the Committee's Reports are available via the Committee's web pages at <http://www.parliament.uk/s&tcom>

## **US NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH POLICY ON SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS**

The US NIH has retreated from its earlier proposal of 'requiring' its grant-holders to deposit in PubMedCentral the publications resulting from their research. PubMed Central is an open access repository, allowing scholars, and indeed the public, access to published research papers in the life sciences. Given the prestige of the NIH its mere 'encouragement' to authors to deposit their publications may carry sufficient weight to change practices in the direction of open access. The announced policy is at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-05-022.html>

## **CURL/SCONUL BRIEFING ON SCHOLARLY**

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

The Joint CURL/SCONUL Scholarly Communications Group has produced a briefing paper for MPs about scientific publishing.

[http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/sch\\_comm/reports.html](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/sch_comm/reports.html)

## **CURL/SCONUL HELP TO EUROPEAN COMMISSION STUDY**

The Joint CURL/SCONUL Group on Scholarly Communication has recently supplied information (largely based on SCONUL's statistics) to the economists at the University of Toulouse who have been commissioned to conduct a study for the European Commission on the scientific publications market in Europe.

## **OPEN ACCESS: A NEW BIBLIOGRAPHY**

If you'd like to read more about the open access movement and its impact on scholarly communication, the Association of Research Libraries (USA and Canada) recently published a bibliography. See <http://www.arl.org/pubscat/pubs/openaccess/>

## **HEFCE PLAN SEEMS TO SUPPORT OPEN ACCESS**

The new revision of HEFCE's strategic plan 2003-08 [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05\\_16/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_16/) contains (at paragraph 11 of the section on Enhancing excellence in research) some encouraging remarks for the development of institutional repositories and other means of disseminating research results outwith the traditional scholarly journals market.

## **FIRST SHOTS FIRED IN VAT BATTLE**

SCONUL and Universities UK (amongst other allies) are coordinating political pressure about the UK's VAT regime, which levies tax on electronic publications but not on printed ones. Charles Hendry, MP for Wealden, tabled two parliamentary questions recently, asking the



Chancellor of the Exchequer how much had been raised through VAT on electronically published materials in each of the past 10 years, and how many universities have protested about it.

#### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION**

On freedom of information in the UK, SCONUL's Advisory Committee on Access to Information Systems and Services issued as one of its last acts, an advice note which is available at <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/access/papers/>

Subtly different from Freedom of Information, which on 1 January became a real issue in the UK with the coming into force of the relevant Acts, is the concept of Public Sector Information. SCONUL helped lobby to exclude cultural and educational institutions from the requirements of the European Directive on this topic. But universities may benefit from it, when it becomes law in the UK and Ireland, through enhanced possibilities of exploiting and reusing information produced by public sector bodies. It may well fall to libraries to organise the information newly available to higher education institutions. The EC Public Sector Information Directive will become law in the UK on 1 July 2005.

#### **JISC RESPONDS TO DFES E-LEARNING STRATEGY**

JISC's recent response (15 March) to the English Department for Education and Skills e-learning strategy is more quickly absorbed than the 359 kb of the strategy itself  
[http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=news\\_estrategy](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=news_estrategy)

If you have no time to read the entire DfES strategy it may be worth concentrating on paras 78 - 97: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/e-strategy/>

#### **HEFCE E-LEARNING STRATEGY PUBLISHED**

As announced on [lis-sconul](http://www.sconul.ac.uk) on 9 March, HEFCE published early this month its own e-learning strategy: see [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05\\_12/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_12/) SCONUL and UCISA get a mention on p15

#### **LAUNCH OF SUNCAT**

On 15 February the national Serials Union Catalogue (SUNCAT) was launched. Reg Carr, Director of Oxford University Library Services & Bodley's Librarian, and Chair of JISC's Integrated Information Environment committee, said that SUNCAT will fill a gap in provision and bring real benefit to a wide range of users of serials. See

[http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=pr\\_new\\_national\\_resource\\_news\\_150205](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=pr_new_national_resource_news_150205)

#### **HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY**

Early in February the Academy announced to its registered practitioners that it will no longer require an annual fee from them: instead, registration will depend on a practitioner's commitment to their own continuing professional development. See [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/news/1370\\_2255.htm](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/news/1370_2255.htm)

Suzanne Enright, SCONUL's Chair, has been consulted by a consultant working for the Academy (Allan Schofield) assessing future options for the HEA.

#### **GATS: WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH LIBRARIES?**

This is a serious question. The General Agreement on Trade in Services potentially covers education and libraries. Education is big business (as an export it earns New Zealand more than the wine industry) and international commercial operators are keen to move in. Why should fee-charging universities and colleges enjoy state subsidies which make foreign competition virtually impossible? A conference organised in Cambridge by EBLIDA in partnership with SCONUL on 2 and 3 March explored this topic, helped by the journalist and author George Monbiot amongst other expert speakers. See [http://www.sconul.ac.uk/event\\_conf/WTOConference/wto-programme](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/event_conf/WTOConference/wto-programme) (programme): a report appears in this issue of *Focus*. Any service that could be run by a commercial company is potentially open to commercial competition under GATS, and unfortunately higher education in the UK has demonstrated that companies can provide information services. International trade agreements are now firmly on EBLIDA's, and SCONUL's, international lobbying agenda. See also 'GATS gets going again' on p.6 of AUT outlook, 234, March 2005. As with international agreements on copyright, the commercial world is calling the shots and the civil servants doing the negotiating simply don't understand library services.

#### **DR DIANA LEITCH**

Dr Diana Leitch, Assistant Director and Deputy University Librarian of the John Rylands University Library, Manchester, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry in recognition of her contribution to the development and provision of information resources in chemistry and allied subjects. She is the first librarian to have achieved this distinction.

#### **A SITE YOU MAY HAVE MISSED**

SCONUL's very own Philip Larkin was one of the powers behind the Location Register of English Literary Manuscripts and Letters: he was irritated when the papers of authors (writing in English) disappeared abroad because people were unaware of the obvious home for them in Britain or Ireland. The Location Register is now suitably web-based and is an under-used resource for literary scholars and special collections librarians. See <http://www.library.rdg.ac.uk/colls/projects/locreg.html>

#### **SCONUL CONFERENCE BREAKS RECORDS**

Our conference in Brighton on 6-8 April broke previous attendance records and resulted in some major new policy directions: see Suzanne Enright's report as SCONUL Chair at [http://www.sconul.ac.uk/event\\_conf/agm2005/agm-briefing.html](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/event_conf/agm2005/agm-briefing.html)

#### **INSPIRE: PROGRESS ON MANY FRONTS**

INSPIRE, the scheme to provide simpler access to varied libraries for all kinds of user, is growing apace. For example, the Derbyshire Information Group has agreed to register with INSPIRE, and subregional development is under way in the West Midlands and the South East of England. In the North East of England INSPIRE has achieved lift-off. Expressions of interest are coming from health libraries, further education libraries, and JISC's Common Information Environment. The website [www.inspire.gov.uk](http://www.inspire.gov.uk) is undergoing serious development.

#### **SCONUL AND UCISA IN TALKS WITH THE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION**

Representatives of SCONUL and UCISA met at the Leadership Foundation on 18 April to discuss further a course for leaders and potential leaders in our two closely-related professions. The Leadership Foundation's new prospectus has been published <http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/publications/prospectusb.pdf> and can also be reached from the 'Useful links' section at <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/links.html>

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# News from member libraries

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## University of Abertay Dundee

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#### **NEW LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

In the last issue of Focus we reported that Abertay had joined the Scottish Endeavor Consortium. The migration from Dynix to Voyager has now taken place and we went live with the system in August. The benefits of being in a consortium were apparent during the implementation phase of the project when we had the support and experience of the consortium team to draw on and we could compare notes and learn from other member libraries. We are operating all the core modules and are at last piloting 'self-issue' – a service which has been on hold for several years pending introduction of a new library management system.

#### **IT UPDATE**

Improvements on the IT side have given users more choice and flexibility in how they access library and other networked resources. Firstly, the new wireless network service was launched earlier in the year so students can now connect their laptops in the library. Secondly, the introduction of WebVPN allows students and staff to access files, documents, intranet etc. from home PCs or from a laptop when on the move without the need to install special software or change settings.

#### **INFORMATION LITERACY WITH MENZIESHILL HIGH SCHOOL**

We have been collaborating with a local high school to provide an information literacy programme for sixth form pupils. The programme includes library and information skills, IT skills and sessions from academic staff on writing for science and statistics. It also gives the pupils a taster of a university environment before they go on to join a university course.

#### **ECDL FOR STUDENTS**

Changes in the University calendar and modular scheme have provided space outside the main curriculum for students to develop their interests and skills. A range of activities are being offered and our IT Trainers are providing an 'ECDL Bootcamp'. Financed through individual learning accounts, the students can attend a series of

intensive training days and complete the ECDL tests in a couple of weeks. Many of the students have already expressed a preference to build on their existing IT skills and do the Advanced ECDL modules and this will be offered as well.

Shirley Millar  
Information Manager  
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## University of Birmingham

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### **FILM DISCOVERED OF UNIVERSITY'S FIRST GRADUATION CEREMONY**

Rare footage –which dates back over 100 years– featuring the University of Birmingham's first graduation ceremony and its founder, Joseph Chamberlain, has been discovered and was shown on BBC's series *'The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon'* in January.

The second programme of the series featured moving pictures of the university's first graduation ceremony on Saturday 6 July 1901 at which the Chancellor, Joseph Chamberlain, presided. It also includes footage of the University's first women graduates, Caroline Edith Morgan (BSc), Gertrude Elsie May (MA), Margaret Mellard Hawkes (BA) and Anne Jane Marchant (BA).

The *University of Birmingham magazine*, the student magazine of the time, has a report about the degree procession and actually refers to the filming: 'The stewards heroically led the way right into the teeth of the cinematograph, in front of the fountain, along the Victoria Square, Paradise Street and Ratcliff Place.'

University of Birmingham archivist Philippa Bassett has been helping the BBC to identify the people in the film. Philippa says, 'I was able to find student record cards for three of the four women and also discovered that Miss May was the first woman to receive a Master's Degree from the University. I found some pictures of two of the graduating women from other sources along with detailed descriptions of academic dress at that time and a register of the graduates from this particular ceremony with all their signatures. I am delighted that such an insightful and fascinating record of this time at the beginning of the University's life has been unearthed.'

### **ELEARNING AND THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

The University of Birmingham has received JISC funding, under the JISC e-Learning Programme

([http://www.jisc.ac.uk/elearning\\_innovation.html](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/elearning_innovation.html)) to report upon the ways in which learning technologies are influencing the design of physical learning spaces in further and higher education institutions.

Virtual learning environments, mobile technologies, wireless LANs and broadband are just some of the technologies that are influencing how the university designs, uses and manages learning spaces. Through this study we hope to bring together examples of the wide range of current practice being implemented in post-16 education, publish a set of practical guidelines on effective planning of learning spaces for managers and provide some possible 'institution of the future' scenarios. A key element of this study is to contact senior staff and review the strategic developments in this area.

### **MAKING AN IMPACT**

Information Services is participating in the 'Measuring Impact Initiative' exploring the impact that higher education libraries make on learning, teaching, and research. Birmingham joins the second cohort of the project and has chosen to investigate research support, and in particular, examine the effect that the Open Archives Initiative (<http://www.openarchives.org>), and our own institutional repository (<http://www.eprints.bham.ac.uk>) will have on researchers, over the next few years.

### **ETHOS PROJECT**

The University of Birmingham is pleased to announce its involvement in a new national e-theses project, called EThOS (Electronic Theses Online Service).

The purpose of EThOS is to deliver, over a period of 18 months, a fully operational, easily scalable and financially viable prototype UK e-theses online service. The service will enable end-users to access the full text of electronically stored theses via a single web interface, in secure format and free of charge. It will enable the University of Birmingham and other higher education institutions, in partnership with the British Library, to ensure a much higher level of national and international visibility for the UK postgraduate research output, as well as its preservation in perpetuity.

#### **PROMOTING SHARED USE OF DIGITAL CONTENT ACROSS THE REGION**

The University of Birmingham is a principal partner in a regional JISC funded project to promote the shared use of digital content.

The aim of the project is to enable local educational institutions to make more effective use of their existing digital assets by promoting shared, open and accessible use of digital content across the region. University College Worcester is the lead institution of a consortium involving several higher and further education institutions across the West Midlands.

Focusing on key areas, the project will provide and pilot a framework for managing cross-institutional authentication and authorisation of access rights to shared resources. It will also investigate the issues in the collaborative use of digital repositories.

The University of Birmingham will work with Kidderminster College, to design and implement a 'Shibboleth' (see <http://www.athensams.net/shibboleth/shibboleth-intro.html>) framework for application to University of Birmingham learning resources contained within WebCT Vista. The project will also be run in conjunction with the Technology Enhanced Enterprise Education project (TE3), based in the Learning Development Unit (LDU), to implement Shibboleth for the TE3 repository and assist with testing in other institutions.

The project will produce experience-based evidence to underpin a regional strategy for models of working with shared digital resources.

#### **BEURO CONFERENCE 2004**

The University of Birmingham hosted the BEuro Conference for European Users of Banner/Luminis in December.

Attendance at the conference came from both technical and functional users of the Banner Student Record and Luminis software, together with participants from SunGard SCT. Delegates came from institutions across Europe – UK, Ireland, Norway and France, including from the Russell Group.

The overall aim of the conference was to move institutions in the direction of creating the Unified Digital Campus; an environment in which systems, individuals, and communities interact

seamlessly for learning, teaching, administration, and achievement.

#### **SMALL BUSINESSES GET ACCESS TO EUROPE**

Information Services is a participant in an EU funded project to provide European information to small businesses in the West Midlands.

The Local Cooperation Project is being led by the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and will create a Website *Signpost West Midlands* which, as its name implies, signposts European information services in the West Midlands region. These services include lobbying and representation on behalf of the business community, general European information, EU legislation, employee recruitment, business partner matching, technological innovation and export advice. Each partner will guide companies to the most relevant source of information if they are unable to deal with the query themselves.

#### **NEW WIRELESS NETWORK**

And finally the university is embarking on an exciting development in C&IT, which offers considerable potential for more flexible and efficient working, complementing the new campus network. These opportunities will benefit teaching, learning, research and administration by providing access to the campus network in areas that traditionally haven't had network links e.g. social space, lecture theatres and libraries. The wireless network infrastructure (authenticated wireless network), is currently being rolled out across campus providing wireless access zones in key locations.

Alongside the introduction of the wireless network, Information Services, on behalf of the university, are participating in a six month trial project to provide guest access on our wireless network. The Location Independent Networking (LIN) project will allow any member of staff/ students/visitors to visit any of the 35 participating institutions and access the host wireless network using their home login credentials. Up until now, this has not been an option, but the benefits of the project will mean less administration for the host institution and easier access for visitors. Further information is available via the JANET web pages at <http://www.ja.net/development/aa/lin/index.html>.

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## University of Exeter

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### **UNIVERSITY OF EXETER IN CORNWALL**

The new campus at Tremough in Cornwall, shared with University College, Falmouth, opened its doors to students in September. Camborne School of Mines closed and staff and students transferred to the new campus. In addition, a number of new subjects are now offered for study in Cornwall: students can currently choose to study University of Exeter courses in biology, environmental science, geography, geology, mining engineering, renewable energy or English. More courses run by the School of Historical, Political and Sociological Studies and the School of Law are planned over the next few years for phase two of the development. The purpose-built learning resources centre contains: a merged collection of 80,000 items from both institutions; special collections including videos, maps and archive collections from Camborne School of Mines and the Institute of Cornish Studies; provision for group and quiet study; wireless technology; laptop connection points and a large open access IT suite, plus smaller training suite. Regular van services run between the different institutions' sites, providing an inter-site loan service. Collaboration between the libraries in Exeter and Tremough has been crucial, particularly when dealing with complex issues involving access to online resources. For example, ensuring that each student from the different institutions can access what they are entitled to, and enabling cross-campus access to subscribed resources for these users can be a full time task.

### **JISC FUNDING AWARD - PROJECT SWISH**

The Library, in partnership with IT Services, has been awarded funding under the JISC Core Middleware Programme to become an early adopter of Shibboleth. Project SWISH (South West Implementation of Shibboleth) will implement a Shibboleth pilot service involving registered members of the university based in Exeter, within the Peninsula Medical School and the Peninsula Allied Health Collaboration, and at the Combined Universities in Cornwall campus in Cornwall. It will also investigate possible integration with the university portal, being developed by the university's XPort project, and its potential to interact with other campus services, including the VLE service and the library management system (produced by Innovative Interfaces). Project SWISH is of 12 months duration and is managed by Ian Tilsed, the library's computing development officer.

### **MOVE TO ATHENS DA**

At the beginning of the 2004/2005 academic year we introduced Athens Devolved Authentication (AthensDA), in a further move to simplify access to electronic resources. Based on an existing set of user credentials (in our case IT Services accounts), it has permitted readers to login to our Electronic Library and remain logged into Athens resources until they logout or close their browser. The introduction required considerable planning and development, particularly in relation to authentication schemas and data flows between university departments, but the system has integrated well and is a success.

### **ELECTRONIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (ERM)**

In the light of comments from our users regarding complexities in accessing electronic journals, at the end of February we installed a new product available from Innovative Interfaces Inc. (who supply our library system). As well as facilitating the complexities that lie behind e-journal management, library users will benefit significantly from ERM's launch. The main 'public' purpose is to translate details relating to our electronic journal subscriptions (as passed to us from EBSCO, our main agents) into functional information on our library catalogue (<http://lib.ex.ac.uk>). The result is that over 2,500 'new' online journal titles have been added automatically to our catalogue and that all our e-journal links now show subscription coverage data. In addition, the links have all been 'proxied' so that they will work for all our authorised users regardless of whether they are on or off campus. Work is already under way to remove the older (non-proxied) links to nearly 8,000 e-journals from the catalogue and ERM will also keep holdings information up-to-date as subscriptions change, titles cease and new ones emerge.

### **SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

The heritage collections of the university are now all managed centrally through the library's special collections. There have been three clear phases to the integration process:

- the physical upgrade to the special collections site, 2000-2003
- the merger into the library of the university's museum, the Bill Douglas Centre for the History of Cinema and Popular Culture, 2002
- the merger into the library of the fine art collection, 2004.

Unification of the collections and staff has delivered significant service and resource management benefits arising from skills sharing between

library, archive, and museum professionals. The hybrid team has proved an invaluable foundation for new ICT initiatives, including the implementation of CALM (collection management software for archive, museum, and local studies' collections), and further development of EVE, the Bill Douglas Centre's catalogue and exhibition site ([www.billdouglas.org/eve](http://www.billdouglas.org/eve)). EVE already attracts 8,000 hits a month, which is more than the average level of visitors to its museum galleries, and it has been chosen as an exemplar project by (MLA) the Council for Museums, Libraries and Archives and the Arts and Humanities Research Board.

The merger process has been challenging, but the increased flexibility of staffing, space, and access have delivered real and measurable increases in collection use which are convincing for staff and users alike.



*Sculpture by Witold Graejan from the university's fine art collection*

*On display in the University of Exeter Library*

Information collated and edited by Caroline Gale  
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## University of Glamorgan

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### OPENING HOURS REVIEW

The opening hours of both Learning Resources Centres at Treforest and Glyntaff have remained more or less unchanged for a number of years. During the last decade the way that students and staff go about their studies and use learning resources has changed. A number of factors have come on the scene in the meantime that have had some effect on higher education. These include

an increase in part time and distance learning students, more mature students and those from backgrounds less accustomed to HE study, advent of tuition fees, changes in study patterns (group work, use of laptops, use of Blackboard, etc.), more emphasis on self service facilities, access to around 7,000 e-journals, more research in some areas . . . the list goes on.

As a result we decided it was time to review the opening hours that currently operate and the kinds of services offered during those times. We were interested in weekdays, weekends and vacations. We have consulted students and staff in two ways. Firstly, a questionnaire survey (paper and e-versions) has been carried out which has resulted in 321 responses. Secondly, a focus group was held at Glyntaff with academic staff from the Law School and the School of Care Sciences. A third strand involved the collection of usage statistics over a seven-day period in February. This enabled us to determine usage (number of loans/returns, number of people visiting the LRCs, number of enquiries) across particular periods of the day. We're hoping this three-pronged approach will give us a rich picture allowing us to make any changes to the opening hours for the start of the next academic year.

### MUCH CLOSER TO HOME

We have operated an off-campus store for many years on the Treforest industrial estate. This has acted as an overflow storage building for back issues of printed journals and books that are less in demand. Students and staff have been able to request that copies of journals/books be brought back to the LRC for loan/reading. This meant a daily van service to and from the store. Given the more widespread access to e-journals and the effectiveness of the interlibrary loan service, less use was being made of the facility. We have therefore now acquired an on-campus store which gives us a number of advantages – a more accessible facility within 100 yards of the Treforest LRC, a more manageable service and even some financial savings for the university. The downside, as some would see it, has been the need to edit fairly drastically the collections, as the new store was only able to accommodate 60% of the old store. With the cooperation of the Schools a fair number of volumes were withdrawn and the new store is being prepared for use again.

### DIGITAL PHOTOCOPIERS . . . AND CHEAPER!

In response to feedback from customer satisfaction surveys and student suggestions we have reduced the cost of photocopying in the LRC. The

charge to students has been reduced from 6p to 5p for A4 b&w copies (12p to 10p for A3) and from 70p to 50p for A4 colour (£1.40 to £1 for A3). Acetate copying will remain at 20p but will include the acetate.

The lower costs are part of a new deal agreed with our suppliers to provide modern digital photocopying machines. The supplier (NRG) will continue to provide a fully managed service on our behalf, including maintenance, paper supplies and cash handling. New charging facilities have also been installed adjacent to each machine. The digital copiers have the capability of inter-operating with smart card software in the future and are likely to be more reliable than the previously more mechanised models.

#### **STUDENT INDUCTION: NEXT STEPS**

Despite the induction efforts of the information librarians we actually only see about 62% of all new students. Being concerned about the other 38% of students who miss out, we are constantly looking for ways in which we can increase the number of students we see at induction.

This year we tried a new and bold advertising campaign in addition to the normal liaison we have with academic schools. Posters were placed around the campus and inside the LRC building and were generally well received. We also had links on the freshers website and on the LRC's web pages advertising our sessions. Towards the end of induction week we offered sessions open to any student who had missed out earlier in the week.

We do not have final figures for those attending LRC induction sessions in 2004/05 but the indication so far is that they will not differ greatly from last year. We are therefore planning some new developments for this coming academic year.

The LRC induction video which we use in face to face induction sessions is being completely updated this year and we hope to be able to make it available online via our web pages. In addition we are developing three short detailed video clips on:

- How to use the OPAC
- How to access our electronic resources
- How to use our self-service facilities.

These short clips will also be integrated onto our web site. One big plus is that the induction material will be available 24x7 and students who

miss the face to face sessions will have access to the same information. Students starting their courses at non-traditional times of the year who sometimes miss out on a LRC induction will also be able to view the online version. The detailed clips, we hope, will be of use at 'point of need' later in a student's course and once the material is online it can be revisited any number of times. With the technology currently available to us the online material will be viewable on campus. Quality off-campus will also be reasonable with broadband but quality may not be as good with dial-up connections. Further developments will be needed to ensure that all off-campus access to the online video material is at a reasonable quality. These represent small steps in the right direction in terms of increasing the proportion of students who get to know how the Learning Resources Centre can help them.

#### **NEW LRC STAFF**

Since the last issue of *SCONUL Focus* we have welcomed more new staff. They are:

Tony Evans, Media Support Manager (Delivery)  
Emma Rye, Assistant Librarian  
Peter Axinowe, LRC Attendant  
Alison Metcalfe, Learning Resources Assistant  
Mark Griffiths, Media Support Officer

During the last few months we also said goodbye to Sara-Marie Wilkins, Paul Aitken and Karl Kiddie.

Steve Morgan  
Deputy Head, Learning Resources Centre  
E-mail: smorgan1@glam.ac.uk

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## Glasgow Caledonian University

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#### **NEW LEARNING CENTRE**

Glasgow Caledonian University's new learning centre will open in September 2005. The university has an international reputation for designing learning space thanks to the success of the Learningcafe designed four years ago. Learning Services at Glasgow Caledonian are predicting major interest in the new building and are planning how to respond to this, including some early feedback on its use in the winter 2005 edition of *SCONUL Focus*. The building enhances the Learningcafe model of group learning space, as well as developing space for a variety of other needs including silent individual study. Over ten student services including the library service will operate in the main feature of the building, a 2500 square metre,

nine metres high services mall. To prepare for this all services were part of the Student Access to Services project, reviewing services to make them more student focussed and considering the best way to deploy people and technology. More information from Jan Howden (J.howden@gcal.ac.uk). Also see <http://student.gcal.ac.uk>, [www.learningservices.gcal.ac.uk](http://www.learningservices.gcal.ac.uk), [www.realcaledonian.ac.uk](http://www.realcaledonian.ac.uk), <http://campus.gcal.ac.uk>

#### **INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS PROJECT – THE LINK BETWEEN SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION**

Following on from the Drumchapel project (see issue 33), Dr John Crawford, library research officer at Glasgow Caledonian University is focusing on the link between secondary and tertiary education in relation to information literacy skills.

The project, an innovative pilot aims to develop curriculum based IL frameworks with secondary and tertiary partners which, at the end of the project, can be rolled out to other participants. It will aim to produce secondary school leavers with a skill set/transferable knowledge which higher education can recognise and develop or which can be applied to the world of work directly.

For further information about this project contact:  
Dr John Crawford  
Library Research Officer  
Glasgow Caledonian University  
Room RS302, 6 Rose Street, Glasgow G3 6RB  
Tel: 0141 270 1360 or 0141 273 1248  
E-mail: [jcr@gcal.ac.uk](mailto:jcr@gcal.ac.uk)

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University of Leeds

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#### **LEEDS READ**

World Book Day saw the culmination of activity for the library's 'Leeds Read' event. Based on the BBC's Big Read, students and staff were asked to firstly nominate their favourite read, and then to vote for the Leeds top read from a shortlist of 30 titles. In first place came Harper Lee's *To kill a mockingbird*, hotly pursued by what was regarded as the rank outsider in the shape of *The very hungry caterpillar* by Eric Carle. As part of Leeds Read, an event 'Between the Lines' was held by our Head of Special Collections, Chris Shepperd. Drawing upon the collection of original manuscripts held by Leeds, works were featured by such authors as Elizabeth Gaskell, William Thackeray, Arthur Ransome, Evelyn Waugh, Barbara Taylor-Bradford, and Kevin Crossley-Holland.

#### **RESEARCH TRAINING OFFICER**

The library has appointed a research training officer for 12 months to investigate training and support for research postgraduates and postdoctoral research staff. Angela Newton, previously faculty team librarian (science and engineering team), is undertaking this role which is part of university-wide work looking at improving the generic transferable skills of researchers, as recommended by the Roberts Review (SET for Success) in 2002.

#### **THE EVIE PROJECT**

EVIE is a two year project funded as part of the JISC Virtual Research Environments programme. It is made up of a partnership of the University of Leeds Library, the British Library, Virtual Knowledge Park, and Bodington.org. The project will address the challenges of researchers by testing the integration and deployment of key existing online components within a portal framework.

Currently EVIE is undertaking user requirements analysis. This has targeted three user communities (geography, medicine, White Rose Grid) for one-to-one interviews and focus groups. The next phase of this work package is to conduct a cross-campus questionnaire based on our emergent requirements model.

The project is keen to avoid adding complexity - initial results suggest that the researcher does not want to enter the same data twice, and the tools should be intuitive so that training requirements are minimal.

Liz Waller  
Head of Public Service Strategy  
E-mail: [e.j.waller@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:e.j.waller@leeds.ac.uk)

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#### **Leeds Metropolitan University**

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#### **STAFFING NEWS**

Following Philip Payne's departure for Birkbeck College, Jo Norry has been appointed Head of Learning Support Services. In turn Wendy Luker (formerly Deputy at Civic Quarter) has been promoted to the Campus Library Manager post at Headingley Campus. Wendy also leads our academic liaison in her role as Academic Support Manager.

#### **CHARTER MARK REACCREDITATION**

Learning Support Services has been awarded the Charter Mark for the second time. The Government award is the national standard that recog-



nises excellence in customer service (as perceived by the customer) and to meet it, LSS showed that:

- it listens to its customers
- it learns which aspects of the service are most important to them
- it delivers a service that is tailored to their needs
- ...and is continuously improving

The assessor's report gave the details of our achievement against the individual elements of the criteria. Areas of best practice were identified as our commitment to supporting users with disabilities; development of appropriate and flexible consultation methods for different groups of users; benchmarking and the use of technology to improve services.

#### **KEY SKILLS INITIATIVE**

The library successfully launched a programme of workshops at the start of the academic year to support student transition to higher education, improve retention and raise achievement. Students can attend drop in sessions on IT, numeracy, academic literacy and information literacy as well as topics such as avoiding plagiarism and day long workshops on IT for absolute beginners. A pilot has also been taking place with the health faculty to specifically support their students' literacy skills.

Almost 1000 students took advantage of both the faculty and university-wide workshops during the autumn term. Their evaluation comments were very positive with 98% recommending the session to others and confidence levels rising from 25% to 84%. For more information please contact Marie Scopes [m.scopes@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:m.scopes@leedsmet.ac.uk).

#### **OPENING HOURS**

Our new 24 hour opening which operates continuously from Monday 08.30 – Friday 19.00 during semesters has been well received by students. Busiest times overnight have been before 03.00, with some students staying throughout the night. Even more popular have been the extended opening hours on Saturdays and Sundays when we are now open until 23.00.

For the first time library services were available throughout the Christmas vacation as the Headingley Library opened its doors from Christmas Day until after the New Year holiday period. Over 1500 students used the library during the ten day period and over 800 books were borrowed through our self service facilities. Opening at this

time enables our many international students to keep in touch with family and friends - this was particularly important in light of the Asian tsunami.

Following a successful pilot in 2004 both the Civic Quarter and Headingley libraries will be opening throughout the Easter vacation (with the exception of Easter Sunday) with self service provided on the Bank Holidays. A publicity campaign has been launched to promote this, focussing on 'no need to panic about your dissertation deadline – the library is open over Easter'.

#### **LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT**

A significant investment has led to a refurbishment of part of Harrogate Library which supports our further education students. New furniture, extended IT facilities and complete new shelving for stock have provided a more inviting, modern study environment for students and staff. Study furniture is lighter in colour, more functional and welcoming for individual and group work. Extended IT facilities provide a quieter IT workspace. Lower shelving in part of the library opens up the space, welcoming the user to make full use of the facilities, including free drinking water and an area of comfortable seating.

#### **PRIZE WINNERS**

We reported in the last edition of SCONUL Focus that our disability support officers, Aly Peacock and Sue Smith, had been nominated for the university's prestigious Chancellor's Award. The library was very pleased to hear that they gained first prize, including a cheque for £1000 to further development their role supporting dyslexic and disabled students. For further information please contact [a.peacock@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:a.peacock@leedsmet.ac.uk) or [s.a.smith@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.smith@leedsmet.ac.uk)

#### **IMPROVING FRONT LINE SERVICES**

The library's self service issue and return machines are now an integrated part of our front line service, supporting our extended opening hours. To enable users to become familiar with these facilities many of our information services assistants now work in front of the counter in a 'happy to help' capacity which also allows directional and other routine queries to be quickly dealt with. Contact Dilys Young for further information [d.a.young@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:d.a.young@leedsmet.ac.uk)

Helen Finlay  
LSS Planning & Marketing Manager  
E-mail: [h.finlay@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:h.finlay@leedsmet.ac.uk)

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## Napier University

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### **NUINLINK: A GATEWAY TO ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AT NAPIER UNIVERSITY**

As part of ongoing developments in the integration of the library's e-resource collections, Napier University Learning Information Services have recently implemented the Ex Libris product, the MetaLib library portal.

Rebranded as *NUINlink*, this powerful new search tool provides a single interface to a range of electronic resources including databases, e-journals, e-books, library catalogues and internet gateways.

The portal includes subject-based collections of resources and an A-Z list of the library's e-journals (around 7000 titles), combined with the ability to cross-search databases within the *NUINlink* interface. Other features allow library members to create lists of favourite resources, to save and export search results using the personalised features and to link from search results to the electronic full-text and other services, using the associated product SFX.

Sara Brown  
Electronic Resources Advisor

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## The National Library of Scotland

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### **IAN HAMILTON FINLAY**

The National Library of Scotland have launched an exhibition of work of the artist and poet Ian Hamilton Finlay and his collaborators. The exhibition deals with his smaller paper works and features his collaborative relationships with Michael Harvey, the letter designer who was responsible for the inscriptions for Edinburgh's Playfair Project, Gary Hincks, an artist and designer who specialises in illustrating the Earth's dynamic systems, the photographer David Paterson, Robin Murdoch, a printer's representative, and the commercial artist and typographer Tom Bee. The exhibition runs until June.

Elizabeth Soutar Bookbinding competition  
The Elizabeth Soutar Bookbinding competition which is organised annually by the NLS has been won by Stuart Brockman from England for his striking cover design for his entry 'Anacreon'. The prize is awarded to the book binder who displays creative use of the skills applied in a craft binding with particular emphasis given to the cover design. The student prize went to Anna Linssen from the Netherlands.

### **HEALTH AWARD**

The library has been successful in achieving a bronze award in Scotland's Health at Work programme and now hopes to commit to working towards the silver award. A portfolio has to be built based on criteria that includes establishment of a health promotion group among staff, promotion of physical activity, provision of a smoke free environment and help to stop smoking, and raising awareness of health issues.

### **WORLD RENOWNED LITERARY ARCHIVE SECURED FOR SCOTLAND**

The most important literary archive to have become publicly available in the last 100 years is on its way to Scotland thanks to a multi-million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The HLF has agreed to give £17.7 million towards the purchase of the John Murray Archive which will allow the National Library of Scotland (NLS) to complete the sale.

The John Murray Archive contains private letters, manuscripts and other correspondence from Jane Austen, Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Benjamin Disraeli, Herman Melville, Charles Darwin, David Livingstone, Thomas Carlyle, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Edith Wharton, among others. It has been independently valued at £45 million but has been offered for sale to NLS at a reduced price of £31.2 million in order to keep the collection in the United Kingdom.

The National Librarian Martyn Wade said HLF's decision was wonderful news for Scotland and for the library. 'It is fantastic to secure such a unique and important collection for Scotland. There is still a lot to do, not least to achieve our own fundraising target of £6.5 million, but the HLF grant means that our funding package is now in place. It will allow us to go forward to complete the purchase.'

'We will now sit down with all interested parties and draw up a timetable for bringing the Archive to Scotland and ensure it is available for everyone to use and enjoy. It is entirely fitting that the Archive will be housed in Edinburgh, the first UNESCO World City of Literature and there is no doubt that it will enhance Scotland's cultural reputation both at home and overseas. This is a great day for the National Library and for Scotland as a whole. It is also important that this archive has been saved for the United Kingdom.'

The John Murray Archive contains more than 150,000 items. It is a literary treasure trove as well as being a who's who of great authors and thinkers. It contains many literary and historical gems along with political, scientific, engineering, travel and exploration material providing a rich source of information on British life and society over three centuries.

Helen Loughlin  
E-mail: h.loughlin@nls.uk

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## University of Newcastle upon Tyne

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After 16 months of intermittent construction work to coincide with student vacations, the £1.5M redevelopment of the Walton Medical Library finally came to a happy conclusion when Sir Liam Donaldson (Chief Medical Officer) performed the official opening ceremony in February 2005. Sir Liam was particularly impressed with the way in which the library had adapted to changing teaching and learning methods. He was particularly impressed with the provision of over 80 student pcs, 16 group study rooms, a student café, access to electronic journals for NHS staff and a generally welcoming learning environment. The newly extended library also allows staff from Special Collections to display exhibits from the Pybus history of medicine collection and a unique collection of historic bleeding bowls.

Considerable efforts have been made in recent years to increase the total number of issue transactions via the 3M self issue terminals. The library has recently completed an interesting and effective collaborative venture with 3M using 6 Sigma project methodology to examine ways of increasing the total percentage of self issue transactions. After a period of analysis changes were implemented which produced a rise in self issue to 68% of total issues. This in turn has identified a 'break point' in terms of the effectiveness of these changes and given some pointers for the further enhancement of self issue which the library will be pursuing. This project is being written up for a future edition of SCONUL Focus.

Earlier in the year the library underwent our latest and fourth CharterMark revalidation which was successful and we still hold the record of being the first UK University to gain the CharterMark and to be validated four times in a row! The most recent process indicated that revalidation is becoming increasingly difficult each time with different criteria being developed and increasing

difficulties in proving full compliance with the assessment criteria. Despite these caveats, the library still gains benefits from possessing the Chartermark both in terms as a focus for continuous improvement and for our customer care programmes.

On the staffing front, Dr Melanie Wood has been appointed to the post of Special Collections Librarian...

Jon Purcell  
Deputy Librarian  
E-mail j.purcell@ncl.ac.uk

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## Roehampton University

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### **SITE MERGER**

Roehampton University (RU) now has a single Learning Resources Centre (LRC). The move of Whitelands College to new listed premises at Christmas led to a merger of the LRC from that site with the larger collection at the Roehampton Lane (RL) LRC. Fortunately for us, this was a two stage process. Last summer (seems a long time ago now!) we got the RL LRC ready. New offices for some in the old gym (which had been the stack area until November 2003) opened up space for the new stock. New desks were ready for the transferred staff.

And then (of course!) the builders over ran their deadline. At one point blood pressure nearly boiled over when there was talk of a site move in week 2 of the autumn term. In the end, wiser counsels prevailed and Whitelands (WL) LRC closed on 10 December in theory at 17.00 but a last issue was pictured at about 17.15! We then had a good Christmas party to celebrate.

As the RL LRC was ready, the actual move was very swift. The removers Olympic had all the stock over and on the shelves in four days. We then closed to all customers for the four days before Christmas. On the 20 December we had a 'tidy the library day' for all staff (and I mean all) so Sue Clegg, Director of Information Services, all the office staff and teams who don't normally touch paper were sent off to different bits of the LRC to merge collections and fine tidy. Great fun to do, a real eye opener to library work for many other staff, and nice mulled wine and mince pies too.

Even then the builders were not quite finished, so instead of moving kit into our new PC suite

at WL on 4 January, we only just got all the kit in by the start of the second semester on 7 February. Other fun things included plasterers covering up speaker sockets in the new big lecture theatre and the lectern conduit - specified as 125mm - turning out to be 25mm. So not all the wires would fit! That this did not cause major problems was down to the former WL staff, who – redeployed in the new PC suite – were at least able to act as familiar faces recognising and supporting the bewildered academic staff and students. The few complaints were often accompanied by praise for the Information Services staff for helping sort things out.

#### **STAFF MERGER**

Of course the big knock on effect of the merger was to disband the WL team of assistants and subject enquiry staff. Months of planning of who was to join which team started in autumn 2003, with an agreed plan by November 2003.

Implementation was delayed by a restructuring in summer 2004 and then of course the building delays. Not surprisingly, by December 2004 a number of staff had left and new staff not in the original plan had joined. A major success was, with two exceptions, being able to negotiate all staff into the areas they wanted to work in. Even the two staff who didn't get what they wanted played fair to help colleagues. A feat of negotiation I could not have achieved without the support of all staff, but in particular Faye Jackson, Customer Services Manager.

Christmas thus became not only a very short time to re-jig the LRC, but also a period of very rapid training for ex-WL staff into the ways of RL ...and a good opportunity to actually look hard at some of the ways things have always been done.

#### **NEW DISABLED-ACCESSIBLE PC SUITE**

Part of the changes to the RL LRC has been the provision, at long last, of a wheelchair accessible, 24x7 accessible (well, when the swipe is in) PC suite. We have made the upstairs bit, which is small rooms, silent work only, which has pleased the postgraduate students.

#### **SELF ISSUE**

As of Easter, we are self issuing and self returning using Plescon's system. So far, so good, with good use even without much prompting. The touch screens and video clip on how to put in your card seem to help. Several students have commented to me how they like getting a receipt for return of items, so they know they really were checked in.

#### **ACOUSTIGUIDE TOUR**

Acoustiguide manufacture audio tours for museums and increasingly now libraries. Min Allen (academic liaison team coordinator) led a very successful project group who have made this happen for us. A major coup was getting the Vice-Chancellor to record the introductory section and we have the photos of him doing it. As a keen supporter of anything to make life easier for students, he was keen to be involved. This has proved very useful in promoting the system. If the VC likes it, it must be good.

#### **PEOPLE NEWS**

Information Services senior management team was restructured last summer, with a smaller group of heads of services replacing the larger senior managers group. The structure is now

- Director of Information Services – Sue Clegg
- Assistant Directors - Paul Scarsbrook (LRC, Careers) and John Hill (technical areas)
- Heads of Service – Adam Edwards (Learning and Liaison Services – the library bit!), David Shacklady (Employment and Careers), Naz Khan (Computer and Communication Services), John King (Information Systems Support Services which includes MIS, Web and software training) and Peter Merton (Media Services – including TV Roehampton).

In Learning and Liaison Services I am supported by Pat Simons, Faye Jackson and a yet to be appointed academic liaison manager.

Pat Simons was appointed in the autumn as bibliographic and technical library services manager. She heads up a restructured department combining the old Bib Services with e-resources and the library system. Following poor responses to the Library Systems post when advertised, we are innovating with a trainee position to grow one of our own. Interviews will be happening shortly as a lot of staff have been interested. Pat is supported by Frances Wiggins (Specialist Services Coordinator Funds and Acquisitions) and Anne Caulfield (SSCO Cataloguing). The systems post is the third coordinator for the team.

Faye Jackson is now customer services manager, managing the front line teams covering Circulation and Stock, Enquiries and Lecture room equipment/PC suites.

J. Adam Edwards  
Head of Learning and Liaison Services

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# New publications

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## New from LISU

*LISU annual library statistics 2004* by Claire Creaser et al (198 pages, spiral bound, ISBN 1 901786 76 5, £37.50) along with *Average prices of British academic books July-Dec 04* (ISBN 1901786846) and *Average prices of USA academic books July-Dec 04* (ISBN 1901786854) (both paperback and £17.50 each) are all now available from LISU, Research School of Informatics, Holywell Park, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leics LE11 3TU (tel: 01509 635680, fax: 01509 635699, email: [lisu@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:lisu@lboro.ac.uk)) and through TeleOrdering. Titles can be ordered online from <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ls/lisu/pages/publications/abpi.html>.

Both *Average prices ...* titles are also available on CD-ROM, price £20 + VAT - or a combined reduced price of £25 + VAT if paper copy and CD-ROM are ordered together.

For further information, contact Sally Maynard, LISU, tel: 01509 635689, email: [lisu@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:lisu@lboro.ac.uk).

## Just published:

*Claire Creaser, Sally Maynard and Sonya White, LISU annual library statistics 2004: featuring trend analysis of UK public and academic libraries 1993-2003*, Loughborough: LISU, 2004, 198 pages, ISSN 0967-487X, ISBN 1 901 786 76 5: £37.50 post paid UK; overseas postage: Europe £3.30, rest of world £5.50

Coverage this year includes:

- public libraries - trends for up to ten years, on key aspects of expenditure, stock, services, use and users, by local authority sector
- academic libraries - trends for up to ten years on a range of features including expenditure, users, provision of stock and facilities, drawn primarily from higher education institutions' return by institution type
- other libraries - the most recent information from the three national libraries and libraries in government departments is given, with some limited trend information where available; a summary of the latest CILIP survey of libraries in further education colleges is included
- Statistics of general interest - including indexes of general, book and periodical price inflation.

The report is available to download free of charge from the LISU website <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/dis/lisu>. Print copies are available from LISU, Loughborough University, Leicestershire, UK, LE11 3TU, Tel: 01509 63 5680, Fax: 01509 63 5699, E-mail: [lisu@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:lisu@lboro.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.

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A copy of *SCONUL Focus* can be supplied on request to a member of the Editorial Board or from SCONUL's office at 102 Euston Street, London NW1 2HA, email: [sconul@sconul.ac.uk](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 ([awbrewerton@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:awbrewerton@brookes.ac.uk)).

As well as text, we are also keen to publish images and would especially like to include author photos where possible. Please either send prints or digital photographs (resolution 300 dpi or above) to your contact on the Editorial Board.

It is helpful if authors follow our house style when submitting their articles:

- Spelling in '-ise' etc. is preferred to '-ize'.
- Capitalisation is ruthlessly minimal. In individual libraries it is usual to refer to 'the Library', 'the University', 'the College' etc. Please resist this in our newsletter: unless there is any ambiguity use 'the library' etc.
- Spell out acronyms at their first occurrence. Avoid 'HE' for 'higher education', which we prefer to write in full (our overseas readers may be unfamiliar with the abbreviation HE).
- Please use single quotation marks, not double.
- Web addresses should be written in full and –where possible– be underlined for purposes of clarity.
- References should appear as numbered footnotes at the end of the article, in the following forms (we prefer not to reverse surnames and initials)

1 A.N.Author, *Title of book*, Place: Publisher, 2000, pp 23-6

2 P.B.Writer, 'Title of chapter or article', in Q.V.Editor, ed., *Interesting articles about libraries*, Place: Publisher, 2000, pp 262-3

3 B.M.Researcher, 'Title of article', *Journal of pseudodocumentalism*, 70 (2), 1989, pp 117-20

Anyone wishing to discuss possible articles or needing more information should contact:

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We look forward to hearing from you.



