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# SCONUL Focus

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#### Contents

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3	Can only Cat Deeley save us now?
5	The 2005 Frye Institute <i>Richard Wake</i>
7	'What would you do if I asked you to shave your beard off?' <i>Steve Morgan</i>
11	Library and Information Management Employability Skills LIMES <i>Yvonne Hamblin</i>
14	Chartership in partnership <i>Kathryn Kilburn</i>
17	Newcastle University Library and the Charter Mark <i>John Morrow</i>
19	Introducing ESRC Society Today <i>Cormac Connolly</i>
21	The role of Wikipedia in higher education <i>Sonya Lipczynska</i>
22	E-learning at the University of Exeter Library <i>Dr Jessica Gardner, Michelle Allen, Dominic Prosser, Dr Helen Hanson</i>
25	The Lost World of Mitchell & Kenyon <i>Dr Vanessa Toulmin</i>
29	The 'Leeds Read' <i>Liz Waller, Katy Sidwell</i>
32	Freedom of Information at Oxford University Library Services <i>Mike Heaney</i>
35	Current strategic issues for conservation of library collections <i>Chris Woods</i>
41	LibQUAL+ in the UK and Ireland: three years' findings and experience <i>Selena Lock, J. Stephen Town</i>
45	Developing an emergency control plan for Oxford University Libraries <i>Kristie Short-Traxler</i>
51	Shelving systems for libraries <i>Richard Ryan</i>
53	Cafés in UK higher education libraries <i>Christopher West</i>
55	Life in the fast lane - well nearly: 24 hour opening pilot at the University of Liverpool, Harold Cohen Library <i>Laura Oldham</i>
59	Fines: a survey of SCONUL libraries <i>Graeme Barber</i>
63	Learning and information services support for international students at the University of Hertfordshire <i>Helen Singer</i>
67	It's good to talk! <i>Karen Jackson, Ann-Marie Ashby</i>
70	Infoteach: developing an online community of practice of librarians who teach <i>Chris Powis</i>
72	WHELP: wherefore, whereto? <i>Elizabeth Kensler, Andrew Green</i>
74	An overview of SCURL's current activities and projects <i>Jill Evans</i>

77	The Open Rose Group
79	Supporting e-learning: a guide for library and information managers, <i>Hilary Johnson</i>
81	Guidelines for colleges: recommendations for learning resources, <i>Lindsey Martin</i>
82	Valnow goes from strength to strength <i>Julie Hitchen</i>
83	The summer meeting of the Universities Science and Technology Librarians' Group (USTLG) <i>Frank Parry</i>
84	A report on the 'Developing an Institutional Repository' workshop at the University of Glasgow <i>William J Nixon</i>
85	News from SCONUL
88	'Move away from SCONUL's 'Saga' image!' <i>Mary Morley</i>
90	Health strategy for SCONUL <i>Judith Palmer</i>
91	CURL/SCONUL Digest of Scholarly Communication News <i>Fredrick J. Friend</i>
93	News from member libraries
98	New from LISU
99	Online Information 2005
100	Advice for authors

### **Editorial information**

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Please send articles for publication to SCONUL: [sconul@sconul.ac.uk](mailto:sconul@sconul.ac.uk)

News items should be sent to Toby Bainton: [sconul@sconul.ac.uk](mailto:sconul@sconul.ac.uk) or to your usual contact person on the SCONUL Focus editorial team.

### **Editorial team**

Antony Brewerton, Oxford Brookes University: [awbrewerton@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:awbrewerton@brookes.ac.uk) (Chair)

Tony Chalcraft, York St John College: [a.chalcraft@yorks.j.ac.uk](mailto:a.chalcraft@yorks.j.ac.uk)

John FitzGerald, University College, Cork: [j.fitzgerald@ucc.ie](mailto:j.fitzgerald@ucc.ie)

Carol Kay, University of Liverpool: [c.kay@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:c.kay@liverpool.ac.uk)

Diane Lindsay, University of Strathclyde: [d.lindsay@strath.ac.uk](mailto:d.lindsay@strath.ac.uk)

Lindsay Martin, Edge Hill College of Higher Education: [martinl@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:martinl@edgehill.ac.uk)

Steve Morgan, University of Glamorgan: [smorgan1@glam.ac.uk](mailto:smorgan1@glam.ac.uk)

Steve Rose, University of Oxford: [steve.rose@ouls.ox.ac.uk](mailto:steve.rose@ouls.ox.ac.uk)

Valerie Stevenson, Liverpool John Moores University: [v.stevenson@livjm.ac.uk](mailto:v.stevenson@livjm.ac.uk)

Ian Tilsed, University of Exeter: [i.j.tilsed@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:i.j.tilsed@exeter.ac.uk) (Newsletter web editor)

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Society of College, National and University Libraries

102 Euston Street

London

NW1 2HA

Tel: 020 7387 0317

Fax: 020 7383 3197

Email: [sconul@sconul.ac.uk](mailto:sconul@sconul.ac.uk)

*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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## Can only Cat Deeley save us now?

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Just as we were heading towards the copy deadline for *SCONUL Focus* Number 35, I found myself at home pondering what we had to do to tie up this issue. I was about to jump on my bike to cycle across Oxford to work (another good thirty minutes to carry on thinking and planning) when I was distracted by an announcement on the BBC's breakfast television programme. Coming up after the weather would be an item about the recruitment crisis in (public) libraries.

Sure enough, we were soon in Liverpool's Central Library with a young woman telling us that librarianship 'is just not seen as a sexy job by tomorrow's workforce'. With 29% of library staff due to retire over the next ten years, the library world is worried.

But why aren't young people interested in library work? A camera crew was sent out onto the streets to find out what their views are of the typical, average librarian and why such a life is not for them. Comments included:

- 'I have high ambitions ...I'd like to become a lawyer'
- 'Their image –they look quite boring'
- 'They just wear cardigans and walk around quiet'
- 'It's no life really'
- "It's fairly boring'

- 'Life's too short to sit around looking in books'
- 'Life's all about talking, communication –librarians don't seem to do much of that'
- 'It's not really a career –it's more of a job'
- 'Once you're a librarian that's all you're going to be ...you can't really go anywhere'
- Etc
- Etc
- Etc

I won't insult you, dear reader, by throwing in loads of exclamation marks (anyway, it would probably bust my '!' key once and for all) but we all know about the recruitment problem.

But what can we do ...other than weep into our cardies? Fear not, the BBC have a solution. A 'PR executive' (who looked like a member of McFly) was wheeled on to give us hope. How can we make libraries sexy? We need to make them cool again, and make the library an appealing environment (I hope you are writing this down...). But most of all we need a champion. And who is the obvious choice? Yes, Cat Deeley! I quote (and I'm really not making this up): 'she's approachable, she'd give the librarian a persona almost, and an identity'.

Now don't get me wrong. I think we do need to tackle the image problem for this reason: Lord knows, I've written enough articles on this. And I've always had a soft spot for Ms Deeley: good comic timing with Ant and Dec and obviously a huge Morrissey fan from the way she introduced him the last time he was on CD:UK –all good points in my book.

But surely there are other things we can try?

One obvious way forward is to look at professional education. The last few years have seen sev-

eral attacks on the library schools and the skills gap between what they offer and what employers want. Goulding's 1999 study, for example, concluded:

'The research highlights some key areas of mismatch between the expectations and perceptions of the key players (employers, students, educators). Employers appear to believe that educators are not developing the appropriate qualities (e.g. flexibility, commitment, reliability) while educators seem to believe they are and students appear to believe that they do actually possess these qualities.'<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, the Information Services National Training Organisation (isNTO) has carried out various investigations into the skills gap. The report covering 2000-2007 flagged up marketing and promotion, supporting the learner/user and performance management as the big areas on which to focus<sup>2</sup>.

In this issue, Yvonne Hamblin's excellent article introduces the work of the LIMES project which is looking to help fill this gap and make professional education more relevant and hopefully more appealing.

In her article Yvonne refers to isNTO's 2003 survey which highlighted, amongst other problems, the lack of leadership training<sup>3</sup>. Regular readers of *SCONUL Focus* will be aware that this is an issue we have covered on several occasions. The lead article in issue 33 was Pat Noon's witty piece on succession planning (based on his paper from the 2004 *SCONUL* Conference)<sup>4</sup>. In this issue, Richard Wake gives his personal take on the 2005 Frye Institute, whose mission is 'to develop creative leaders to guide and transform academic information services for higher education in the twenty-first century'. Pat and Richard's articles are completely different but both highly thought-provoking (and not just for would-be leaders).

But it is not just formal training that will help us to adapt and survive. Very often it is the experiences that we bring from outside the profession that make librarianship so rich. I know a music librarian who leads a choir and is studying for his MA, all of which helps him to do his job better. At Brookes, one of the key players in our customer care group was the Librarian's PA, not because of her administrative skills but because of her background in retail.

In the next issue we are keen to report short case studies on how past jobs and outside interests aid us in our day-to-day work. So if your years at the Co-op are paying off dividends, or your nights on the boards (in amateur dramatics) are assisting with days spent lecturing on information skills, or you are an ex-wrestler who has no problems enforcing library regulations, please contact me or one of the Editorial Board and you may appear in the next issue.

Now, that's given me a good idea. Cat Deeley, with all that presenting experience and years of dealing with a youthful audience, would be just right on our Freshers' Fair stall. I'm off to check the *Radio Times* to see if she's available....

Antony Brewerton  
*SCONUL Focus* Editorial Board

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# The 2005 Frye Institute



Richard Wake  
*Deputy Librarian,  
University of Southampton  
Library*  
Tel: 023 8059 2371  
Email: [R.L.Wake@soton.ac.uk](mailto:R.L.Wake@soton.ac.uk)

Regular readers will already have seen Maggie Fieldhouse's account of the Frye Institute 2004<sup>1</sup>. The institute, details of which are available at <http://www.fryeinstitute.org/>, has been held annually since 2000. It is supported by the Robert Woodruff Foundation, EDUCAUSE, the Council on Library and Information Resources and Emory University. It takes its name from Billy Frye, a distinguished figure in higher education who spent many years at Emory University and who continues to support development and innovation in librarianship and information technology, and aims, in the words of its website, 'to develop creative leaders to guide and transform academic information services for higher education in the twenty-first century'.

I was able to attend as a result of nomination by SCONUL to receive JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) funding. The class consisted of 45 members, of whom I was one of three working in institutions outside the United States, from Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom respectively. The class represented a wide range of educational institutions, and a range of experience and of expertise, with approximately equal numbers of librarians and information technology professionals, and a minority who were academics.

Much of the early part of the programme dealt with higher education in the United States. I was asked by a number of people how relevant this was, and my answer was that it was extremely valuable. This was not so much because I learned a lot about how the sector is organised, but more because I was able to recognise many of the issues which are current as being very much the same as those here and think again about them in a new light. In particular, the question of whether education is a public or private good, very much part of our recent debate about tuition fees, is clearly something which has been much more widely

debated in the United States. Not surprisingly, perhaps, there was a clear consensus amongst the group that education is a public good and should be treated as such by government, but on the other hand, I was unaware of how much money some students or parents are prepared to pay for an undergraduate education in the United States.

Another extremely interesting feature of the early programme was a series of presentations from college and university presidents and other senior figures, from a range of institutions. All spoke of the challenges, especially of having to lead very diverse organisations. I was particularly struck by the comment that you will never please the zealots and so you shouldn't even try. The first part of the week also included sessions about what teachers and researchers wanted from, and contributed to, higher education, and a very interesting presentation on the characteristics and behaviour of current students and those about to enter higher education. Although the research on which this was based was specifically American, it seems likely that the same pattern would be found internationally. My conclusion was that the way in which the so-called Net Generation (which was defined as those born in 1982 or later) prefer to interact and learn, whilst very different from my own preferences, was more enabling and less limited than I had believed. I also felt I understood more about my own children than I had before the presentation.

Later in the programme, attention turned more to the personal qualities involved in being a leader. This built upon the early presentations by presidents and other senior figures, but also included a morning where we investigated personality differences as illustrated by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which helps us understand both ourselves and those we work with. This was perhaps the most enjoyable single session, but many of us probably learned more in this session than at any other time. There were also discussions about leadership styles, how to behave as a leader (or to become a leader), and how to deal with particular difficult situations.

There were many practical discussions and presentations. Because we at Southampton are very much involved in digitisation projects, I was very interested in a presentation about the Virginia Center for Digital History (<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/index.html>), the main theme of which was the suspicion with which such projects are viewed by promotion and tenure committees, which in turn discourages researchers from

developing innovative electronic products. The most practical exercise was the group work to construct a hypothetical institution, with exercises throughout the fortnight addressing constitution and governance, the groups served, how to market the institution, and, the most challenging, how to make the finances work, an exercise which took up almost a whole day. This exercise allowed the groups to indulge in all manner of idealist and visionary thinking, devising, amongst others, institutions to challenge globalism, to promote multi and inter-disciplinary studies, and to provide wonderful facilities for non-traditional students.

The event took place on the campus at Emory University in Atlanta. We spent one half day and a whole day in the second week in the Cox Center, a computing facility, and also had an opportunity to visit the Woodruffe Library, the main library on campus. Both visits emphasised the resources available to private universities, and the facilities available were the envy of, I think, absolutely everyone on the course. However, even if we are unlikely to match the funding, we could all learn from the process by which the facilities in the Cox Centre had been designed to offer facilities which responded to the expressed needs of the students and staff, and the way in which thought had been given to likely future needs.

The institute was primarily intended to facilitate personal development, and its success should be judged on whether the class leaves the institute better prepared to lead in higher education (although of course there are many different ways in which you can be a leader). From that point of view, perhaps it is too early to say, and perhaps others will be better judges of whether I am better equipped to lead than I can be. However, I certainly do feel that I have learned a lot about leadership both intellectually and personally, and I hope that I will be able to practice what I have learned intellectually. This includes being committed to your own personal values, being inclusive in all decisions and actions, being determined, but also flexible, and perhaps above all ensuring that you are a good communicator. Indeed, the need for communication between different parts of an organisation, the so-called silos, was the single most recurrent theme of the fortnight.

I was very fortunate indeed to be offered the opportunity by SCONUL and JISC, and then by the Frye Institute, to take part in the 2005 programme. The programme offered many opportunities for interaction and discussion which the

class took up very enthusiastically, and the open and honest approach was also evident in all the breaks, rest periods and during the weekend in between the two weeks of the programme when a number of the class remained in the conference centre. I learned a huge amount from fellow members of the class as well as from the formal sessions, and have come back certainly more aware of the role and responsibilities of the leader, and, I believe, better able to carry them out. I would highly recommend that anyone interested in developing their leadership skills consider very seriously an application to a future Frye Institute.

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- 1 Maggie Fieldhouse, 'On being Fried: a report from the Frye Leadership Institute', *SCONUL Focus*, 32, Summer / Autumn 2004, pp16-18

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# 'What would you do if I asked you to shave your beard off?'

Top ten ways to succeed at interview



Steve Morgan  
Deputy Head, Learning  
Resources Centre, University of  
Glamorgan  
Tel: 01443 482632  
E-mail: smorgan1@glam.ac.uk

I'm one of those sad people who's fascinated by selection interviews. They can be the source of great joy or great sadness. Whole career directions can depend upon a thirty-minute conversation. I thought, given the current popularity of Top Ten lists, it would be helpful to make a list of my ten key ways to succeed at interview. At times, the words 'cheek' and 'tongue' may spring to mind!

I claim no special knowledge other than that picked up over the last decade or so chairing and being included on selection panels in university libraries. I chair around twenty panels a year. With over thirty years in the profession I've also been interviewed myself a number of times. Some experiences were good, others not so good. I was once interviewed by ten men all wearing grey suits but more of that later.

We all know how to have a conversation or a dialogue, even one with a purpose. But in this unnatural setting some candidates fail to do themselves justice. Some take on a different persona, others ramble on endlessly or completely clam up, some have little structure to their thoughts or words, continually apologising, afraid to ask questions, fidgeting and their body language gives a clear signal: they want to be somewhere else.

As candidates, we need to say: enough of this. We need to take some control of the proceedings and make things happen.

Only one thing is certain about interviews – unless the panel is just going through the motions, they want *you* to be the ideal person to fill the position. They want to know their search is over. Therefore, in theory, for the duration of the

interview, the job is *yours!* You just need to make the most of it and turn the theory into practice.

## TOP TEN WAYS TO SUCCEED AT INTERVIEW

- 1 Do your homework
- 2 Make a first and last(ing) impression
- 3 Regain some control but don't take over
- 4 Grit your teeth and answer: their questions
- 5 Grasp the nettle and ask: your questions
- 6 Embrace the sound of silence
- 7 Pass the cream: soothing the sore bum
- 8 If it's bent, straighten it: the career path
- 9 Apply the same principles, forget the method
- 10 Learn from the experience

## ONE: DO YOUR HOMEWORK

I am very much a disciple of the Valerie Singleton School of Management (of *Blue Peter* fame). She always had 'one she'd prepared earlier'. The same principle applies to the interview process. You should have no excuses for being unprepared for obvious questions to answer and ask.

Become an expert on the details of the post and the organisation you're applying to. Use all means at your disposal - webpages, correspondence, informal networks. Panelists are impressed by candidates demonstrating their knowledge of the recruiting institution's services! As an interviewer it is natural to think that no knowledge = no interest.

If you're not already, you'll need to get used to praising and selling yourself. It's helpful to make a list of your most impressive achievements, two or three strengths and a handful of key personal qualities.

## TWO: MAKE A FIRST AND LAST(ING) IMPRESSION

A recruitment consultant ([www.hunter-campbell.co.uk/interteach.html](http://www.hunter-campbell.co.uk/interteach.html)) came up with the twenty most common interview mistakes. Of these five relate to first impressions and body language – before you even open your mouth! They are:

- Poor personal appearance
- Lack of eye contact
- Limp handshake
- Late for interview
- Lack of confidence and poise, nervous, ill-at-ease

Visual impact is important – 70% of impressions made on interviewers is through body language (the other 30% is tone of voice and content). Connecting and engaging with the interviewers is crucial. Some studies prove that the selection decision is made subconsciously within the first 4 to 20 seconds of meeting a candidate. Others suggest that a decision is made within the first five minutes and the next thirty minutes is spent trying to defend that decision.

*Poor personal appearance:*

There's a lot written about this. Some of it is blindingly obvious. For example – the interview isn't the place to be making a fashion statement. Some pieces of advice from a recruitment agency made me chuckle –

- 'If you have a moustache, you may want to consider shaving it off. People with moustaches can be perceived as being aggressive. You can always grow it again once you've got the job'
- Avoid visual body piercing, very short skirts, floppy hair and carrier bags!

*Eye contact:*

Ensure good eye contact but don't stare. Believe me – there's nothing more disconcerting for an interviewer to have these scary stary eyes glaring at you.

*Handshake:*

This is rather overplayed in my experience. Ensure a firm handshake but beware the knuckle-grinder! Don't be too obsessed with getting it firm that you put the panel chair's metacarpals in danger.

*Be on time:*

Make sure you know exactly where you're going and give yourself plenty of time to get there. Interestingly, only 4% of candidates arrive late for interview whilst over 30% of interviews actually start late!

*Nerves:*

Nerves are good news. If you don't have them, you're probably not taking the interview seriously! Remember that other candidates (and probably the interviewers) will also be nervous.

Individually, these five aspects may seem trivial. But, taken together, they can have a huge impact.

*Last(ing) impression:*

Having made a first impression, it's worth thinking about the last impression you leave on the panel. There is a danger that the interview tails off ineffectively unless you engineer something different. In response to 'Do you have any questions you want to ask us?' Don't just say 'No I think you've covered everything but I'm sure I'll think of something after I've left'. This is the opportunity to ask those insightful questions you've prepared. Or alternatively, you might want to make a final positive statement, perhaps reinforcing your enthusiasm for the post on offer.

**THREE: REGAIN SOME CONTROL BUT DON'T TAKE OVER**

Traditionally, the interviewer is in control - and will remain so. However, that doesn't stop you shifting the balance. This is the most difficult and challenging bit of the process. There is a thin line between you regaining some control of the interview and stepping on to the interviewers' ground. If you do overstep the mark, you may jeopardise your chances. It is sometimes viewed as high risk.

My advice is bite the bullet and take some control!

You have your own agenda: you may want this job badly, you have prepared for it in some detail, you have specific points you need to get across, you now have the opportunity to convince the panel that they would be foolish *not* to appoint you.

In fact, you probably have more control than you realise. It is certainly not as one-sided as some people think.

There is a theory that managers know how to interview: the interviewing fairy appears and bonks you with a magic interviewing wand. And, from then on, you just 'know' how to interview and you don't need any training. Interestingly, only 10% of British managers are actually trained in interview techniques.

Remember that panellists get nervous too (inexperience? peer pressure?). They may have difficulty controlling the candidates talking too much. They may find it difficult concentrating, particularly in the middle of an interview, after the first five minutes and before the last five minutes. They may also be trying to take notes, not just to jog the memory but just to stay awake. Remember that 85% of what is said at interview is forgotten within an hour of it ending. Remember also that you may be the tenth candidate in front of the panel that day!



Interviewers desperately want to get both the process and the outcome right. So the force isn't always totally with the interviewer.

#### **FOUR: GRIT YOUR TEETH AND ANSWER: THEIR QUESTIONS**

Always treat the panel's questions as opportunities, rather than hoops or hurdles. If the textbooks are right, about 75% of the interview time is yours to impress. It's generally agreed that, as that percentage rises or falls, so do the chances of being successful. Too little talking usually means answers are too shallow and brief for the panel to be able to decide. Too much talking usually points to waffling answers or verbal diarrhoea. In reality, the questions you're asked tend to be based upon the person specification and job description. So most of them shouldn't surprise you. For example, if a person specification requires you to be an 'effective team player', prepare examples of your participation in teams, what your role was, what you collectively and individually achieved and what made its operation successful.

##### *Likely questions:*

Drawing up answers to likely questions is important. But how many people actually do that beyond - *Why do you want the job?* A common question is around strengths and weaknesses. This is fairly straightforward. Prepare your two or three strengths. Either admit to a weakness and demonstrate how you're overcoming it or another tactic - come up with a weakness that's a strength. For example 'I tend to be a bit too conscientious and want to get everything right' or 'I've been told I take work too seriously'. Another favourite question is the futuristic one - *Where do you see yourself or libraries in 5/10 years time?* There's really no right or wrong with these. Just ensure that you are convinced by the answer yourself and can justify it.

##### *Unlikely questions:*

Some organisations go in for the *Interview questions from hell*. These are unpredictable and stop you in your tracks. They're often justified as testing the ability to think on one's feet. I sometimes think it's more to do with the interviewer's sadistic streak!

When I left university, I participated in the selection procedure to join the civil service. I undertook a psychometric test and was then interviewed by ten grey-suited men, all sat in a semicircle, poised and ready to pounce. Amongst other unusual questions I was asked:

'What would you do if I asked you to shave your beard off?'

I wondered if the panel asked their questions consistently of all candidates, regardless of gender, as the textbooks suggest! Although intimidated, I must have said something right as they offered me a post the following week.

Microsoft also go in for unusual questions. One of their favourites is:

'Why are manhole covers round and not square?' (If it was square, the cover could fall down the hole! Of course!).

#### **FIVE: GRASP THE NETTLE AND ASK: YOUR QUESTIONS**

This is part of the interview that's sometimes overlooked. Remember you have your own agenda. Your questions are opportunities to find out whether you really want this job. They're also an opportunity to show the panel that you're very interested in the post. If you ask astute questions, it could well set you apart from the other candidates. You could even be bold and ask the panel their views on a particular issue. The selection process is a two-way process, after all. I suggest you don't make it too difficult or it might backfire. And definitely don't let it slip into interrogation mode or you can kiss the job goodbye!

There are some questions *definitely* best avoided:

- How much annual leave do I get?
- What's your grievance procedure?
- When will I get a pay rise?

#### **SIX: EMBRACE THE SOUND OF SILENCE**

It's not necessary to fill up every second with conversation (for interviewee and interviewer alike). Don't feel you have to blurt out the first response that enters your head, almost before the question has been asked. You need a calm considered coherent response. Thoughtful silence does not mean indecision. It's an opportunity to gather your thoughts and give yourself a breathing space. As long as you remain in control of the silence, it can work. Don't overuse it. There is a point beyond which it becomes embarrassing or the chair intervenes. If the panel start nodding off, you know you've gone beyond the point!

#### **SEVEN: PASS THE CREAM: SOOTHING THE SORE BUM**

The panel is clearly interested to hear your views. They are also likely to want to know how you would behave in particular situations. There's a danger of saying - well on the one hand I would

do this and on the other. You assume – probably wrongly – that the panel wants you to give both sides of the issue, a balanced response, as if you were writing an essay. Not so – they’re looking for you to have considered the issue and come up with a realistic, black and white answer, together with the reasons why. Usually, there is no right or wrong answer. My advice – jump off the fence, before you’re pushed.

#### **EIGHT: IF IT’S BENT, STRAIGHTEN IT: THE CAREER PATH**

CV or *NOT CV* – that is the question!

My advice would be: don’t send a CV *instead* of an application form (unless specifically told to). You may want to send a CV to *accompany* an application form (from my experience about one in five do so). From the interviewer’s perspective it can help to fill gaps and provide a richer picture of the individual.

Some career paths have a logical linear sequence, others take various twists and turns, sometimes going up cul-de-sacs. Some moves you may have regretted with hindsight, others may have been beneficial. It’s often a matter of highlighting bits here and de-emphasising bits there. You can usually justify particular moves which you will have learned from for the future. That six months you spent at the University of Nowhere which turned out to be a glorified cataloguer. You now know for certain that that’s a direction you don’t wish to take! Alternatively, you may have very good reasons for staying in one job for twelve years – job satisfaction or perhaps the job, clientele or environment all changed radically. You should always be prepared to explain gaps in your CV or career path. Some interviewers are particularly good at ferreting these out and making you feel uncomfortable!

#### **NINE: APPLY THE SAME PRINCIPLES, FORGET THE METHOD**

There are other selection methods that you may be involved with.

##### *Trial by knife and fork*

This potentially frightening ordeal, usually for higher graded posts, is where the candidates have a formal meal with the panel or other staff. Be careful about the tendency to monopolise conversations, given there will be an understandable clamour for attention. It’s sometimes helpful to let others burn themselves out while you chomp away on your *coq au vin*. Then *strike* when the opportunity presents itself, with some cutting and

insightful observations – even if only about last night’s episode of Corrie. Remember you’re being observed all the time – go easy on the Beaujolais!

##### *Assessment centre approach*

This usually consists of at least one whole day of different exercises and activities – it may include leading a discussion, writing a brief report, doing a presentation as well as a structured interview. It gives the decision-makers a more rounded picture of the candidates and is generally felt to be more reliable and effective than the traditional interview alone. It can be more complicated to organise and carry out and usually has a heavy involvement of human resources/personnel staff.

I was a candidate once in an assessment centre. It wasn’t a good experience! I felt like a guinea pig in a laboratory rather than a human being. Thankfully and not surprisingly, I wasn’t offered the job!

#### **TEN: LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE**

If you’re offered the post and you still want it, take it and wallow in your success (until the reality of the new job kicks in!). If you are turned down, what’s the next step?

As soon as possible after the bad news (and after drowning your sorrows!), you need to create an action replay and evaluate your performance. The chances are that is the last thing you’ll want to do. You’ll want to forget the whole experience. Force yourself. Write as much of the detail and your own feelings while it’s still fresh in your mind. Try to be objective by looking at yourself from the employer’s perspective. Importantly, you need to get feedback from the interview panel/chair and then ask yourself:

What did you do well/badly?

Did you have any control?

What questions made you feel uncomfortable?

Did you include all your own agenda – strengths, achievements?

Did you include all the questions you wanted to?

Did your preparations pay off?

Did you do most of the talking?

Did you waffle at all?

Your honest answers need to feed into the next job opportunity. Although not much consolation, you do get better, the more interviews you do. I’ve seen concrete evidence of that!

So these are my Top Ten ways of succeeding at interview. Clearly, I am not suggesting that this

approach will guarantee you success but I am convinced the keys to success are:

- Being *proactive* throughout the process

And

- Regaining some *control* of the process

*Remember*

Preparation is under your control  
First impressions are under your control  
75% of the talking is under your control  
Your questions are under your control  
The silences are under your control

*Make the most of them!*

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# Library and Information Management Employability Skills LIMES



Yvonne Hamblin  
*LIMES Project Manager,*  
*Research School of Informatics,*  
*Loughborough University*  
Tel: 01509 635714  
E-mail: [y.c.hamblin@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:y.c.hamblin@lboro.ac.uk)

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## WHAT IS LIMES?

Funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) this two year project is a partnership between Loughborough University, the University of the West of England, Bristol and Liverpool John Moores University. The project is the only one in the field of information science to successfully bid for the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) in phase 5<sup>1</sup>.

The aim of the project is to identify the perceived skills gaps in the library and information sector and to work with employers and academic departments to bridge those gaps. The project team will work with the partner universities to create learning and teaching materials which will enhance the employability of library and information students by relating theory to practice. These materials will be available to all departments to support their modules with the ultimate aim of producing graduates who will be better equipped to apply their skills in the workplace.

## SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

Changes in the provision of library and information services have demanded new job titles, new roles, different skills from the profession. The challenge has been to have flexibility so that more traditional skills can be adapted for the changes in the workplace. Linda Ashcroft, Reader in Information Management at the School of Business Information at Liverpool John Moores University, has stated that the development of new skills is the responsibility of all those concerned in library and information science<sup>2</sup>. Ashcroft says that the

traditional skills of analysing, evaluating and cataloguing information can be adapted to suit changing demands but that this change needs to be managed. Marketing and promotion of a library service now involves consultation of the user through surveys and questionnaires and these results evaluated to improve the service. This entails successful communication of the changes both internally and externally. In addition, communication skills are required to 'train the user' in new technologies, in all sectors<sup>3</sup>.

The adaptation of traditional skills is echoed by Angela Abell, principal consultant at the specialist employment agency, TFPL. She states that ambitious professionals will identify transferable skills and where they fit into the workplace<sup>4</sup>. Information management skills can be used to manage multi-functional teams, to form strategic partnerships and to understand the business and how it uses information. Complementary skills, such as, mentoring, negotiation and facilitation will also be crucial in management<sup>5</sup>.

The Information Services National Training Organisation (ISNTO) has carried out research on behalf of the sector and it is interesting to see how new skills seen as 'most urgent' have changed in the period of a few years. In the 2001 ISNTO *Skills Foresight:2000-2007* report<sup>6</sup>, the most urgent skills gaps were:

- Marketing and promotion
- Supporting the learner/user
- Performance management

In the later report, published in 2003<sup>7</sup>, the priorities for skills required have changed to:

- Customer care
- Leadership
- Managing change
- Negotiating
- Technology awareness

While ISNTO are keen to point out that basic training needs are not obsolete and that traditional skills are still in demand, the research highlights the changeability of the library and information sector and the need for library and information professionals to remain flexible in their acquisition and application of skills.

Biddy Fisher, head of academic services and development at Sheffield Hallam University, carried out research for the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)

prior to the setting up of the Framework of Qualifications<sup>8</sup>. Fisher states that an analysis of recruitment advertisements indicated five priority areas for development<sup>9</sup>. The following were put forward as areas where a skills deficit exists or where competence levels need to be increased:

- Knowledge management
- Project management
- User support
- Leadership
- Strategic thinking

Fisher goes on to say that these areas were not previously considered to be the natural realm of information professionals, but that the delivery of information through technology has challenged traditional roles. She suggests that this affords the profession an opportunity to *align traditional skills with the new terminology*<sup>10</sup>.

From the research literature it would appear that while retaining the basic library and information skills there is a strong message for the profession to be aware of the changing demands of employers and to have both flexibility and transferability in adapting those skills to the current work environment.

#### **WHY LIMES?**

The world of libraries and information service provision has changed over the last ten years and with government initiatives and public expectations, continues to do so. Likewise, higher education has undergone change and it was against that background that John Feather, Head of Department of Information Science at Loughborough University, explored how library and information science (LIS) departments could develop relationships with library services to meet new demands. He said that in order to produce students with the necessary knowledge to equip them for employment, 'we need a meaningful discussion between employers' representatives, the professional bodies and education providers about what skills and qualities are needed now and for the future'<sup>11</sup>. The LIMES project is bringing those groups together to develop materials which are directly relevant to the employability of graduates.

#### **HOW WILL LIMES IMPROVE EMPLOYABILITY?**

The project team is working closely with professional bodies such as CILIP and the British Association for Information and Library Education Research (BAILER), as well as representatives

from library and information departments and employers. While understanding that the curricula of LIS departments should retain certain basic elements that allow students to develop knowledge and skills, LIMES aims to supplement this base with teaching and learning materials which relate theory to workplace practice.

The three project partner universities will create materials which are directly related to employment situations. It is intended to use links with employers to develop 'context rich' case studies which will provide examples for students to see how their skills can be applied. One example will be the development of a 'cataloguing and classification' case study. Cataloguing and classification is a traditional skill which underpins a variety of library systems, including online services. The case study will be supplemental to the theory and provide a means of demonstrating how cataloguing and classification can be applied in an employment situation.

All the case studies and materials produced by the project will be available to academics via a database to enhance their teaching modules and provide students with examples of how their knowledge can be applied. In having this complementary material students will be provided with an opportunity to relate the knowledge they acquire at university to the requirements of job advertisements, improving their employability and subsequently their career development.

#### **SHARING RESOURCES**

The database of the learning and teaching materials will be available on the LIMES web site which will be maintained after the duration of the project by the Higher Education Academy ICS Subject Centre. In addition to this, the project aims to foster networks within the academic community who will add to and update the materials available, facilitating a sharing of resources and saving valuable time for those creating teaching modules.

Part of the work of the LIMES project is, therefore, to contact all library and information departments in the UK to introduce them to the project and to facilitate this sharing of resources. The departments visited in the first months of the project have been enthusiastic and have responded well to the idea of sharing resources. Although priority will be given to the project partners, other departments will be encouraged to put forward suggestions for materials and there may be a small amount of funding available to develop these.

The LIMES project is also fostering links with other FDTL5 projects who are developing learning materials, in particular the project developing reusable learning objects for law librarianship<sup>12</sup>.

#### **PROJECT OUTCOMES**

Adapting to the ever-changing demands of a vibrant profession challenges academics who teach the information professionals of the future. LIMES will help to meet that challenge by providing a resource of learning materials available to all which offers 'the added ingredient' of relating theory to practice. LIMES will also encourage the sharing of valuable resources which can be adapted to suit a specific module, saving time-conscious academics from 're-inventing the wheel'.

#### **HOW TO GET INVOLVED**

If you are an academic in a library and information department contact the project team to find out how your department can participate. We also welcome suggestions for learning and teaching materials which would help employability skills.

If you are an employer and can provide data for the production of materials, for example case studies, statistical data, please contact the project team (contact details below). We also would like to know if you have any existing links with academic departments which produce 'real life' scenarios.

**Project Manager** Yvonne Hamblin.

Email [y.c.hamblin@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:y.c.hamblin@lboro.ac.uk)

Tel: 01509 635714

**Project Director** Dr Derek Stephens, senior lecturer and director of learning and teaching

Tel: 01509 223080

Email: [d.p.stephens@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:d.p.stephens@lboro.ac.uk)

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## Chartership in partnership



Kathryn Kilburn  
 University of Huddersfield and  
**WELCOME!**  
 Tel: 01484 472581  
 E-mail: [welcome@hud.ac.uk](mailto:welcome@hud.ac.uk)

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I suspect that devising a scheme for those embarking on the Chartership process (chartered membership of CILIP, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals), even under the old established rules, wasn't an easy task. How much more difficult then, to attempt setting up a joint scheme involving ten diverse partner libraries, at a time when the whole Chartership system was in a state of change? After a few false starts, however, that's exactly what we at WELCOME! have done, and the early signs are that it's working well.

The WELCOME! cooperative library partnership consists of two sixth form colleges, three further education colleges, the University of Huddersfield, local NHS Trust libraries, careers/connexions services, one public health resource centre and the public library services of the Kirklees (Huddersfield/Dewsbury) and Calderdale (Halifax) areas. We came together in 2003 with funding from Resource (now the MLA, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) via YMLAC (Yorkshire Museums, Libraries and Archives Council), and have formed a strong partnership, encouraging cross-sectoral use by local learners. We feel we cooperate well together and enjoy pushing the boundaries of what can be achieved cooperatively.

It seemed logical therefore, when both the Kirklees public library and the university library Chartership schemes needed renewing –and the Technical College found itself with two or three members of staff all eager to charter around the same time– that we should investigate putting together a joint scheme.

The original motivating ideas were:

- 1 That we could support each other in drawing up a joint scheme relevant to all staff
- 2 That, as a cooperative scheme, we could develop a range of opportunities for candidates through the different kinds of library

represented in the partnership: including the tours we already offered on an annual basis; job shadowing; visits; work experience; and joint training.

So far, so straightforward. Unfortunately, the fact that this all took place against the implementation of the new Framework of Qualifications caused the odd hiccup. Our initial research for example involved attendance at a local 'Charter-ship Event' back in late 2004. This turned out to relate to the previous regulations, and it became clear that every piece of paper and template I'd carefully collected was rapidly heading towards obsolescence. This meeting, however, had two useful outcomes. Firstly, I met Ellie Clements, local regional liaison officer and extremely helpful and enthusiastic person. Secondly, I rapidly became familiar with the terminology pertaining to Chartership issues. I also realised that knowing nothing hitherto about Chartering was not going to be a problem because, with the incoming revised regulations, neither did anyone else. And this after all was to be a joint WELCOME! Chartering scheme, and I knew about WELCOME!

With the partners' approval, we formed a Charter-ship subgroup representing Kirklees public libraries, the university and Huddersfield Technical College, keeping in touch through meetings and email. In the absence at that time of much CILIP information, we proceeded as follows:

- We identified areas we thought WELCOME! could help with – the range of opportunities and experiences mentioned earlier: we felt sure the good relations built up between the partners would help in this.
- We sought out other training, groups and potential sources of 'work experience' locally.
- We posted an enquiry to Lis-Link. This subsequently resulted in some useful replies, notably from Gil Young from NOWAL (North West Academic Libraries), who kindly sent through examples of documentation from their quite formal training. This was especially useful in indicating the possibilities for different kinds of scheme being equally valid.
- We decided to limit ourselves – initially at least, to Chartership rather than certification.
- We planned to set up an email group for the candidates so they could offer each other moral support and exchange experiences and advice.

- We aimed to set up and maintain lists of potential mentors and potential candidates within the WELCOME! libraries.

Meanwhile, Andy Walsh, my WELCOME! uni- versity colleague (joint coordinator of the scheme) and himself a Chartership candidate, attended a more up-to-date Chartership Event, which con- creted our impressions that the mentoring scheme was to be the main foundation of the new system, that there would be no need for a rigid training scheme and that the process would be one of self- directed learning backed up by personal evalua- tion of the experience.

We kept a weather eye on the CILIP website. Slowly, information became available, although much of it seemed unclear, and replies to enquir- ies weren't always as helpful as we'd hoped. The impression was that the system was being devised and posted piecemeal. In early March 2005, just a month before the new rules became operational, the Body of Professional Knowledge was posted on the site. I was alerted to this with the comment that it 'seems pretty meaningless'. This was what we'd been waiting for but meant little to any of us, although 'esoteric' would be a kinder description. The later outline Personal Professional Develop- ment Plan was similarly vague. Thank goodness for the annotated version distributed by Ellie!

As the mentoring relationship was to be the main- stay of the system we were grateful to Jane Walton of YMLAC for her offer of mentoring training for WELCOME! staff, which would enable our men- tors to register with CILIP. (Mentors have to be registered with CILIP but can restrict the mentors they take to a local scheme. The rules allow for telephone or email mentoring, but we felt certain that most candidates would prefer a one-to-one mentor relationship.)

So far we have two candidates who have embarked on Chartership and a list of approxi- mately ten others who are considering taking the plunge in the near future.

The scheme plays a facilitating role. We put men- tors and mentees in touch with each other via our list of several trained WELCOME! mentors; the list is available to local mentees and kept up to date regarding 'matches'. We've become, through this 'admin role' and our general frequent com- munication with WELCOME! staff, the central point for enquiries about Chartering.

We aim to be responsive to any expressed needs from the candidates regarding joint training we

can offer. The scheme will be both proactive, offering a range of set options for training and experiences, and also reactive to particular candidates' needs and interests. We have information on various lesser known local libraries as potential training sources and have investigated other more formal training opportunities.

Communication between candidates is via a JISCMAIL group comprising the current Chartership candidates and those potential candidates who feel they would benefit from being members. Candidates support each other, and the email link will be especially useful for those librarians working alone or in smaller service points.

For the future, there are plans to offer an information pack to new candidates regarding: the Chartering process; information from the CILIP site; other useful websites and email groups; contact details for CILIP and other staff; local CILIP groups to join; possible training opportunities within and outside WELCOME!; the list of current mentors; and anything else we feel would be helpful and relevant. And we're aiming at some point soon to expand the scheme to include Certification candidates.

When the scheme is bedded-in we'll ask the current candidates for feedback, which will then inform future plans.

The spin-off benefits from setting up the scheme have been enormous. News of the incipient scheme spread fast. It has brought the whole chartering system into sharper focus for us and, whilst we had criticisms of the slowness with which the information appeared and the vagueness of some of the documentation, the broad CILIP template allows each candidate to concentrate on their own interests and develop their own career. We've reached more staff with the WELCOME! partnership message than we would otherwise have done, and it's brought more staff from the partnership libraries into closer contact. It started as a bumpy ride and we weren't quite sure where we were headed but now we feel we're established, and judging by the number of enquiries we're fielding about Chartership, so do the rest of the WELCOME! partner staffs.

In conclusion, these are the words of one current Chartership candidate, Bev Baldwin, who works for the local careers/connexions service, and who would have found chartering without the joint scheme tricky:

'The WELCOME! scheme made me think again about Chartership by letting me know about the new framework, which is more in tune with the needs of information professionals working outside traditional libraries...I've joined the email list which has helped me to make contact with others and to understand what is needed in the Personal Professional Development Plan...For me the support of the WELCOME! team is essential in getting through Chartership, especially as I'm the first person from my organisation to go through the Chartership process whilst in post.'



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# Newcastle University Library and the Charter Mark



John Morrow  
Head of Document Delivery  
Services,  
The Robinson Library,  
University of Newcastle upon Tyne,  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4HQ  
Tel: 0191 222 7658

E-mail: [john.morrow@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:john.morrow@ncl.ac.uk)

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In a ceremony in the Robinson Library at the end of May the Vice-Chancellor of the university remarked in his speech that 'being awarded the Charter Mark for the fourth successive time is a remarkable achievement'. He went on to say 'this would not have happened without high quality leadership and outstanding staff who are dedicated to delivering a quality service. The process of assessment this time was even more demanding than in the past. The university is proud of your success.' Even given the hyperbole that often colours such occasions, there is little doubt that the library is noted within the university for its continuing Charter Mark success. This brings praise, but also pressure and expectations of success. We have to maintain our working towards continual improvement, and whilst that does bring pressure it also provides a bedded in commitment to better services.

Charter Mark is the government's award scheme for recognising and encouraging excellence in public service. It is a powerful quality improvement tool focusing on customer service and service delivery, and it concentrates on results – the service the customer actually receives. Newcastle's involvement with structures and systems to provide the most effective services for users goes back a number of years. In 1993-94 the library developed a Total Quality Management strategy with in-house trainers running TQ workshops for all library staff. By 1994 well over a hundred staff had attended the workshops and Charter Mark, which was relatively new, was being considered as a focused follow up. As well as a development of the total quality initiatives we also applied for Charter Mark to increase recognition of our serv-

ices locally, nationally and internationally, as the comments above of the Vice-Chancellor illustrate. There was also within the university an increasing value in us putting ourselves forward for external assessment in a way similar to University Schools undergoing quality assessments. It means that we are examined similarly to the Schools we service, and so are on firmer ground in various discussions with them. However, whilst these reasons for applying for the Charter Mark are all positive, they are secondary. The main reason is to carry out an internal structured audit of all of our services so that we can see clearly where we need to take action and demonstrate where we have made necessary improvements.

The methodology of Charter Mark has moved on since our first award in 1995. At that time there was one assessment body, namely the government's Charter Mark Office, while now there are four separate assessment bodies, all accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), with the Cabinet Office still retaining overall control.

There are now six Charter Mark criteria, rather than the nine that there were in 1995 and the ten that there were in 2001. However the six criteria cover essentially the same ground. They are concerned with:

- Setting standards and performing well
- Actively engaging with customers, partners and staff
- Being fair and accessible to everyone and promoting choice
- Continuously developing and improving
- Using resources effectively and imaginatively
- Contributing to improving opportunities and the quality of life in the communities you serve

These are general descriptions which are developed in greater detail in the sub-criteria and their constituent parts as outlined in the guidelines for applicants. However, we discovered when going for the Charter Mark for the first time in 1995 that once we started looking closely at the criteria we were farther down the road than we thought we'd be. This is an experience which I would think all libraries going for the award are likely to share. Libraries often operate standards of performance as part of routine procedures. For example, our periodicals staff had been working to receive, check in and shelve all print journal parts by 13.00 each day. This was a performance standard of direct relevance to the user which had been in

place for years, but it wasn't called a standard. We found, and I'm sure many others will too, that there were a lot of activities that translated into performance standards quite easily. The important thing is that they are qualitative standards and not simply quantitative. Libraries have counted the results of procedures for years, but a customer isn't really that interested in how many books were acquired in any given period. They are much more likely to be interested in how long it takes for the book they want to get to them. The standards should be challenging but not unreasonable, and they should leave room for improvement. If the target is 100% and the target is always met then there's no room for staff to improve as they would want.

The second criterion is concerned with demonstrating clearly that the library consults and communicates well with all parties involved, e.g. customers, staff, partner organisations. This criterion asks directly about how users of the organisation are consulted about the services offered to them. It is concerned with the information provided and the clarity of the language used, something worth highlighting since librarians can rarely be described as strangers to complexity. User surveys, staff suggestion schemes, library web sites, leaflets, staff-student committees, staff meetings, staff appraisals, mystery shopper reports are all ways of addressing this.

Treating everyone fairly in providing access to services, offering choice in how those services are used and paying particular attention to customer care and customers with special needs are facets of a library service that users of the service will most certainly appreciate. Again this third criterion is an area where more will have been done by organisations than at first might be thought, e.g. providing a range of options for renewing books may include self service, via the Web, in person with the book or in person without the book. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) leads us to consider and act where we possibly can, and customer care training too should be a constant.

The fourth criterion is about showing that the organisation is continuously looking to develop and improve its services, and that where things have gone wrong and a user of the services complains the matter is addressed quickly. It is important here to listen and to act, not necessarily doing what the customer asks for but explaining why the actions concerned have been taken. Libraries are full of developments in services, e.g.

self return units, the use of the British Library's Secure Electronic Delivery (SED) service. Here the library needs to demonstrate that it is committed to improvement as a continuous process.

As ever, seeking value for money is a fundamental element of effective library services, and showing that resources are used well and with imagination is equally fundamental to the Charter Mark. In universities we will have students from 2006 whose families will have paid top-up fees so we need to provide the best value we can. Again this is part and parcel of what we're about and examples can be easily identified, e.g. library consortia to buy periodicals at best prices, introducing wireless networking to create flexible internet working space and reduce the cost of buying new PCs.

The last of the six criteria is the one that can seem the most daunting. It is about the organisation's role in the local and national communities it serves. It's about showing that some contribution to those communities has been made. This becomes less daunting when you understand that it's the library that defines the communities it serves. So for us at Newcastle it was the university itself, higher education in the UK, the NHS and the region of Newcastle upon Tyne. The daunting aspect reduces even further because the examples given don't have to be large, but can be small and local, e.g. collecting books in the library for Book Aid International (books for Third World countries). A large example for us is our involvement in the university's Partners Scheme with local schools which is part of the university's widening participation strategy.

These criteria together form a framework that allows you to see clearly where you are in the provision of your services. They can sound complicated, but when inspected closely they become far more manageable. So how is a Charter Mark application best handled? Firstly in my experience it is essential to establish the commitment within the library, to make an honest assessment of how you measure up against the criteria, and to be realistic in discussions with the university stressing the customer benefits of the process rather than the award itself. On an organisational note a Charter Mark group should be set up. It will spread the workload, raise visibility of the application, give staff more opportunity to be in contact with someone closely involved, allow questions about the application to be more easily answered and enable the Charter Mark to be more easily recognised as a library wide initiative. To help in this the group is best made up of staff across

various grades, and from various areas of the organisation. It is also advisable for the Librarian to be a member of the group, even if not attending meetings much until the year of the application, so that leadership from the top is quite clear. The group should have a chairperson, should meet regularly, should minute its meetings recording action points, and should make its minutes widely available. The group should be set up at the beginning of the process so that there is as much time available to it as possible. Communication is the key. It allows all staff to feel part of the process and come the busy end of the process helps the group gather as much evidence as possible.

So you do all that, pay for the application, put in all the organisation and effort ..... and don't get the award! It's all gone wrong? Well not really because you will still have been through the process with all its benefits of improvements. You will still receive an assessment report which will highlight any areas that need further work and describe all the positives that you will doubtless have. You will have the basis to move forward and add the actual award to the benefits your customers will already have received. It has to be said that the Charter Mark is only one way to address improvements in service, but for us at Newcastle it has proved a valuable focus.

Further details of the Charter Mark scheme are available from <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/chartermark/>

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## Introducing ESRC Society Today



Cormac Connolly  
Editor of *ESRC Society Today*,  
Polaris House,  
North Star Avenue,  
Swindon SN2 1UJ  
Tel: 01793 413000

Email: [www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk](http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk)

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In May of this year, the culmination of more than a year's work was realised with the launch by the Economic and Social Research Council of *ESRC Society Today*. It is hoped this major new online resource – available at [www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk](http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk) – will be of great value to the librarian and research community, and it has already generated positive feedback from many users. As well as bringing together all ESRC-funded research, *ESRC Society Today* provides a free gateway to other key online resources from the UK such as the Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG), the UK Data Archive and the Office of National Statistics – as well as international coverage from services such as Europa and the Social Science Research Network (SSRN). In order to make this broad picture of the latest social and economic research as useful as possible, users can quickly access research summaries and news articles which provide context for some of the more detailed or topical subjects covered. Then for those who need them, early research findings, full-texts and original datasets are also available. Users can also participate in online discussion fora, track down researchers in their key subject fields and find details on ESRC funding and training opportunities.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS

We are now pleased to let SCONUL members know of two further developments that will make the website even easier to use. The first of these is improved access to plain English summaries of much of the latest research on the website now available from the left-hand menu on the home page. These easy-to-read documents provide a succinct summary of each study's key findings and also allow users to link back to the full research. Secondly, a brand new section has been launched called *Our Society Today* which includes 'Voices' interviews with some of our key research-

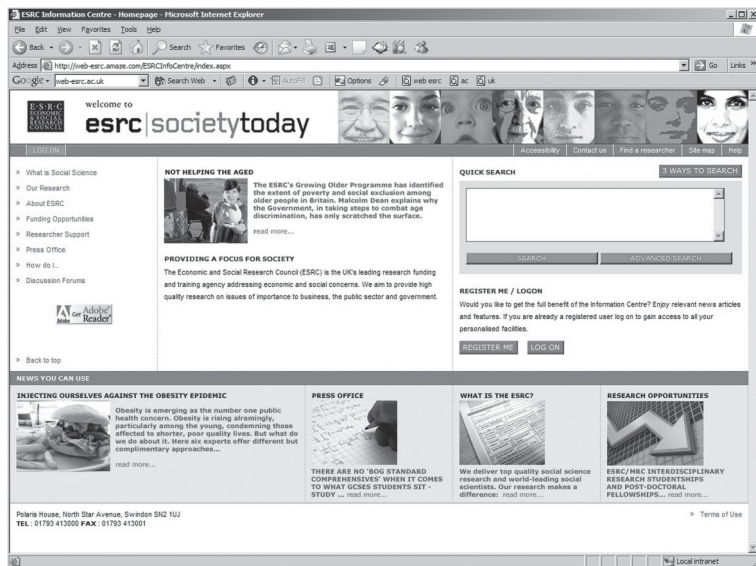
ers and 'Spotlights' - a selection of feature articles and news stories written by top journalists. It is hoped this material will not only prove very interesting, but also help illustrate the wider impact of ESRC funded research.

It is also worth reviewing our expanding range of overview fact-sheets that give key facts and figures on a wide range of research areas, such as governance and citizenship, or social stability and exclusion. We're confident that these new features, coupled with ongoing improvements to the usability of the site, will ensure it is easier than ever to get straight to the most relevant research information, first time.

### GET REGISTERED!

If you haven't already registered on ESRC Society Today we urge you do so next time you visit the website. Not only can you set up a 'personal profile' that allows you to customise content to better meet your needs, but you can also specify particular topics to be alerted to by email as soon as relevant new content is available. Registration also gives you access to take part in the online discussion fora. In order to keep up-to-date with all the latest developments on ESRC Society Today, users can sign-up to an occasional bulletin which will highlight all that is new on the website. We would encourage SCOUNL members to email [bulletin@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:bulletin@esrc.ac.uk) and we will add you to the mailing list.

stration CD-ROMs. If you would be interested in receiving any of these - perhaps to put up on a library notice board or to hand out to students and colleagues - please email [societytoday@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:societytoday@esrc.ac.uk) with 'Promotional materials' in the subject line and outline your requirements. We will then make sure the relevant materials are sent out to you.



We have also produced a range of promotional materials on the new resource that have already been received by many universities and librarian organisations across the country. These include A3 and A4 posters, bookmarks, flyers with 'quick start' guides to searching the site, plus demon-

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# The role of Wikipedia in higher education



Sonya Lipczynska  
User Education Librarian,  
Institute of Psychiatry,  
De Crespigny Park,  
Denmark Hill,  
London SE5 8AF

Tel: 020 7848 0206

E-mail: s.lipczynska@iop.kcl.ac.uk

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As a user education librarian, I spend a good part of the autumn term running internet classes for various groups of students, in particular focusing on the need for critical judgement and evaluation of information on the Net rather than trusting blindly in everything thrown at them by Google. In light of this, the idea of Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia that invites contributions from anyone who comes across it, is somewhat unsettling: there are those in the information sector who have reacted to this unusual site as though they'd just discovered a student annotating the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* with a thick marker pen.

A 'wiki', the principle upon which Wikipedia is based, is a website which allows any user to add content. This content can be shared among other users, and edited by any other user. In the case of Wikipedia, there is no formal review process and it is possible to make textual and grammatical changes without even registering with the site. It may seem as though this anarchic structure allows and encourages anyone to post what they please with impunity resulting in a mass of uninformed comment and inaccurate information.

The site owner, Jimmy Wales, is perfectly aware of the criticism levelled at his project. As stated in the site entry about Wikipedia itself, it 'has been criticised for a perceived lack of reliability, comprehensiveness, and authority. It is considered to have no or limited utility as a reference work among many librarians, academics, and the editors of more formally written encyclopedias'<sup>1</sup>. Interviewed in the *Guardian* in 2004, librarian and internet consultant Philip Bradley stated, 'Theoretically, it's a lovely idea...but practically, I wouldn't use it; and I'm not aware of a single librarian who would'<sup>2</sup>. So can a resource

that, from the outside at least, seems rather like an unregulated bun-fight have any value in the academic sector, or is it to be avoided by students, staff and librarians alike?

Having used Wikipedia both personally and professionally for well over a year now, I think the criticisms are unjust. What Wikipedia does is to hand responsibility for the maintenance and accuracy of the site information to everyone who uses it, from registered members and regular contributors to those who casually surf the entries and stumble across a spelling error. While graffiti and vandalism are unavoidable, the open source software used by Wikipedia allows the community members and assorted volunteers to patrol the site, editing out any vandalism and/or glaring factual errors. All users from the front page onwards are encouraged to play an active part in the upkeep of the site by editing material or alerting other Wikipedians to the problem. IBM researchers monitored controversial articles on Wikipedia and found that, although most had been vandalised at some point, 'vandalism is usually repaired extremely quickly – so quickly that most users will never see its effects'<sup>3</sup>. The site is, as Jimmy Wales points out, 'self healing'.

It is true that one person's perceptions of something will differ from another's, and to ensure that personal bias does not affect entries, Wikipedia has fostered an ethos of NPOV: Neutral Point of View. The Manual of Style which Wikipedians are encouraged to refer to, states, 'The neutral point of view attempts to present ideas and facts in such a fashion that both supporters and opponents can agree'. A look through various discussion pages where users can justify and debate the exclusion or inclusion of material, reveals that most Wikipedians take this policy very seriously. In extreme cases when 'editing wars' break out on the discussion page, the article itself may be protected from further editing until the dispute has been resolved. The article on abortion is a case in point, where heated arguments over ethics and terminology have seen the page temporarily locked.

Wikipedia is also not quite the free-for-all some imagine it to be. While it is true that anyone can edit content, Wikipedia has developed what Simon Waldman in the *Guardian* describes as 'an incredibly intricate social order to keep this vast sprawling project in order'<sup>4</sup>. Out of the thousands of people who have made edits, there is a smaller group of about 200 people who contribute daily and who know each other well in the context of the Wikipedia community. There are volunteer

administrators and moderators all of whom ensure the smooth running and development of the site: despite numerous users, the main responsibility for updates and maintenance resides with a few.

Another advantage of this system is the ability to update site content in conjunction with constant shifts in information and events. During the time I've used Wikipedia I've been impressed with the rapid creation and updating of articles in response to day-to-day occurrences. On the morning of 7 July this year, an article on the London bombings had been created by 9.18 am and was updated almost minute by minute more or less by the same users. Since then the article has had over 500 edits, all of which have been logged on the history page which is attached to each entry.

So does this site indeed have 'limited or no utility as a reference work'? I believe this is not the case, and Wikipedia does have a role to play as a resource in academic libraries. In terms of the validity of information on offer, I have not yet come across any gross factual errors, and where an article is incomplete, or needs fine tuning, there are messages at the top of the article making this clear to the user. Many students and staff routinely turn to the internet in the course of their research, and this is an information resource which is readily accessible and free to use. Not only are most articles well-structured and edited, there are links to visual aids such as photographs or maps, and links at the end of each article to relevant outside sources, encouraging users to widen their research parameters. The ability to contribute to the site is also an attractive idea to many studying or working in the academic sector. Judging an article, looking through the discussion pages and deciding if you have any personal knowledge which could improve it is an ideal way of sharpening critical and evaluative skills. No one should treat any internet resource with blind trust: Wikipedia itself does not claim to have the final answers. What it does do, in the same way as many other information resources, is to provide a platform for further study and the tools to enable this.

#### REFERENCES

- 1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wikipedia>
- 2 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,,1335837,00.html>
- 3 <http://www.research.ibm.com/history/results.htm>
- 4 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,,1335837,00.html>

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## E-learning at the University of Exeter Library



**EVE**  
EVERYONE'S  
VIRTUAL  
EXHIBITION



Dr Jessica Gardner  
Special Collections Librarian,  
University of Exeter Library  
Tel: 01392 263879  
E-mail: [j.p.gardner@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:j.p.gardner@exeter.ac.uk)



Michelle Allen  
Curator of the Bill Douglas  
Centre,  
University of Exeter Library  
Tel: 01392 263879  
E-mail: [m.l.allen@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:m.l.allen@exeter.ac.uk)



Dominic Prosser  
Imaginarium,  
The Learning Consultants  
E-mail: [dominicp@imaginarium.co.uk](mailto:dominicp@imaginarium.co.uk)



Dr Helen Hanson  
Lecturer, School of English,  
University of Exeter Library  
Tel: 01392 264262  
E-mail: [h.m.hanson@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:h.m.hanson@exeter.ac.uk)

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*'I don't know if you can ever feel more for something you're not touching obviously, but I feel I learnt more from the objects online'*

This endorsement of e-learning came from a level 3 undergraduate in the School of English at the University of Exeter where EVE, a new e-learning resource for film studies, has been developed through the Bill Douglas Centre, the university's museum for the history of cinema and popular culture. EVE has been chosen as an exemplar project which will be featured in the Arts and Humanities Research Council's annual report and is already being considered by other institutions

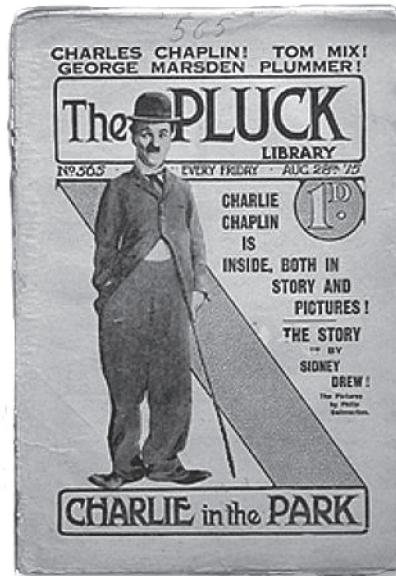
as a model for e-learning based on cultural collections.

The Bill Douglas Centre is a fully registered museum and home to one of Britain's largest publicly accessible collections of cinema and popular culture artefacts, with over 60,000 items encompassing the development of popular visual entertainment from Georgian and Victorian times to the present day. The Centre has its own dedicated curator but, since its merger into the library in 2002, many of its services for teaching and research are integrated through a reading room shared with special collections. The curator is a fully-integrated member of the special collections team and there is a very strong cross-domain approach to collection management and access. There is limited footfall to the museum galleries due to its location on campus outside of the city centre and EVE (everyone's virtual exhibition) was designed to open up virtual access to the collection and to enhance the flexibility of the resource for teaching.

EVE<sup>1</sup> is the product of two consecutive awards totalling £60,000 under the AHRC's museums, galleries and collections scheme in 2003/04 and 2004/05. The EVE and ADAM (applying digital artefacts from a museum) projects were led by the Telematics Centre (a research and development group with expertise in e-learning, education and heritage collections) in the School of Education & Lifelong Learning at Exeter working in partnership with the library, the School of English at Exeter and the Institute for Cultural Studies at the University of Lancaster. This pooling of skills in pedagogy, information retrieval, collection management, and academic film and media studies was a significant factor in the project's success.

EVE incorporates: a fully searchable, image rich catalogue listing all items in the collection (including a number of digital interactives and over 2,400 digital images); a personalised 'your collection' facility through which registered users can deposit and edit text and images from the catalogue; and an exhibitions feature, where registered users can select, organise and annotate images and adapt text through a simple and flexible template to create their own online exhibition. The exhibitions are then published on request on

the EVE website, where there are now over 80 exhibitions by virtual visitors in addition to many more unpublished works in progress.



'Whatever happened to Joan Crawford', 'Marketing movies and Shakespeare', and 'The enigma of Marlene Dietrich' are just three of the online presentations on EVE created by level 3 undergraduate film students as part of their assessed coursework on two modules, 'Film and literature' and 'Hollywood heroines', designed by lecturer Dr Helen Hanson. Dr Hanson, one of the project partners, believes EVE provides an ideal flexible learning environment where students can develop their knowledge of film history and reflect creatively on their

encounters with the material culture of cinema history<sup>2</sup>. Students involved in a focus group evaluation of EVE described the facility as 'novel' and 'multi-faceted', and felt that they 'learnt more from the objects online'<sup>3</sup> than during their visit to the museum because the website gave them the time and space to work independently whilst also supporting their learning with catalogue and image data and access to existing exhibitions. The internal moderator for the 'Hollywood heroines' module credited the facility as 'an excellent innovation that makes creative use of technology and the resources available through the Bill Douglas Centre [and] works against student complacency with the 3,000 word essay'<sup>4</sup>.

The quality of the site's e-learning and web design, led by Dominic Prosser at Telematics<sup>5</sup>, has certainly contributed to its uptake by users. The site is accessible and appeals to a range of age groups. It achieves its aim to attract the academic audience while the design team has also introduced lighter touches (a lucky dip, collection overview, and image gallery) to provide good access points for those at lower educational levels (EVE has now been incorporated into widening participation activities at the institution, for instance). From a collection management perspective, EVE has also streamlined aspects of the cura-





torial role, enabling easy access to image content for marketing and to catalogue data for research enquiries. The level of visits to EVE now eclipse those to the Centre's main website, meaning that EVE now operates as the collection's virtual museum shop front for the global market. There have been headaches along the way, particularly negotiating copyright issues in the digital landscape with a collection rich in twentieth-century ephemera, but EVE is now firmly embedded in a range of undergraduate and, from 2005/6, post-graduate teaching modules at the universities of Exeter and Lancaster.

The single most significant factor in the success of this project has been the participation of users – students, lecturers in further and higher education, and curatorial staff – who have contributed to EVE's development at every stage from the original design brief through to implementation and evaluation in the classroom. Users also led the selection of artefacts for digitisation with the specific aim of enhancing the value of the site for teaching film and media students and Victorian studies. For instance, building on the strength of pre-cinema optical entertainments in the collection, several of the digital interactives feature what has been called 'Victorian multimedia', and actively try to reproduce the experience of spinning a zoetrope or looking into a peepshow: so 'the zoetrope images *do* flicker, the peepshow *is* difficult to look into, the toy panorama *does* wobble a bit as it is wound'<sup>6</sup>. As the site goes on to say, 'this is your chance to experience these objects as a Victorian might have done'.



Plans for future development of the site are likely to focus on the Victorian culture artefacts, partly because this material is free from copyright restraints but also because of strong user demand. It is this high level of student and staff ownership of EVE at Exeter that has also ultimately secured institutional resources for the long-term preservation and maintenance of EVE and set a standard for future e-learning based on the library's special collections.

#### REFERENCES

- 1 To find out more about EVE and to view current exhibitions or create your own, please visit the website at <http://www.billdouglas.org/eve>. The Bill Douglas Centre is based in the Old Library on the Streatham campus of the University of Exeter.
- 2 'University leads field in e-learning with new museum website', *Extra*, Summer Term 2005, University of Exeter, p. 9.
- 3 Evaluative data gathered by Dr Helen Hanson and Dominic Prosser during interviews with a student focus group for the AHRC-funded ADAM project at the University of Exeter.
- 4 'End of award report: project funding scheme 2003' for the AHRC for the ADAM project, by Dominic Prosser with contributions from Dr Helen Hanson, Dr Marc Furstenau and Dr Jessica Gardner.
- 5 Dominic Prosser is now an independent learning consultant at Imaginarium, a spin off company from the Telematics Centre, see <http://www.imaginarium.co.uk/>.
- 6 To see the digital interactives go to [http://billdouglas.ex.ac.uk/eve/digital\\_interactives.asp](http://billdouglas.ex.ac.uk/eve/digital_interactives.asp).



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# The Lost World of Mitchell & Kenyon

Dr Vanessa Toulmin  
Research Director, National Fairground Archive, University of Sheffield Library  
Tel: 0114 222 7231 E-mail:  
fairground@sheffield.ac.uk

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*The Lost World of Mitchell & Kenyon* shown earlier this year on BBC2, captured the public imagination and attracted over 12 million viewers over the three episodes it was shown. The programmes featured astonishingly clear archive film footage; illustrating street life, civic events and industrial society in the first decade of the twentieth century. The beauty of the image as well as the specificity of the information narrated by Dan Cruikshank on behalf of the BBC revealed a world only previously seen in still photographs and moved the Guardian to comment that it represented the ghosts of our ancestors made flesh. The series was based on the discovery of what is now known as the Peter Worden Collection of Mitchell & Kenyon films, and was one of the outputs of a five year research project initiated by the National Fairground Archive (NFA) at the University of Sheffield Library, and the holders of the film material, the British Film Institute (bfi). Other strategies associated with the project include screenings, publications, and conferences. This extraordinary collection of actuality footage from the first decade of the twentieth century is a vivid and unparalleled social record of early 20th-century British life, featuring street and transport scenes, sporting events, parades, and local industries, all featuring ordinary people in everyday situations. However, behind the glossy narrative of reconstructed snapshots of Edwardian Britain produced by the BBC, lies a story of collaboration, research, restoration and a team of subject specialists who have worked together since 2001 on unearthing the treasure that lay in the unrestored nitrate negatives acquired by the bfi in July 2000.



MK 58: Pendlebury Colliery (1901)

## THE COMPANY

The firm of Mitchell and Kenyon, founded in Blackburn in 1897 by Sagar Mitchell and James Kenyon, released films under the trade name of Norden. They were one of the largest British film companies in the 1900s, producing a mixture of topicals, fiction, and 'fake' war films. Before their arrival in the world of early filmmaking, Mitchell ran the family photographic apparatus business with his father, and Kenyon operated a penny-in-the-slot machine manufacturing company. The company had premises at 21 King Street and 40 Northgate, but from late 1901 they were primarily based at Norden Film Works, 22 Clayton Street, Blackburn. Until recently the company were more famous for their dramatised war films, ten of which were known to have survived and included titles such as *The dispatch bearers* (1900), *Winning the VC* (1900) and *Attack on a China mission* (1901)<sup>1</sup> However, the discovery of 838 camera negatives in the original premises in 1994 by Peter Worden and their acquisition by the bfi in 2000, has led to a major re-evaluation of their contribution to film making in the United Kingdom.

## BACKGROUND TO THE COLLECTION

In June 1994 Peter Worden paid a local salvage man to bring the three drums of films to his premises in Blackburn where he worked as an optician. Between 1994 and 1999 Peter sent various batches of films to be printed to a commercial laboratory and showed a selection of this material in the Lancashire region to local and regional history groups. The discovery was first premiered in Blackburn in November 1994 when he presented a selection of newly restored material on 16mm to an audience consisting of local people, film collectors and members of the Blackburn Arts Club<sup>2</sup>

A later screening took place in June 1995. Ironically, at the same time over 300 film archivists, historians and academics from all over the world were in Britain to celebrate the 100th anniversary of cinema at the National Museum of Photography Film and Television. The first showing outside Lancashire to film historians was at the National Fairground Archive's Visual Delights Conference held at the University of Sheffield in July 1999. During that time various expressions of

interest were made by film archives and other agencies in housing the collection. However, it was not until July 2000 and with the aid of the National Fairground Archive at the University of Sheffield Library that the camera ready negative rolls were acquired by the *bfi* to form the *Peter Worden Mitchell and Kenyon Collection*. A four-year joint research



MK 154: *Wales v Ireland at Wrexham (1906)*

project was proposed by the National Fairground Archive to go hand in hand with the archiving and restoration project of the National Film and Television Archive (NFTVA) at the *bfi*. Funding was obtained from the Arts and Humanities Research Board for the project and a formal agreement between the University of Sheffield and the *bfi* was compiled to combine the archiving and restoration of the films with a proactive research programme, intended to be completed at the end of 2004. In 2001 the *bfi* started a four-year project to actively preserve and make accessible the content of the 800 nitrate negatives in early 2005.

#### RESEARCHING THE COLLECTION

It was calculated for the purpose of the research project that out of the 838 main titles, 650 films needed to be fully dated, contextualised, identified and their content revealed. This appeared to be a daunting task and while visual cataloguing of the films' onscreen content fell within the scope of the NFTVA's cataloguing staff, the contextual research underpinning a full understanding of the films would have to be undertaken in a separate, but symbiotic, exercise.

When the collection was discovered in three drums under the floorboards of the original premises by three local workmen, the films were found in layers consisting of between twenty films per layer and fifteen layers in total. Each roll of film was wrapped with an elastic band and a scrap of paper was attached to some of the rolls. These pieces of paper invariably contained information pertaining to the location of the film, the name of the exhibitor or a date of filming. In all instances it corroborated the little information on the film leaders which were either inscribed with a stylus or black ink. The scraps of paper were between one and three quarter inches in length and one and half inches wide and were either blank pieces of paper cut to size or unused hand-

bills printed or used by Mitchell and Kenyon in association with a travelling exhibitor. Over the next three months, each layer of film was carefully taken out of the drums by Peter Worden, the dust and debris which had formed between the films was carefully cleaned using a hand held vacuum, and then placed into small

plastic sandwich bags, with the paper inscriptions. Peter Worden copied the information from the film leaders onto labels stuck on the outside of the sandwich bags. The films were numbered, placed in ice cream cartons, and stored in the unplugged refrigeration unit.<sup>3</sup> The work undertaken nightly over three months by Peter Worden and Robin Whalley (another local historian), produced a working list of the showmen/exhibitors who were associated with Mitchell and Kenyon, a time scale of the film production, and the geographical boundaries where the firm operated.

The importance of Peter Worden's work exemplifies many themes that will be familiar to people working in archives, whether they be film, manuscript or ephemera based, in particular the role and importance of the collector in preserving much of the material that is now in institutional collections. Peter was and is a local historian who spent many years of his life tracing the history of Mitchell and Kenyon. Indeed his interest can be traced back to 1965 when he became a member of the Blackburn Arts Club (Film Section) and a National Council Member of the



MK: 173: *Manchester Band of Hope Procession (1901)*

Institute of Amateur Cinematographers. Collectors like Peter Worden exist in every town, region and country in the world and their importance in saving items which could have been lost, cannot be overstated. It was his perseverance and surveillance of the property for over thirty years and the awareness in the locality of his commitment, that resulted in the films being offered to the nation in the first instance.

## INDEXING THE COLLECTION

By the time the research project commenced in November 2001, the staff at the NFA were working from the original typed list supplied by Peter Worden where he had numbered and listed the films based on the information contained on the original negative or inscribed on the scraps of paper. Approximately 20 per cent of the films had information pertaining to date, location or



MKhandbill - Advertisement for Mitchell & Kenyon taken from the *Showmen's Year Book, 1900* (National Fairground Archive)

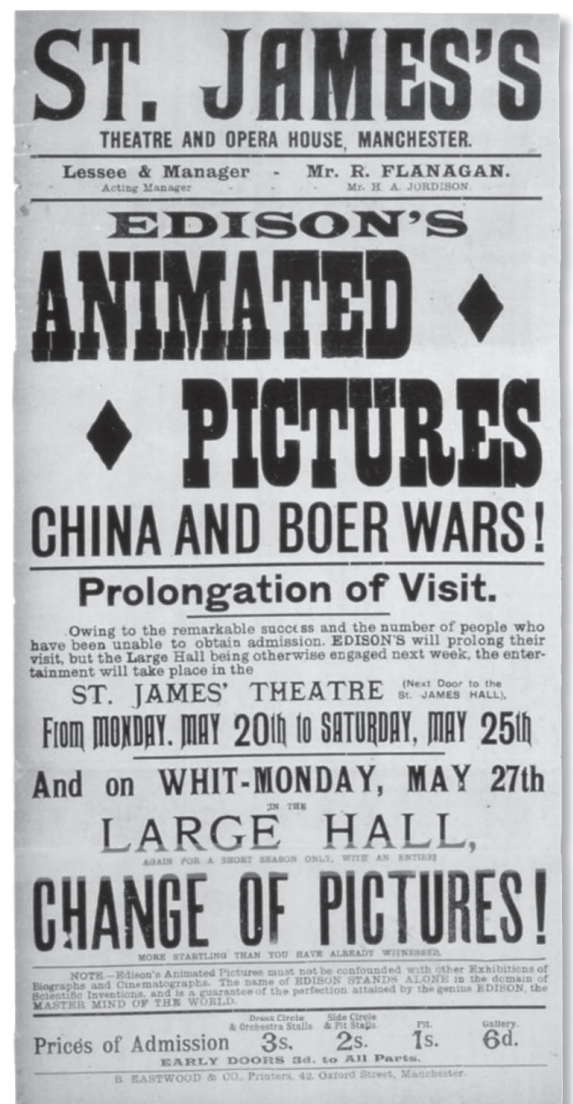
only the location for example Liverpool. In the case of the sporting material, the date of the game being filmed was noted but not the individual teams or location. The rationale taken by the research project was to link the dating of the films to the original reason why the showmen commissioned the titles in the first place. Every film in the Mitchell and Kenyon Collection was specifically filmed to fit in with a local event or celebration and related to the visit of the cinematograph showmen to the town, village or city where the show was being presented. Indeed, the operators specifically advertised the films as 'Local films for local people' both in the showmen's press when they were advertising their business and in the local press when the films were on show. These films were then shown within the network of traditional holidays, festivals, local events or specific national occasions which were commemorated on a local level. This date could be the local village fete or fair, or a calendar custom, which falls only on a particular day of the year. For example the Mitchell and Kenyon film of Bootle May Queen in 1903 or of Warrington Catholic Procession in 1902,

title with 80 per cent containing the names of the showmen who commissioned the films, or a description of the film, for example ships at Sunderland. Information on the negative linked particular films to individual showmen or sometimes mentioned

can only occur on a particular day according to calendar custom<sup>4</sup> The showmen operated a simple marketing venture to film as many faces as possible, thus providing a ready made paying audience, desiring to see itself reproduced on screen in temporary venues in the locality. Therefore, the key to the date lay in understanding the purpose or reasoning behind the films' commissioning in the first instance.<sup>5</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

From November 2001 to March 2004, staff at the NFA drew up a list of possible locations, events, and festivities that could be dated in order to match the newly restored films that were being sent to the NFA by the National Film and Television Archive (NFTVA). Over 80 local studies libraries were visited in order to find local newspaper reports that linked the films to specific customs and specialist archives. Local and specialist historians were contacted in order



Poster advertising Edison's Animated Pictures in Manchester in June 1901. (National Fairground Archive)

to form a network of specialists who could work on the contextual material once it was dated<sup>6</sup>. An Access database was designed in order to cross reference the archival, newspaper and contextual material in numerical order according to the original number listing designated by Peter Worden. Route books held at the National Fairground Archive revealed the date of the fair where the film was shown and the names of the showmen who attended the event. Reviews in local newspapers often contained descriptions of the films. In addition, original handbills already held by the NFA were cross referenced and a large amount of ephemera material was accumulated corresponding directly to the films themselves or the showmen who commissioned them. In some cases the posters and programmes actually listed the original film titles that were given at the time. These were maintained by the project and films without titles were named in the style of the time, for example instead of listing a film under the title of the factory it was given the descriptive title as 'Workers leaving the factory' – with the name of the factory then inserted into the location field when this information was obtained.

The material was classified in order of locality and subject and corresponded to the original numbering system listed by Peter Worden when the films came out of the metal drums. Subjects were grouped to reflect both a descriptive context and a filmic type, so for example, *factory gate* as an index term applied both to the description of a film showing people leaving a factory and is a recognised form or early film category based on the Lumiere's original film title. Sporting events were grouped under sport (general sporting event) with particular activities such as *rugby* and *football* being given their own categories. Other subjects included *transport*, *townview*, *phantom ride*, *factory gate*, *church exit*, *transport-ship*, *transport-train*, *transport-tram*, *VIP*, and *recreation*. The geographical spread of the material encompassed Lancashire, Yorkshire, the Midlands, Scotland, Ireland, the north east of England, Bristol and north Wales, with all county indexing relating to modern county boundaries.

The three year project produced a database of information relating not just to the listing of the films but a snap shot of archival sources relating to Edwardian social and industrial Britain and became the main source of information that would be used by the subject historians who would work on understanding the significance of the material in terms of historical data.

## OUTCOMES

The most important outcomes in terms of the Arts and Humanities Research Board were the publications produced by the project team and associated specialists working on the project. In line with this criteria, a series of single authored articles by Dr Vanessa Toulmin has been published in international journals since 2001.<sup>7</sup> However, the wish of both the bfi and the NFA was to actively make the collection available. This has been achieved through screenings across the UK (over forty two different screenings), two DVD releases, and a book of specially commissioned essays on themes within the collection by leading authorities in a broad range of disciplines (*The lost world of Mitchell & Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on film*)<sup>8</sup> Future publications will include a second book on the collection, subject specialist DVDs and an online film catalogue. Various examples of the films within the collection can also be viewed online<sup>9</sup>.

The collection continues to fascinate both the academic community and the general public at large. Its further research potential is immense. Professor Dave Russell of the University of Central Lancashire, who contributed to the edited collection of essays, recently remarked that the first decade of the twentieth century is not only known as the Edwardian era but can also be called the Mitchell and Kenyon decade!

## REFERENCES

- 1 See Tim Neal, Vanessa Toulmin and Rebecca Vick, 'Mitchell and Kenyon: a successful, pioneering and travelled partnership of production', in Vanessa Toulmin, Simon Popple and Patrick Russell (eds), *The lost world of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on film* (London: British Film Institute, 2004): 6-12.
- 2 Full details of the films shown can be found on a handout produced by Peter Worden and Robin Whalley which lists six titles relating to Blackburn including MK 256-60: *Princess Louise unveiling Queen Victoria's statue*, (30 September 1905) MK 95: *Blackburn Rovers V Sheffield United*, (29 March 1907) and a factory title from 1900 of MK 48: *Workforce leaving Hornby's Brookhouse Mill, Blackburn* (1900).
- 3 Personal communication, Peter Worden to Vanessa Toulmin between 26 and 30 January 2003.
- 4 Full details of the titles are as follows, MK 389: *Bootle May Queen* (25 May 1903), MK 375: *Warrington Catholic Procession* (27 June 1902).

- 5 Vanessa Toulmin, 'We take them and make them: Mitchell and Kenyon and the travelling exhibition showmen', in Toulmin et al, *The lost world of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on film* (London: British Film Institute, 2004): 59-69. See also a case study on the NFA's web pages at [http://www.shef.ac.uk/nfa/mitchell\\_and\\_kenyon/showmen.php](http://www.shef.ac.uk/nfa/mitchell_and_kenyon/showmen.php)
- 6 An example of a case study undertaken by one of the research staff can be found at [http://www.shef.ac.uk/nfa/mitchell\\_and\\_kenyon/case.php](http://www.shef.ac.uk/nfa/mitchell_and_kenyon/case.php)
- 7 A full list can be found on the Institute of Historical Research's website <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/paper/toulminresp.html>
- 8 Vanessa Toulmin, Simon Popple and Patrick Russell (eds), *The lost world of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on film* (London: British Film Institute, 2004). See also 'Electric Edwardians: the films of Mitchell & Kenyon', selected by Dr Vanessa Toulmin, with a 28 page illustrated essay/booklet to accompany the films. (London: British Film Institute, 2005)
- 9 Up to date activities relating to the collection including screenings and recent publications can be found on [www.bfi.org.uk/mk](http://www.bfi.org.uk/mk) and [www.shef.ac.uk/nfa](http://www.shef.ac.uk/nfa)

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## The 'Leeds Read'



Liz Waller  
 Head of Public Service  
 Strategy,  
 Leeds University Library  
 Tel: 0113 34 37615  
 E-mail: [e.j.waller@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:e.j.waller@leeds.ac.uk)



Katy Sidwell  
 Faculty Team Librarian  
 (Science and Engineering  
 Team),  
 Leeds University Library  
 Tel: 0113 34 35542  
 E-mail: [c.a.sidwell@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:c.a.sidwell@leeds.ac.uk)

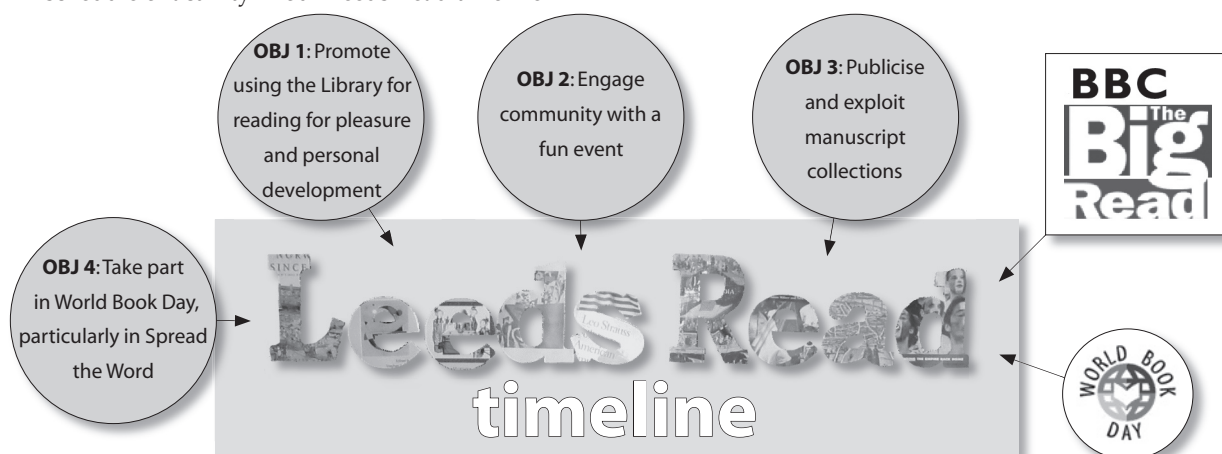
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What is your favourite book? What would you recommend and why? These are questions which Leeds University Library asked of its customers this year in its own version of the BBC 'Big Read' event, held to celebrate World Book Day. We were inspired by the World Book Day *Spread the Word* campaign asking people to recommend a good read to friends and family. We hoped to encourage customers to take part in the event, raise the profile of reading for pleasure not just academic study, and most importantly to have some fun! The library has a marketing group and it was here that the idea was first discussed before being implemented by a small sub-group with additional web authoring assistance from one of our web savvy customer services staff. At this point sponsorship of the event was sought and we are most grateful to a well known book supplier for their assistance in this.

The idea of a voting exercise had always been central to our plans, but we also looked for supporting events and Chris Sheppard, our head of special collections, developed a talk *Between the lines* which drew upon Leeds' collection of original manuscripts from such diverse authors as Elizabeth Gaskell, William Thackeray, Arthur Ransome, Evelyn Waugh and Barbara Taylor-Bradford. Our exhibition cabinets in the entrance to the Brotherton Library were also used to display novels from our special collections which were anticipated to be likely candidates for the top 'Leeds Read' books.

The whole event ran over a period of four weeks leading up to 3 March and World Book Day when the Leeds Read 'Top 5' was announced and the

Between the lines talk took place. You can see the schedule of activity in our Leeds Read timeline.



## WEEK 1 Nominations

Website had overview of event, nominations form and list of nominations received (updated at least twice daily). Also publicised 'Between the lines' talk and display.

Posters displayed all over campus. Displays mounted in each library. Emails sent by all subject librarians to their departments, staff and students. Campusweb article displayed. 1st screensaver displayed. Notice on library homepage. Exhibition display mounted in the Brotherton Library by Special Collections.

Over 250 nominations received via the website and through the ballot boxes in libraries. Staff and students in every section of the University participated.

## WEEK 2 & 3 Voting

Website has voting form displaying the top 30 nominated books (those that had more than one nomination).

Displays in libraries changed to show voting posters and shortlisted titles. 'Between the lines' posters and emails distributed to publicise evening event. 2nd and 3rd screensaver displayed. Article in University newsletter distributed to all staff. Campusweb article with link to voting form displayed

837 genuine votes (jokes and duplicate votes from the same IP address were removed) received via the website and through the ballot boxes in libraries.  
The student newspaper 'Leeds Student' printed favourable article.

## World Book Day

Website announced the winner with the most votes

Displays in libraries changed to show details of winner and top 10 Leeds Reads. 4th screensaver displayed announcing winner. Campus web article. Between the lines evening event. Exhibition display changed to incorporate winners. Winner of top 5 Leeds Reads drawn (formal presentation by Librarian the following week)

30 people attended 'Between the lines

## PUBLICITY FOR THE EVENT

This event was a leap in the dark for us – we had no idea of how popular (or not) the Leeds Read would be!

The event had an internal focus: we didn't set out to encourage interest outside the university. We tried to ensure that our publicity reached out through a variety of media to reach the staff and students:

- Direct contact with University book groups and e-mails to academic departments
- Displays in each library
- Notices on the news pages of the Intranet
- Adverts on screensavers in computer clusters
- Posters
- Dedicated 'Leeds Read' website
- Supply of World Book Day postcards

We were fortunate in that the university student newspaper *Leeds student* picked up on the event and ran a brief article – attracted no doubt by *The very hungry caterpillar* in the nominations! Subsequent to the event the University newsletter *The Reporter* has also featured our activities.

## HOW DID IT GO?

Despite early concerns about popularity, our web pages went live in February with 2587 hits on our Leeds Read index pages and 1153 hits on the nominations/voting page. Overall there were over 250 nominations for book titles, with approximately 850 votes made. Whilst we had an internal focus for the event we received nominations and votes from various academic institutions across the country! We hope to pick up on this interest next year with a collaborative city-wide event. At the nomination stage people were invited to comment on why they would recommend their particular book; most took up this opportunity which gave us a lot of insightful comments which we used on the web site and displayed on the notice boards to generate further interest:

*The time traveller's wife* by Audrey Niffenegger  
'Reading fiction has become something of a luxury for me over the last year and textbooks now occupy most of my shelves... It is sexy, engaging and clever. If textbooks were as thrilling as this I'd be sorted!'

*Pride and prejudice* by Jane Austen  
'Because of Mr Darcy'

*Crime and punishment* by Dostoevsky  
'Cracking plot'

All of the World Book Day postcards (10,000) also disappeared very quickly!

Our top five were (starting in best tradition with the fifth place):

- 5th *His dark materials* – Philip Pullman
- 4th *Lord of the rings* – JRR Tolkien
- 3rd *Pride and prejudice* – Jane Austen
- 2nd *The very hungry caterpillar* – Eric Carle
- 1st *To kill a mockingbird* – Harper Lee

Interestingly four of our top five featured in the top 21 in the BBC Big Read (*The very hungry caterpillar* only made 199 in the ranking).

## EVALUATING THE EVENT

Following the Leeds Read the team held a de-brief to evaluate our impact and record any points which we could take forward to next year's World Book Day. We were very pleased with the interest which had been shown in the Leeds Read vote and in the *Between the lines* event. We were pleasantly surprised by the number of nominations and votes submitted. Whilst initially we had been uncertain what the take up was likely to be, its success has given us something to build on for next year.

We have ideas for improving Leeds Read next time around. We need to:

- Start planning earlier
- Identify a permanent budget
- Build a web site which requires less staff intervention
- Explore contacts with the students union and student newspaper
- Attract external speakers

Whilst we were happy with the number of participants in comparison with other responses to the library we would wish to increase this in future years.

The major lessons we learnt were:

- Don't be afraid to experiment
- You can't start planning too early
- People love books!

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# Freedom of Information at Oxford University Library Services

Mike Heaney

*Head of Service Assessment and Planning, OULS, Osney One Building, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0EW*

*Tel: 01865 277236*

*E-mail: michael.heaney@ouls.ox.ac.uk*

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The second part of Freedom of Information (FoI) Act came into force in January 2005. It crept up on us relatively unawares at Oxford. Until the middle of 2004 we had presumed that it related only to our own documentation and records, and that it applied to archives and libraries in much the same way as it applied to other public bodies – to hold us accountable, quite properly, for our decisions and procedures. It was late in the day when we realized that it applies to all ‘information held’ – irrespective of who created it and for what purpose. In theory it applies to all the books and other material in the library. As most requests to a library take the form of requests for information, the Act potentially imposes a massive burden on us.

Fortunately, relief is at hand. The second part of the FoI Act falls into two parts – first, a statement about the general duty to provide information, and second, a list of exceptions which release us from the obligation to do so. For most material in most libraries – i.e. published books and journals – the information is generally available, and institutions do not have to supply information that is generally available; so we as libraries are exempt from having to supply it under the terms of the Act. Of course, being helpful librarians and eager to help our readers and enquirers, we shall continue to do as we have always done and answer readers’ enquiries and requests for information within the limits of our resources.

So no change there, then? Well not quite – large research libraries such as Oxford’s are significantly affected. Large research libraries contain manuscripts and unique printed material which

are *not* generally available. For this material there is a significant new duty to supply information, and this goes beyond what most libraries may have thought themselves able to do in the past. We have to be prepared to undertake up to 18 hours’ work (a £450 limit at £25 per hour) in meeting each request.

There is a complication which probably affects libraries more than any other bodies: the information we hold is in most cases not our own. We may own the objects but we do not normally own the copyright in them. In some cases we don’t even own the objects, which are merely deposited in our care. We learned even later in the day – within a month of the implementation date – that where we don’t own the objects (as with deposited collections) the Information Commissioner takes the view that there is still a basic duty to disclose, which may override the depositor’s wishes. It was only after implementation that it became clear that official advice was that the duty to disclose also overrides any potential breach of copyright regulations.

Our parent institution, the university itself, was taking a fairly low-key approach. The central administration was putting procedures in place but departments were being given the message that by-and-large it was expected to be business as usual, and any problems should be referred to the university’s data protection officer (as with the national arrangements, the responsibility for compliance with Freedom of Information and Data Protection requirements is combined in one post). It took some effort to get the university to realise that libraries respond to enormous numbers of requests that potentially fall within the purview of the Act.

Of course we were not alone in coming late to grapple with the Act – the government itself was very dilatory in providing key information – the charging regime was only announced in mid-December, and some necessary consequential changes to other legislation were not made until mid-February.

All this meant that we did not really come to grips with planning our approach until the last quarter of 2004. The key factors in our response were:

- the devolution of responsibility to individuals and departments
- a series of briefing sessions for staff
- development of guidelines for dealing with mail and email, including standard letters



- a proactive policy to establish the status of specific manuscript collections.

Oxford University Library Services are scattered across dozens of buildings, and, although operating as an integrated system since 2000, are still relatively decentralised. We followed the university's relaxed approach and tried to ensure that as much as possible is done in the place where a query is made. I (as OULS's nominated responsible person) did not want to be snowed under with requests which I could not answer without referring back to the originating department! It is not an entirely trivial issue, however, as the institution is deemed to have received a request as soon as the request is received anywhere, not necessarily in the appropriate department. So the first two points of our guidance to staff are:

- 1 Each site library / department is responsible for assessing the written / faxed / email correspondence it receives. If you as an individual receive such correspondence, you are responsible for it unless explicitly agreed otherwise for any particular case. There is a named local contact who should be your first port of call.
- 2 Where correspondence involves more than one department within OULS the original receiving department / individual retains responsibility for it unless explicitly agreed otherwise. (Where correspondence involves a university department outside OULS it should be passed immediately to the university's data protection office).

The last provision reflects university policy about cross-departmental FoI requests; for this purpose OULS is one department. Every named local contact in OULS (covering 51 sections in all) attended a briefing session, as did all those who regularly dealt with correspondence. Over a hundred people (out of OULS's complement of around 700) attended briefing sessions.

One of the main aims of the briefing sessions was to reassure people that for most of the time we could respond to requests as we have always done. The analogy we used was the Highway Code: we don't stop to consult the Highway Code every time we make a driving manoeuvre, but it's there in the background when a situation becomes more complicated and we have to be aware of the right way and the wrong way to do things. Letters don't have to start out 'This is an FoI request...' so every letter asking for information, no matter how informal, falls under the FoI umbrella.

The initial assessment staff make is intended to identify potential problem areas:

- 1 Is this a request for information about OULS or university policies or procedures, or about information which OULS or the university holds?
- 2 Does it pertain solely to OULS or does it involve, wholly or in part, other departments in the university? (If the latter, pass to university.)
- 3 Is it couched in terms too vague or general?
- 4 Is it in the OULS publication scheme (mainly catalogues and policy documents)?
- 5 Is the information held uniquely by OULS? (This deals with most requests for information from printed works.)
- 6 Might we want to claim an exemption?
- 7 Is the time needed to gather the information likely to be more than 18 working hours?

We ask staff to take no more than two working days over the initial assessment. We also provided guidance on actions to take:

- 1 If the request is too vague, advise the enquirer how to narrow the scope of the request so that it might be answered.
- 2 For material in the publication scheme notify the enquirer how to access the information. If straightforward to do so, enclose a copy.
- 3 For material that is not unique decide if we want to supply and if so offer to do so, with a charge including research costs (on which VAT should be charged). (This provision deals with most requests for information which are normally met by supplying photocopies under library privilege, as we have always done.)
- 4 For material that is unique (and for administrative information), after assessing the application of exemptions and cost, gather the information together and calculate costs of supply (excluding research costs). Offer to supply; or if more economical to do so, supply a copy.
- 5 If, after consultation with the data protection officer, we decide that some or all of the information is exempt, the DPO will write to the enquirer explaining that this is so and identifying the grounds for exemption. If possible suggest how a request might be rephrased so that non-exempt information can be identified and supplied.
- 6 If it is too costly to supply the information (i.e. more than 18 hours' work), advise the

enquirer and indicate how much information might be suppliable within the FoI limits.

- 7 Do not take more than eight working days over the actions (with a presumption that a referral where necessary to the Data Protection Officer would take place early in this process rather than late).

You'll see that we recommend that the whole procedure should take no more than ten working days (two for assessment, eight for action). This is because we decided to allow up to ten working days – two weeks – to allow for staff absences. Early discussions with staff indicated a general reluctance to make specific arrangements to cover for short absences. This was compounded by the difficulty that, for reasons that need not concern us, not all staff were able to set appropriate diversions or auto-replies on their email, in which case it had to be done centrally. The policy we came up with to deal with correspondence is as follows:

- 1 Mail addressed to a department will be opened if the person normally responsible is away
- 2 Mail addressed to an individual will be opened after ten working days unless marked 'Personal', 'Private', 'Private and confidential' or 'Personnel – confidential'. Mail marked only as 'Confidential' will be opened. (This is in line with the policy of the university administration.)
- 3 Departmental email addresses are already monitored daily.
- 4 Email addressed to individuals is left until they return. If individuals are away for more than ten working days, they must set up an auto-reply directing people to a departmental email address. (FoI guidance states that an auto-reply directing enquirers to use another email address meets the requirements of the Act.)
- 5 If a member of staff is away unexpectedly for more than ten working days, the Director of OULS will be requested to authorise access to the staff member's email account.

Mail is date-stamped on opening. Staff are recommended to keep FoI requests in a separate email folder.

Some of our manuscript collections are the subject of more frequent and intense public interest than others. One collection in particular (I leave you to guess which it is!) contains family letters to and from people still alive and already tired of having the minutiae of their lives picked over. Fortu-

nately we can invoke the Data Protection Act for living members, but we cannot do this for their deceased relations. Special Collections staff have compiled a register of affected collections, listing the exemptions that may apply in each case

As for collections that are deposited with us but not owned by us, we were alarmed at one point late in 2004 when the Information Commissioner let it be known that deposited collections were not immune from the Act and that a depositor's wishes expressed at the time of deposit may be overridden in the public interest. However, later clarification emerged, that the possibility that a depositor might withdraw a collection rather than accede to FoI requests could be used as a test of the wider public interest – i.e. it is deemed more important that a collection remain accessible to the public in an institution than it is to meet an FoI request about it against the owner's wishes.

In the first week of FoI implementation we had a request which exemplified the new regime. We had an enquiry from abroad about books from Tolkien's personal library now held by one of the university libraries. The information was available but not published. We estimated it would take about 10 hours' work to gather and supply the information – well beyond what we would normally contemplate being able to expend on just one query. However, we felt that in this case we had to oblige. The request did not mention FoI and the enquirer, in the Netherlands, was probably unaware that the Act had just become operational!

Another early request was the converse: it invoked the FoI Act but merely asked for a copy of extracts from a thesis which we would have supplied in any case.

One of the most interesting aspects was the flurry of activity on the FoI discussion list at the beginning of January as people up and down the country tried to grapple with the first requests. Since implementation, the enquiries that have given rise to most activities have been those which the Act really envisaged – enquiries from employees and from outside interested parties (including journalists) about our policies and procedures.

## NOTES

*Useful resources on the Information Commissioner's and Department for Constitutional Affairs websites:*

*The Freedom of Information Act 2000: An introduction*  
<http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/cms/DocumentUploads/Freedom%20of%20Information%20Act%202000%20An%20Introduction.pdf>

*What information is caught by the Act?*  
<http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/cms/DocumentUploads/AG%2012%20When%20is%20info%20caught%20by%20Act.pdf>

*Time to comply (including email handling):*  
<http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/cms/DocumentUploads/AG%2011Time%20for%20compliance.pdf>

*Guidance on fees*  
<http://www.foi.gov.uk/feeguidesum.htm>

*Guidance on exemptions*  
<http://www.foi.gov.uk/guidance/exguide/index.htm>

(all verified: 11 July 2005)

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# Current strategic issues for conservation of library collections

Chris Woods,  
Head of Conservation & Collection Care  
Room 303, Bodleian Library,  
Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BG  
Tel: 01865 277086  
Email: [csw@bodley.ox.ac.uk](mailto:csw@bodley.ox.ac.uk)

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## INTRODUCTION

This article sets out a selection of issues of significance to libraries in caring for their collections in the 21st century. It is not intended to be exhaustive and readers will have their own concerns that are not reflected here, but it may serve as impetus for a wider discussion about the future management of libraries, especially in a digital age. The issues chosen are strategic cultural and professional issues rather than technical, and some may be considered unusual or controversial but they exist nevertheless and are raised in the hope that readers will take an interest. In technical terms there is little that cannot be achieved to preserve collections, as long as there is the will and enthusiasm to overcome obstacles. What matters then is whether library management culture is yet in a position to make improvements happen. In the long run, cultural changes have the most impact on how successful libraries are in caring for their collections.

As a framework for presenting these issues it may be helpful to describe some of the changes that have happened at Oxford University. Readers will probably be familiar with the changes and improvements undertaken since 1998 by Reg Carr, Bodley's Librarian and Director of Oxford University Library Services (doubtless they have been written about before now). These changes have been motivated by local needs (management and co-ordination of the OU libraries was long overdue) and by the need for modernisation to bring Oxford's libraries into a position better to exploit changes in technology and readers' expectations in the modern era.

Perhaps the most fundamental improvement was to clarify and formalise the relationship of the Bodleian Library (and its satellites) with the proliferation of departmental and faculty libraries. For the author, arriving in 2002 after this change had begun, it was essential to identify the role and purpose of collection care and conservation across a wide variety of libraries. What was formerly thought of almost solely as a Bodleian function, conservation and collection care needed to be delivered at different levels in different settings, so the first step was to articulate a broad policy, common to all 40 OULS library sites.

The policy sets out why OULS is protecting and preserving collections, through the means of a simple vision statement, and it defines the key strategic objectives to achieve this vision:

- To foster and maintain a protective ethos of care for all our library assets;
- To make the best and most efficient use of all OULS skills and resources towards achieving our aims;
- To raise the profile of the OULS' role of 'archive' for some of the world's most significant written heritage;
- To maximise the use of preventative and protective measures for whole collections as well as remedial conservation of single items;

It then sets out the role of a proposed new OULS Conservation & Collection Care service, and through a series of review documents the priorities and changes of direction necessary to undertake this new role are described. The policies and strategy were approved by the University's library authorities in 2003 and 2004, along with some changes that had already begun from 2002 onwards, and during this last academic year 04/05 the final significant changes of direction have been made. We are entering a period now in which the new directions can be pursued in practice, and we are planning for a second three year plan, which should see some of the strategic changes begin to bear fruit. (It may be worth observing that changes to such an operation after many years of existence in different forms are not the stuff of revolution!)

At first sight, the above set of objectives may be dismissed as 'motherhood and apple pie'. They are indeed defined at a very broad level, but reflecting after nearly three years since their first consideration, under shifting circumstances, they are still apposite, and can be used here to help focus on current issues.

## 1 *A protective ethos of care for all our library assets*

The first intention of this statement was that staff of a collective library system should begin to recognise their own service and its assets (meaning here collections, facilities and, where appropriate, heritage) as part of a whole for which all are responsible for protecting. Individual library services are, in most instances, very small institutions with a handful of staff, often only one or two. Under these circumstances it is easy for some librarians to succumb to the 'big fish, small pond' syndrome. It is a testament to OULS librarians that, in spite of this risk, there is a good level of collaborative spirit.

Care and maintenance of equipment and facilities is most often of a high level in libraries since no librarian wishes to see tables, chairs, photocopiers etc being unusable. Care of library heritage is often only meaningful in historic settings and all too often librarians are at the mercy of others. However, care of collections is interpreted in a variety of ways by different librarians. In University teaching support libraries in particular, there has existed a not uncommon tendency to believe that care of collections doesn't really apply to them. Of course, most are proud to ensure that their materials are well presented, but when questions are asked about aspects of handling procedures for example, some prefer to fall back on the argument that in fact replacement prevents the need for what might be considered 'onerous' levels of care.

It is true that, if a preservation policy is intended to ensure continued access to material for readers, replacement of some material may be the cheapest and most practical method of preserving access to the information needed (or not, as the case maybe). However, financial resources in any publicly funded University are always finite, and there is always justification for encouraging staff and users to do what they can to prolong the life of material. A protective ethos simply means therefore that we try not to squander resources, we value our library assets and we err on the side of care rather than complacency.

The reasons for doing this are not only for those set out above, but also because no library is an island, especially in a network like OULS for example. The attitude readers take towards collections and services in one library can often be carried into other libraries. Students using a teaching support library that is poorly maintained, and with collections that have not been well cared for,

may well treat the permanent retention collections in a nearby research library in the same manner. Equally, theft and defacement of stock can be as much a headache for the lending library as for the research library.

## 2 *The best use of skills and resources*

This objective can be interpreted widely but in this context the most important reference is to staff. Staff members devoted to conservation and care are always in a small minority in a large library system and often their role has been narrowly prescribed. There has for a long time been a presumption that conservation involves solely the repair of damaged material. In the library sector this narrow role has been openly and consistently promoted through the widespread promulgation of the use of the term preservation to mean everything to do with the care of collections including remediation, and conservation to mean solely the remedial methods. A serious review of this definition is long overdue, not least as it is not subscribed to by other parts of the conservation and heritage sector.

‘Preservation’ is not something we do; it is something we try to achieve. Those many things we do that are not involved directly with the remediation of damaged material are better described as ‘preventative conservation’ or care of collections, terms used commonly in much of the conservation community. For many years the conservation profession as a whole has not only been taught to undertake this wider activity as a *sine qua non*, but has actually defined the standards and provided the solutions necessary to achieve sustainable use and preservation of materials through preventative and ‘interventive’ care. If library services are genuinely to achieve long term sustainability of their collections, the skills and knowledge of the conservation profession, in short supply at present, must be used wisely. This can be undertaken in three ways, a theme common to all being training.

The first is to allow conservators to shoulder an equal responsibility for decisions about the care of collections, instead of being simply the servants of those for whom collection care is an activity frequently eclipsed by the pressures of providing services to readers. To make this culture change effective, conservators whose activities have been restricted to bench work in spite of their wider knowledge, should begin to undertake the assessment and planning of all aspects of care whether delivered by themselves or by others. If

necessary they should have their preventative training refreshed to ensure that they have the most up-to-date knowledge and tools at their disposal. In addition, some conservators making this transition may need to be prepared to learn new communication skills to plan and to convey effectively the needs of collections to their librarian colleagues.

The second involves a changing understanding of conservators as teachers and allies. When skills and financial resources are in short supply, those with knowledge should ideally cascade their knowledge in an informed and planned manner. Library teams can be helped to deliver better levels of care for their collections by having the support of a conservator who can assist with identifying problems and solutions and who can train staff in current best practice for environmental and building management, handling and surrogacy, and in simple repair for non-permanent material. This in turn leads to a greater level of self-sufficiency in libraries. The accredited professional conservator can be relied upon to keep knowledge current and to convey best practice periodically, freeing the librarian from the pressure of continuous horizon scanning, at risk of failing to maintain optimum standards of care.

Some will say that the above is an easy observation to make in a library service with conservation staff, and that for a small library with no direct provision and scant resources, freelance conservation expertise can be difficult to obtain. This is undoubtedly true, but the issue for the UK library community is how it perceives the role and functions of conservators. There continues nationally to be a notion that conservators only provide expensive repairs to specialist material. This demonstrates a weak understanding of how conservators operate (especially in the private sector) and of what conservators themselves define as their occupational functions. Most will offer advice, often free at first visit, and most can demonstrate that a small investment in planning guidance has the potential to release funds for wider conservation projects.

In a large institution such as OULS, with many library sites or departments, conservators can be allocated individually to these sites, as well as operating centrally. This allocation of expertise, now underway at OULS, should ensure that all library services have additional professional support for a wide range of care functions including the assessment of their ongoing needs. Recent findings from the National Preservation Office’s

Preservation Assessment Surveys have confirmed that so many libraries have yet to undertake the most basic preventative measures including environmental monitoring and emergency planning. Experience shows also that many more have not yet undertaken any form of needs assessment survey. This lack of essential planning means that libraries are unable to provide systematic evidence of their needs and thus prevents them from being eligible for extra resources. Provision of benchmark assessment and survey evidence for library needs is assisting OULS to justify allocation of conservation resources in a targeted manner, subject to agreed priorities, instead of haphazard and uneconomic spending, or more likely, lack of resource provision. Exploiting the expertise of conservators in assessing needs, planning solutions and guiding staff is making optimum use of resources and will pay dividends in the future.

The third way of making best use of skills involves a changing concept of staffing for conservation (and which might equally be applicable to other functions). A large conservation service cannot sustain a rigid staff structure where employees are recruited to narrow job roles with no prospect of career progression. There needs to be a presumption of development and mobility, with flexible job roles that allow staff to learn a range of functions and to have their development recognised. Specialist skills and knowledge are important, but unless these are shared and cascaded, the inevitable turnover of staff, especially those at junior levels, results in skills shortages and low productivity. At a time when book conservation as a skill is becoming more and more scarce, the role of conservation services as training centres for future generations of conservators is of increasing importance. To make such a change requires that library authorities are enlightened and willing to accommodate this shift in emphasis of the purpose of their conservation functions.

Healthy, sustainable institutions are those that foster a diversity of knowledge and perspective, managed through clear strategic goals, and which have a culture that values the enhancement of skills and learning. This applies equally to conservation services as to the highest levels of management, where a tendency to continue to view a single professional group as the only pool from which leaders can be drawn ensures that any new ways of doing things will inevitably become the obsolete practices of an ageing culture that has recruited in its own image. For those larger library services in the UK with old cultures, it may

be beneficial if conservation departments take a lead in developing modern resource management since the improvements will not only benefit the standards of collection care but may even influence the departments around them.

### *3 Raising the profile of the library as 'archive' for written heritage*

The library sector is beset by a dilemma that shows no signs of being resolved. A large part of it exists solely for the purpose of information conveyance. The issues of asset protection aside, the expectation of government and users that access to information is paramount places pressure on librarians to avoid talking about the 'H' word: heritage, or worse, the 'C' words: culture and conservation. The formation of the Museums Libraries and Archives Council for England & Wales has arguably failed as an attempt to bring these domains together. Librarians, and to a lesser extent archivists, find themselves unable to buy in to the culture concept, collectively preferring to view their function primarily as information scientists, with cultural heritage responsibility being only an adjunct.

This continues to be a fundamental issue for UK library conservation. While museums and archives have begun to succeed in couching their collection care needs in modern long-term accessibility terms, and to find ways of celebrating and exploiting the resource-raising potential of cultural heritage, libraries in the education sector especially find it hard not to subjugate their heritage perpetuation role for fear of being told that this function is counter to readers' needs. It is not. Indeed, by exposing and making best use of heritage resources, these can add value to the scope of choices for readers. However, to do this requires courage to present heritage materials in this way. It also requires resources, but these will not be achieved by dodging the subject and indeed are in some respects easier to get externally, when the aim is to make these collections accessible, than are similar external funds for modern library information provision. The real problem lies with the lack of time and commitment that librarians have at their disposal to assess the potential and needs of special collections and to convert this information into bids for additional support. As above, one answer is to delegate this to conservators and empower them to advocate the value of heritage collections, but for some libraries this delegation can itself involve a culture change.

4 *Maximise the use of preventative measures for whole collections as well as remedial conservation of single items*

This is another culture change issue, but one that the library sector has embraced quite widely. To it should be added 'maximise the economies of scale of undertaking large scale remedial conservation projects' as well preventative measures and item treatment. The Bodleian had for a long time focussed its conservation on item-by-item treatment for treasures and only under the OULS mantle begun to undertake collection-level preventative measures to any significant degree. Equally, the years of rather exclusive specialist treatment work had been at the expense of repairing the many thousands of damaged books in reading rooms and special collections. Major boxing programmes for the latter have begun at least to tidy up the general conditions in storage of, for example, eighteenth and nineteenth century printed books with boards off and broken corners, though this damage will take longer to address where it proves necessary. The change needed was for problems to be assessed at a collection level, and large-scale solutions proposed, rather than chipping away at the mountain and choosing the choicest jewels to work on.

In the past, significance and demand have been the most prevalent criteria for determining what conservation programmes should be carried out. These are still important factors in decision-making, but vulnerability should be the key criterion, especially when there are competing needs, because it incorporates significance and demand in its assessment, and places them alongside nature and condition. Inevitably the political needs of an institution should also have a place in this process, so that projects that provide quick wins for the institution in successfully advocating for its resources are placed high alongside the immediate needs of problem material. Nevertheless there are problems that will not wait another generation, such as large quantities of decaying acetate photographs and badly acidified newspapers. These 'cross-collection', material-based problems are on the increase as the rapid changes to production technologies in the nineteenth and twentieth century come to plague us in the twenty first.

Research about the thermodynamic changes to materials and likely resolutions are invariably undertaken within the wider conservation sector and must increasingly influence decisions about conservation priorities in libraries. Indeed, there

is a growing need for larger conservation services to devote a proportion of time to research and analysis that will provide improved tools for conservation and help improve the effects of targeted collection care measures. By using a project-management approach to planning and delivering large-scale works to collections, the resultant economies of scale mean that resources can be devoted to this research, especially when undertaken in collaboration with other major libraries. The current trend in this between the UK legal deposit libraries and the National Archives will have an important impact on our national capacity to deliver effective preservation.

The most efficient conservation programmes are those that take a single set of problems common to several collections, or sometimes a large collection with a consistent range of problems on a large scale, and deal with these systematically within a defined period of time. These need not happen one at a time in the larger institutions, a number can be operating concurrently, and they can occur while smaller-scale ad hoc emergency work is undertaken on demand. The key is assessing and identifying a specific vulnerable class of material and comparing this with others to identify that which is most pressing. Having done so, a proportionate level of resource is devoted to resolving this large-scale problem, thereby lifting the condition of a significant section of a library's holdings.

An important feature of the success of such large-scale projects is the inclusion of surrogacy as an option for ensuring future access to material. The use of surrogacy as a means of protecting vulnerable material is still not as widespread and effective as it might be. There are still institutions that view the production of copies as solely being for the purpose of making income, not as a key means of providing a systematic source of surrogate material. The emergence of easy and cheap digital imaging has, in some instances, actually reduced the use of surrogacy production for preservation purposes. Even major digitisation projects are openly described as not having preservation value, because it is feared that the possible non-sustainability of the digital copy means they cannot promise that the original will not have to be copied again in the future. Project managers also fear that the project will not be supported if they refer to anything other than the accessibility benefits. They miss an opportunity of adding value to their own promotion.

It is a simple truth that the single most consistent and prevalent form of decay of library materials is caused by use. There is nothing wrong with this, printed books exist to be used and most should be considered expendable in the long run, even if treated with care while they are in use. Only a minority in existence will need long-term preservation, along with unique, archival materials. For this minority, the existence of a surrogate is one of the most significant factors for its potential longevity. The existence of a surrogate does not mean that the original will not be needed for consultation from time to time, and it most certainly can mean that an item may be in more demand once exposed on the web, for example, than it had before, and it may well have to be copied more than once. But the use of a surrogate in favour of the original on most or many occasions will prolong the life of the original, and if common sense is used in limiting access to an original for those few users who cannot get what they need from the surrogate alone, this longevity can be increased significantly.

It is another simple truth that the majority of users can get what they want from an electronic book or journal by viewing it electronically. This surrogacy lifts items and collections out of direct use and is one of the simplest and most effective preventative conservation measures. The issue here is not whether surrogacy is an effective preservation tool; it is the fact that the easiest way of producing surrogates (digitisation) is not widely valued for this specific purpose. Looking ahead, it is quite likely that the majority of printed material, and a great deal of manuscript, will be available electronically within the next 30 years. The original material will need to be maintained and cared for, and the occasional demand for selected items will need some form of provision. But it may be the case that the predominance of usage as the principal cause of decay will become a thing of the past, leaving the more manageable problems of thermodynamic, hygroscopic and biological decay. The more we do now to make this possible the better and we should openly espouse the preservation benefit of all forms of surrogacy, not least because there are formats that will not survive into the future and only a preservation surrogate will ensure that the information they hold can be preserved. But even getting the library community to talk about the value of digitisation as preservation surrogacy is proving quite difficult, probably because their attention is drawn by the big task of getting a digital object management infrastructure for born-digital material in particular. Meanwhile,

opportunities for prolonging the life of vulnerable material are being missed.

## **CONCLUSION**

The really big issues in conservation, as in any other human endeavour, are about people and organisational cultures. Solutions and resources exist that would overcome many of the technical challenges faced by libraries today, but where and when they are applied is dependent upon our ability to prove a need and to get our priorities higher up the funding agenda. There is a trend, slow but visible, of libraries making better use of the knowledge and expertise of conservation professionals, and delegating and empowering, in line with modern management models. One of the great strengths of conservators is the alliance of their creative thinking and problem solving skills with their dedication to the cause of conservation. Harnessing this strength for corporate reasons will have the largest and most sustainable effect on the long-term accessibility of our collections.



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# LibQUAL+ in the UK and Ireland: three years' findings and experience



Selena Lock  
*Research & Development  
Officer,  
Cranfield University  
(Shrivenham)*  
Tel: 01793 785561  
E-mail: s.a.lock@cranfield.ac.uk



J. Stephen Town  
*Director of Information Services,  
Cranfield University  
(Shrivenham)*  
Tel: 01793 785481  
E-mail: j.s.town@cranfield.ac.uk

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## INTRODUCTION

This article gives an overview of the SCONUL LibQUAL+ participation, presents some of the overall results of the 2003-5 SCONUL cohorts, and describes some feedback from participants and the lessons learnt from the process.

Academic libraries in the UK had been involved for more than a decade in drawing on data from 'designed' surveys. Some of these developed from general satisfaction surveys on a range of university activities within which there would be some questions on library services. These were often initiated as exit questionnaires for students, as UK universities responded to the wider quality movement in the late 1980s and early 1990s and began to see students as customers.

These general satisfaction surveys could provide data on satisfaction levels, but usually without context, conversation, or comparison (other than with trends from previous years). Academic libraries in the UK quickly recognised that a higher level of designed survey would provide more useful data to create agendas for action, and to identify the priorities of users, in addition to indications of satisfaction with existing services. In the early 1990s a number of university libra-

ries started to engage with the company Priority Research, who offered a tailored means of collecting views from users via focus groups, developing these into a forced-choice priority survey, resulting in a local detailed assessment of ranked user priorities for library service improvement.

Because there has been a reasonable history of satisfaction surveys in the UK, SCONUL's Advisory Committee on Performance Improvement (now the Working Group on Performance Improvement) felt it needed to develop a product which libraries could draw on and use. And so the SCONUL satisfaction survey has been available as a basic standard product for libraries in the UK to use for some time.

Chris West, the Secretary of the SCONUL Working Group on Performance Improvement, undertook a survey of survey methods used in the UK in 2004. Twenty-seven respondents were using the standard SCONUL Satisfaction Survey, and 18 libraries at that time used LibQUAL+. This reflected only the first year of UK participation, and we know now that 43 UK and Irish institutions have taken up LibQUAL+ across the three years.

## LIBQUAL+ IN THE UK

From the outset the UK and Irish engagement with LibQUAL+ has been through SCONUL with the Working Group on Performance Improvement undertaking the leadership and coordinating role. This approach was also agreed and supported by CURL (the Consortium of Research Libraries).

Following discussions with ARL (the Association of Research Libraries [USA and Canada]), the first year of UK involvement was in 2003 when 20 UK higher education institutions participated. In 2004 17 Irish and UK higher education institutions participated and a further cohort of 17 participated in 2005. Because some institutions repeated across these years the total number of institutions taking part so far from the UK and Ireland is 43. This represents an involvement in LibQUAL+ of about one third of UK university level institutions (based on a Universities UK membership of 121).

The potential sample covered by LibQUAL+ in relation to the overall UK higher education enterprise is therefore considerable. To 2004 a fifth of UK institutions had been involved, and by 2005 this had risen to one third. To 2005 this represented the potential to capture the views of nearly three quarters of a million students and implying

a judgment on over a third of the total higher education library expenditure in the UK.

Since 2003 the UK LibQUAL+ return has continued to rise, with an increase in responses of 45%. LibQUAL+ as a whole has seen a decrease in responses since 2003, subsequently the UK now accounts for 16% of the LibQUAL+ responses received.

In 2003 LibQUAL+ contained 25 core questions which were categorised by four dimensions of Library Service quality: Access to Information (questions on, for example, availability of journals, electronic information and opening hours); Affect of Service (questions concerning the effectiveness of library staff); Library as Place (questions on the physical environment); and Personal Control (questions concerning the ease with which information can be found, e.g. effectiveness of access tools, web-sites etc.). In 2004 the Access to Information and Personal Control dimensions merged into the Information Control dimension and 22 core questions measured the three dimensions.

The overall results for SCONUL in 2005 show that performance is a little above the minimum in Affect of Service and some problems of performance below the minimum in Information Control and Library as Place.

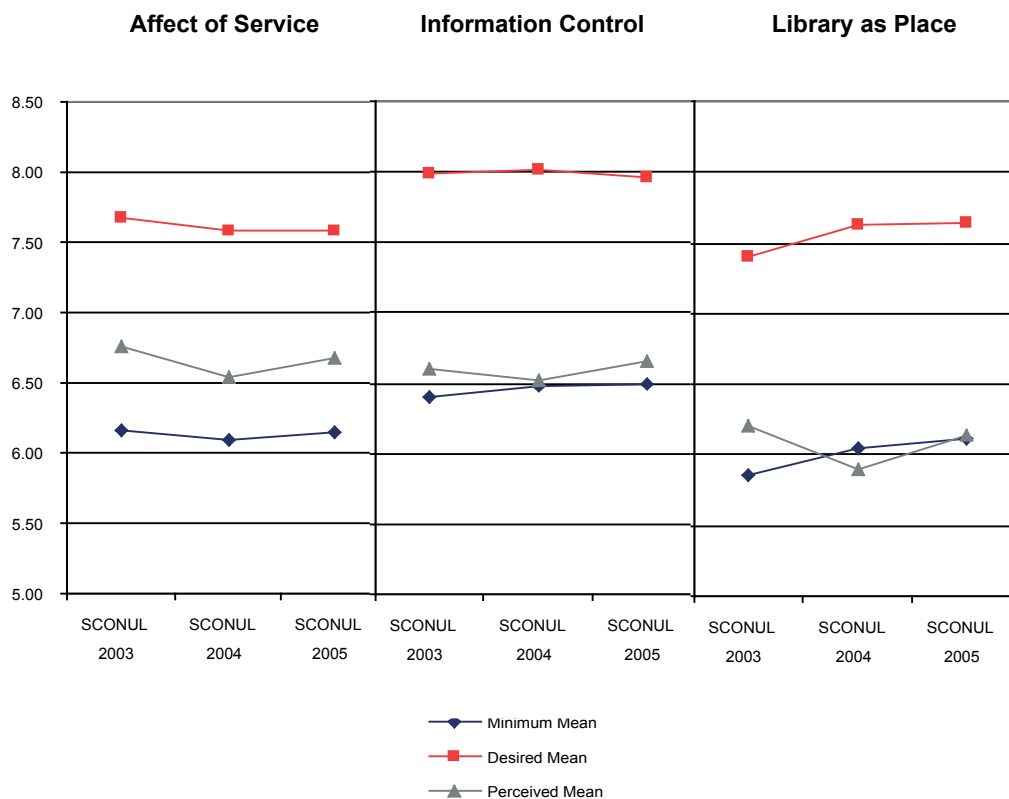
There is a marked difference between the results for 2003 and the subsequent years, and one without obvious immediate explanation. Library as Place is the dimension which suggests more research is needed to understand the variation across the three years, and the particularly good results in the 2003 cohort.

Consistently across all years the ability of libraries to deliver printed materials that staff and students require for their work, and the print or electronic journal collection provision has scored below users' minimum expectations in the UK.

Graph 1 shows the change in the dimensions over the three years LibQUAL+ has been running in the UK. The Information Control data has been calculated to take into account the merging of the dimensions between 2003 and 2004.

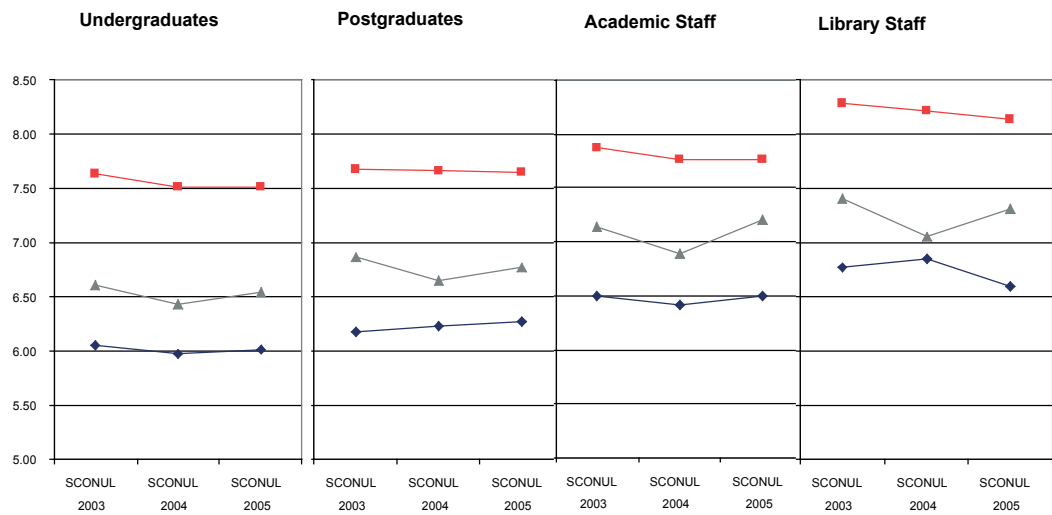
For all three dimensions there was a decrease in perceptions in 2004. Library as Place is the only dimension to see a steady increase in users' expectations over the three years, Information Control expectations have remained fairly stable and Affect of Service has seen a decline in users' expectations.

Graph 1: Overall results for each dimension from SCONUL



Graph 2 shows the Affect of Service dimension broken down by user group for the three years.

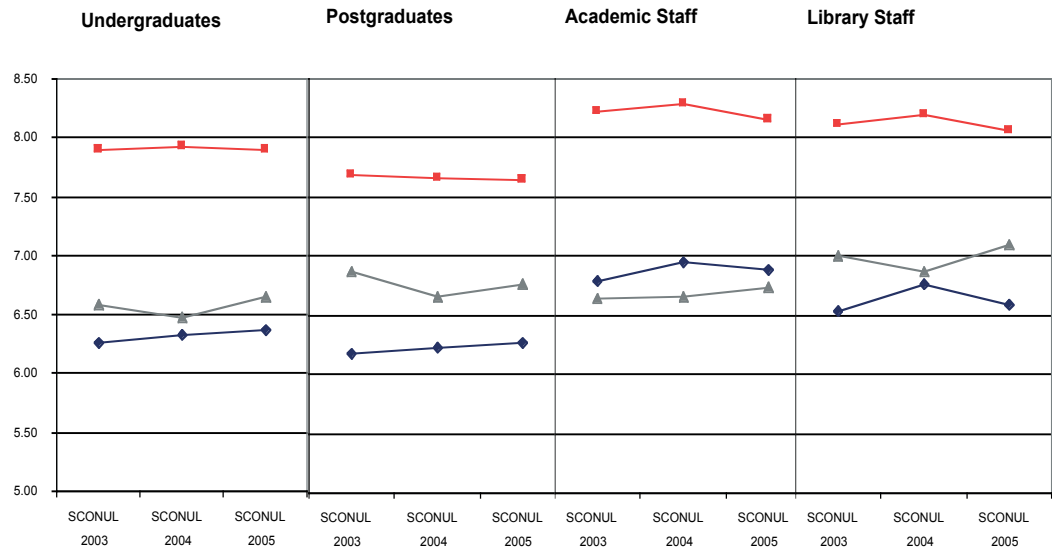
Graph 2: Affect of Service results by user group



Expectations increase progressively from the undergraduates through to the library staff members, with the library staff having the highest desired expectations. Perceptions appear to increase in line with expectations across the user groups.

Graph 3 shows the Information Control dimension broken down by user group for the three years.

Graph 3: Information Control results by user group.

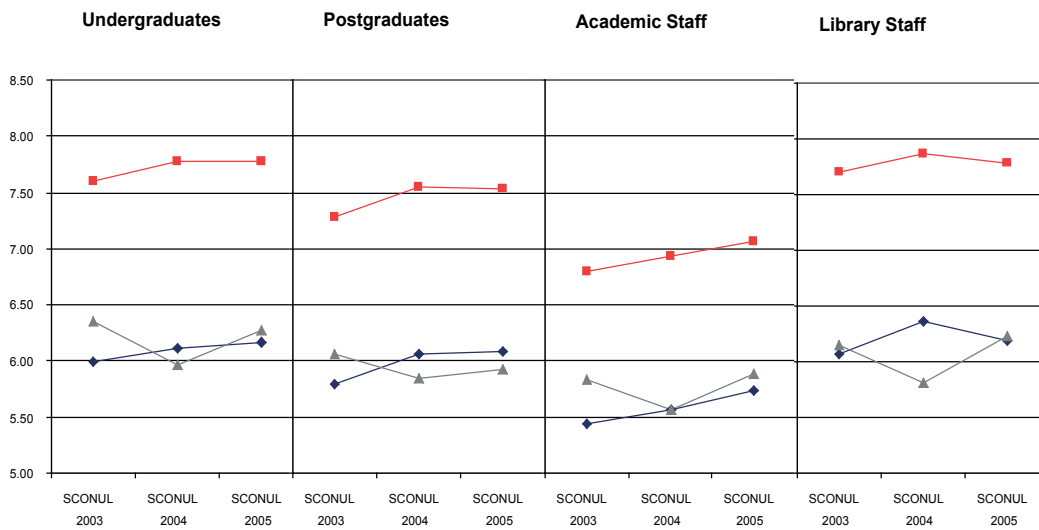


Postgraduates appear to have the lowest expectations in this dimension and are the most satisfied with a smaller superiority gap. Academic staff are clearly the least satisfied with their perceived level of performance never exceeding their minimum expectations. They also have the highest expectations of the Information Control dimension. Library staff have the highest perceptions of the level of service provided in this dimension, which

could indicate a gap in the level of awareness of resources amongst the other user groups.

Graph 4 shows the Library as Place dimension broken down by user group for the three years.

Graph 4: Library as Place results by user group



Although expectations are growing in this dimension across the majority of user groups, it is not viewed as important as the other two dimensions – especially for academic staff. This is not unusual as questions relating to space for group study may not be as applicable to academic staff as it may be to undergraduates. Library as Place has the most dramatic differences across the years, which could be attributed to the difference in libraries taking part over the different years. The other two dimensions remain fairly consistent despite the difference in cohorts, however due to the nature of Library as Place the impact of the different participants has more impact.

#### FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

Participants from the 2005 SCONUL cohort were asked to provide feedback on their experience with LibQUAL+ survey. Different reasons for using LibQUAL+ were presented, with the most predominant being the opportunity for benchmarking and the analysis of the results being conducted by LibQUAL+ on behalf of the institution. The majority of participants found the LibQUAL+ process straightforward requiring limited staff time to administer. The issues that did take time were in obtaining email addresses and demographic data about their local population, and publicising the survey locally. The survey results were as expected at the majority of participating institutions, the detailed level of results highlighted new opportunities for improvement at some

institutions as the survey goes into more depth than other tools previously used.

Institutions reported changes they had made on the back of their results which included lobbying for more funds to improve the environment, resources or PCs. One institution reported that they were able to improve the PC facilities by presenting their results to the computing department as evidence of a need to increase provision. The free-text comments gleaned from survey participants provide specific comments to the library about areas of concern or praise. One institution reported that on the back of these comments direct (and prompt) action was taken to re-introduce a feature which had been removed from their web site shortly before undertaking LibQUAL+.

Institutions which first participated in 2003 and again in 2005 have all commented on the improvements to the tool and the process. One major positive improvement has been seen as the ability for institutions to tailor the subject discipline categories to suit their local context, enabling further analysis of the results to be produced by academic area.

Most of the participants concluded that they were likely to participate in a LibQUAL+ survey again, as the benchmarking data was considered to be of high value, and the managed and serviced process represented very good value for money. Those who have participated would like to see

other institutions follow suit in order to improve the benchmarking possibilities.

SCONUL's Working Group on Performance Improvement (WGPI) is encouraging and organising a 2006 consortium of SCONUL members for the LibQUAL+ survey. This is being coordinated by Stephen Town of Cranfield University on behalf of WGPI. Those wishing to participate should contact him directly at [j.s.town@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:j.s.town@cranfield.ac.uk) to indicate interest as soon as possible.

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# Developing an emergency control plan for Oxford University Libraries

Kristie Short-Traxler  
*Preventive Conservator /Contract  
Emergency Planner for Oxford University  
Library Services,  
Conservation and Collections Care  
Department, Bodleian Library,  
Oxford University  
Tel: 01865 287117  
E-mail: [kristie.short-traxler@ouls.ox.ac.uk](mailto:kristie.short-traxler@ouls.ox.ac.uk)*

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The University of Oxford's many libraries contain one of the largest and most diverse collections of material for the support of teaching and research of higher education in the United Kingdom. The core of the university's libraries together form Oxford University Library Services (OULS) and contain more than 10 million volumes with additions to the stock daily. A large portion of the library stock will be preserved in perpetuity and a significant percentage of the legal deposit intake forms a part of the national printed archive.

The conservation and collection care service (CCCS) is one of the new functional services of OULS and supports the work of all current 38 libraries. The service is implementing a new preservation strategy to ensure that collections are available for library users now and in the future. One of these programmes is the CCCS emergency-planning project. During 2004-05 this project aims to develop and improve emergency plans for the OULS libraries and produce a workable written plan. The project's other main objective is to identify and describe short-term and ongoing staff training needs. This includes a program for training core staff responsible for responding to emergencies both in and out of hours as well as a general training program for all staff.

Prior to this planning year, the OULS libraries did not have a centrally co-ordinated and codified plan but did have routine arrangements in place for response to emergencies such as fire and flood. Additionally, guidance for treatment of collections and service continuity is also available on the OULS Conservation and Collections Care web pages. Historically, attempts to draw together a fully comprehensive and codified plan have been slow due to limited centrally co-ordinated mechanisms for information gathering, training and support for emergency response. The project goal for the planning year is to expand on the arrangements and policies already in place, identify any areas for improvement and finally, codify the plan.

Because of the size and scope of the OULS libraries, the emergency planning project is focused, in the first instance, on the main library of the university, the Bodleian. The Bodleian consists of four separate and historic buildings located in a central position in the city centre. The written plan will be used as a template to introduce emergency planning to the other OULS libraries.

#### **PURPOSE OF A WRITTEN EMERGENCY PLAN**

There are several reasons for maintaining a written plan, rather than relying on a general shared agreement and understanding. Firstly, equipping the library with a written emergency response and collection salvage plan demonstrates the library's commitment to responsible management and protection of organisational assets. OULS has an obligation to protect and provide for its students, faculty, staff and visitors in the event of a major interruption of its mission and operation. Further, OULS recognises that these obligations extend to a responsibility for each library within the service to be able to meet its individual obligations. These include the ability to provide the services expected of them and to carry out functions critical to the mission of Oxford University should an event occur which interrupts the normal course of operations. Failure to have an adequate emergency control plan could lead to avoidable injury or loss of life, financial emergency, failure of research projects, and delays in completing other mission critical activities.

A written plan also ensures that staff responsible for action have all the necessary information and are using the same information. In large organisations such as OULS, a written plan will better inform staff whose responsibilities are peripheral to the main emergency response and collection salvage effort and will help all staff to think

clearly and work systematically in high stress emergency situations.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMERGENCY PLANNING AT OULS**

Emergency planning involves planning for the safety and recovery of people, buildings and collections. As such, it is a large and difficult task that cannot be accomplished by one individual in isolation. Although one person is usually set with the task of writing the plan itself, there must always be a group in charge of developing the plan. The size of the planning team will depend on the organisation's operations, requirements and resources. Usually involving a group of people is best because:

- it encourages participation and gets more people invested in the process
- it increases the amount of time and energy participants are able and willing to give
- it enhances the visibility and stature of the planning process
- and it provides for a broad perspective on the issues.

In addition to engendering support and visibility for the plan, the scope of the planning process necessitates involvement from individuals across OULS and the university if it is to be successful. Project oversight for the OULS emergency planning project is provided by a project management team, led by the head of conservation and collections care. In addition, library staff with responsibility for and experience in managing emergency response for the central Bodleian site make up an implementation team which is led by the holder of the emergency planning post.

#### **SUCCESSFUL EMERGENCY PLANNING: THE FOUR STAGES**

Service continuity plans are a common feature in modern organisations and many address the steps to take once an emergency or disaster has happened. Whilst service continuity is vital to the emergency planning process, it does not constitute the whole of an emergency control plan. If emergency planning is to be proactive and not merely reactive, it should include the following four stages:

##### *Preventive*

This stage includes establishing risk assessments to ascertain the dangers to the building and its collections. It is also important to determine the vulnerability of the objects within the collections. What types of materials are included? Are they

susceptible to certain types of damage? How and where are the collections stored? Are any artefacts stored directly on the floor where they could be damaged by leaks or flooding? Are materials stored under or near water sources? Many preventive procedures can be written into the daily maintenance procedures of an organisation. For example, an analysis of day to day security and housekeeping procedures will highlight if they expose collections to the dangers of theft, vandalism, or insect infestation.

It is also important at this stage to identify the organisation's administrative vulnerabilities. Are the collections insured? Are there complete and accurate inventories with duplicates stored at another site? Have collection priorities been set? In other words, do you know which collections should be salvaged first in the event of fire, water, or other emergency? Do you have a back-up priority list if you cannot reach the highest-priority objects due to building damage or the nature of the emergency?

#### *Preparedness*

This stage includes taking measures to mitigate the risks outlined in the preventive stage and their impact on the buildings and the collections. These questions and implementing their solutions can seem overwhelming but only by addressing them can an organisation grasp and prepare for the significant risks that it faces. Research into other library risk mitigation efforts show that many improvements are not made due to the fact that they will be cost and time consuming to already tight budgets. But preservation costs money to save money; it requires an initial investment in building features and systems to increase protection and reduce deterioration. The library's return on its investment comes as cost avoidance in the years that follow: fewer losses and longer service life.

Historically, one of the areas in this stage to be frequently ignored is priority salvage lists. All libraries should list, in order of priority, materials that should be salvaged first. The importance of prioritising library assets lies in the possible misapplication of resources during emergency recovery. Evaluation of material assets will be based on the broad and subjective criteria of irreplaceability and value. Criteria for determining value usually includes considering one or more of the following: historic value; scientific or research value; monetary value; and administrative value. In many cases, consideration of monetary value may be deemed inapplicable to cultural materials.

Nonetheless, monetary value has an important bearing on the practicality of replacing damaged or destroyed assets and thus must be included in relative evaluations of the library's property. Evaluation will classify the library's contents into at least three broad priority categories:

- Highest Security / Priority 1: Items that are irreplaceable and their loss would be catastrophic
- Medium Security / Priority 2: Items that are important but replaceable at serious cost / time to the library
- Low Security / Priority 3: Items that are easily replaced.

Insurance is another area of emergency preparedness that if overlooked, will undermine the entire plan. A perfect response and salvage mechanism is a waste of time if any damage to the collections and buildings is not adequately provided for in the insurance agreement. Organisations are realising the benefit in engaging a loss adjuster (a representative of the library's insurance carrier) in the preparation of the emergency control plan. In addition to providing specific instructions and procedures to follow in the event of a claim, this can lower premiums for collection insurance coverage. Additionally, reviewing insurance coverage with the insurance carrier before an emergency strikes will enable staff to know what steps can be taken immediately in response to the incident without jeopardising coverage.

A trained organisation is a prepared organisation. Training enables the library and the staff to be fully prepared for the response and recovery stages of emergency. A training program may include any combination(s) of the following types of sessions:

- Orientation and education sessions – these are regularly scheduled discussion sessions to provide information, answer questions and identify needs and concerns.
- Tabletop exercise – Those responsible for emergency management meet in a conference room setting to discuss their responsibilities and how they would react to emergency scenarios. This is a cost-effective and efficient way to identify areas of overlap and confusion before conducting more demanding training activities.
- Walk-through drill – Those responsible for emergency management actually perform their emergency response functions. This

activity generally involves more people and is more thorough than a tabletop exercise.

- Functional drills – These drills test specific functions such as medical response, emergency notifications, warning and communications procedures and equipment, though not necessarily at the same time. Personnel are asked to evaluate the systems and identify problem areas.
- Evacuation drill – Personnel walk the evacuation route to a designated area where procedures for accounting for all personnel are tested. Participants are asked to make notes as they go along of what might become a hazard during an emergency, e.g., stairways cluttered with debris, smoke in the hallways. Plans are modified accordingly.
- Full-scale exercise – A real-life emergency situation is simulated as closely as possible. This exercise involves emergency management personnel, employees, and community response organisations.

### *Response*

This stage includes specific response procedures to follow during opening hours and also out of hours. These procedures include alerting the library's chain of command, local emergency services and other relevant response services. The roles and responsibilities of staff members should be clear so as to avoid confusion and/or duplication of efforts. This section should also address the initial assessment of the emergency situation.

### *Recovery*

The recovery stage deals with the long-term effects of the incident whilst trying to maintain an acceptable level of service. Priorities for the continued provision of service must be set locally, but may include the following:

- alternate accommodation for staff and / or collections
- administrative and financial functions
- salvage of undamaged collections
- conservation of damaged collections
- restoration of the affected area
- filing insurance claims
- counselling for staff.

All damages to the affected area must be assessed and the appropriate salvage response enacted. Because emergencies cannot be predicted, it is almost impossible to plan an exact salvage response but it is possible to prepare by working out a general response for small, medium and large scale incidents. For small to medium

responses, dedicated and trained staff should be available and training must include health and safety concerns for staff working in an emergency site. For large scale emergencies where a significant portion of the collections are affected, it may be necessary to rely on outside specialists and sources of advice. The emergency control plan should have well researched contacts for this purpose and also discuss scenarios with the specialist firm.

### **PLANNING ONLY TO FAIL ... IS A WRITTEN PLAN ENOUGH?**

Codifying or having a published written emergency plan is just part of the planning process. A written plan is useless without the procedure and training to back it up. Many plans have failed at the planning stage or lose impetus for want of organisational support. The main reason for failure is lack of awareness: plans do not work if they remain on a shelf. People make plans work, by being familiar with their contents. For a plan to be effective it is necessary that all staff know their own responsibility, are aware of others' responsibilities and communicate with each other.

It must be stressed that keeping up with the preparedness aspects of an emergency plan is crucial to its success. It is essential that the library remain committed to the plan. It is easy to label tasks 'difficult' and push them aside. Others tasks may be less difficult but take up precious time and so become neglected, such as the holding of regular evacuations or training scenarios.

Another reason plans fail is the inability to predict the nature of emergencies: each emergency is unique. To enable staff to adapt the written emergency plan to a specific situation and to become familiar with working together it is useful to stage mock emergencies on a regular basis. It is impossible to cover all eventualities in the written plan and staging of mock emergencies provides a practical method of testing the plan. If an emergency results in total destruction of a library or archive, having an emergency plan will not assist in the recovery of the collection. It will however serve a useful purpose in that staff will have had to face the prospect of an emergency and will be able to cope better with the reality than they would have been able to without any planning or training.

The results of failure could be reflected in any one or all of the three essential library areas: people, building and collections. If staff are not informed of developments during the 'after' phase, when they may have to work in an uncomfortable



environment, they will become discontented: grievances, illness and absenteeism will increase. If the building, its services and facilities are not returned to an operational level the organisation will not be able to function. If the collections are not salvaged and returned to circulation or made available for use there will be a reduction and perhaps even a loss of library services. Money will be needed to replace lost collections. If the organisation's records are destroyed it will not operate effectively for some time.

Having prepared an emergency plan, it is important to revise it frequently and to ensure that all staff are familiar with its contents. One of the best methods of maintaining staff awareness is to hold regular training sessions, including full drills. As mentioned previously the preventive procedures can usually be incorporated into the regular maintenance program of the library. It is the preparedness activities which tend to be ignored and these are the ones which are vital in coping with a real emergency.

Training for effective emergency planning is targeted at two broad groups within an organisation, the general staff and those staff responsible for emergency management. The goal of general training includes informing all staff on the control plan's objectives and their individual roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency. This training can be held in conjunction with other library and staff development training. The second group of training programs is targeted at those responsible for emergency management as they will need a higher level of training than the rest of the staff.

#### **CONTENTS OF THE OULS EMERGENCY CONTROL PLAN**

A standard specific emergency plan does not exist; it must be tailored to the organisation for which it is written. The OULS emergency control plan is currently eight months into the planning process and a great deal of the plan is specifically tailored to meet the needs of OULS libraries and to take into consideration the changes in structure and planned future building projects. Because we cannot print the current draft of the OULS plan in its entirety, some of its key elements have been included here:

##### *A clear chain of command*

OULS are in the process of adopting an emergency management structure that will enable a quick and organised response to any minor and major incidents that may occur. The management

structure consists of two teams, the emergency response team (ERT) and the emergency management team (EMT). Their specific roles and responsibilities are the foundation to the OULS emergency control plan.

The emergency response team is library specific and works in conjunction with the area affected by the problem condition to restore services and provide assistance at the local level. In many cases, the personnel comprising these support teams will have as their normal responsibility the provision of these support services. This team would be called upon in operating hours as the first point of contact for minor threats to the library, its contents and/or its staff (such as a fire or water leak). The central Bodleian emergency response team has been identified and will be used as a template for other OULS libraries to create their own teams.

The emergency management team is an OULS-wide team in that in the event of an emergency affecting any OULS library or its resources, the team will respond in accordance with the plan and will initiate specific actions for recovery. The EMT comprises of senior managers from OULS and its primary role is to provide departmental level support services to the library's emergency response teams.

It is important to note that Oxford University has prepared an emergency crisis management team, devised to provide support services to university departments in order to enable the affected department to respond to a major emergency in an effective, organised and co-ordinated manner. References are made in the OULS emergency control plan to the university crisis management team where appropriate. Members of library staff should be aware of the existence of the university's emergency team and plan and that the OULS plan is designed to co-ordinate with the university's own emergency plan.

##### *Emergency notification procedures*

The plan includes procedures for how and when to notify local emergency services such as the police and fire brigade, OULS emergency management, and library supervisors of affected staff. These instructions are implemented into the training programme for all staff.

With the formal adoption of the roles of the emergency management and response teams, OULS is working toward establishing an effective emergency communication network. Another way that OULS is achieving this goal is through

working with university telecommunications to implement an auto-attendant emergency contact phone system to enable any member of OULS staff to access the correct individuals in the event of an emergency. This system is in the testing phase and targeted for completion in November 2005.

#### *Collections salvage priority list*

The central Bodleian Library already practises this approach to some degree as the collections are stored in various areas dependent upon the level of security offered by that area. The result is that highest security areas contain the items that would be earmarked as priority one in salvage lists. The emergency plan is targeted to contain floor plans and off site storage areas with the location of high priority materials for salvage marked on the plan.

#### *Location maps*

In addition to salvage priority maps, the emergency control plan will include other quick visual references to the location of fire detection and suppression equipment, evacuation routes, plant and mechanical equipment and location of emergency supplies. These quick references will expedite response provided by the library and by local emergency services. Help has been enlisted from those who have the expertise and necessary software to produce the new plans.

#### *A trained salvage response*

OULS has a duty conservator service for responding to minor emergencies such as non-contaminated water leaks that affect small numbers of books, backed-up by a small freezer facility at Osney Mead. In addition, the university has a consortium service contract with the emergency response facility Harwell Drying and Restoration Service, which includes OULS. Specific emergency response for damaged collections is one of the specialised courses targeted for the duty conservators in the emergency training program. In addition, the written control plan and emergency training program will offer steps for any member of staff to take in salvaging various materials until conservation advice can be obtained.

#### *Training programme*

The importance of training for staff in emergency planning is a thread that cannot be emphasised enough. OULS administration recognises that any attempt to foster an emergency control culture necessitates the release of resources, both time and money, particularly in the area of training.

As a direct result, OULS are currently devising a training program, intended to begin late this year for identified groups and individuals with responsibilities for management, response and recovery issues in an emergency. The program utilises internal resources through OULS staff development as well as external emergency planning and salvage organisations. Harwell Drying and Restoration Services will provide some of the core training needs and Conservation and Collections Care conservators are marked to continue the training internally for other members of staff.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Emergencies and any resultant disasters are probably the greatest single cause of attrition to the world's cultural and natural heritage. The primary goal of emergency planning is to avoid and/or minimise the impact of an incident on the organisation's assets. Advanced planning is the key to that goal. Some emergencies cannot be prevented but they can be planned for. How effectively damage is limited in an emergency situation depends to a very great extent upon the thoroughness of the planning effort. Much has been accomplished in this planning year and the launch of the OULS emergency control plan in November will provide a useful training tool for all OULS libraries to identify their vulnerabilities; point out how some of them can be mitigated and others prepared for; detail ways of responding to and controlling emergencies that do occur; and provide a guide to recovery.

However, all of the preparation that goes into the written OULS plan will be useless if the document remains on a shelf and is not reviewed and updated on a regular basis. This control plan should be an organic entity. It is a living document that should evolve with the changes to OULS and the risks around it. Another factor to be borne in mind is that the larger the organisation, the more staff it has, the greater is the effort required to coordinate the activities of all staff involved in an emergency plan. The key element in avoiding failure for the OULS plan is for all staff, especially senior staff, to remain committed to the plan.

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## Shelving systems for libraries

Richard Ryan  
Managing Director, Forster Ecospace  
Tel: 01869 278002  
E-mail: [sales@ecospace.co.uk](mailto:sales@ecospace.co.uk)  
<http://www.ecospace.co.uk>

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Writing an article on shelving for librarians and learning resource centre managers in higher education smacks of 'teaching granny how to suck eggs'. Nevertheless, when making a selection of both shelving type and choice of supplier, the following may be useful. All libraries and learning resource centres differ from each other. At the same time, in terms of storage for books and other materials, they all face similar problems. There are seldom occasions when space is not an issue of some kind and, since books generally take up the greatest volume of space, the method of storage is always worthy of consideration.

Traditionally, open access shelving has been of the static variety which naturally takes up more space because of the gangways. In those areas which are accessed frequently, it certainly makes sense to retain fixed gangways. However, in areas where there is less frequent use, mobile shelving units minimise gangway requirements. Modern drive mechanisms facilitate the movement of the shelving stacks which can be easily secured in place temporarily to ensure the safety of individual users.



Loading and structural floor strength is always going to be a factor – particularly in relation to mobile shelving. But because it is now possible to lay a floor on top of the structural floor and locate the rails for mobile shelving in this overfloor, cut-

ting chases in the structural floor slab to take the rails for mobile shelving is no longer an essential. On a large mobile installation it is to be preferred but the use of the overfloor means that static shelving can be converted to mobile shelving without disruptive building works. It also means that mobile shelving installed on an overfloor can be easily relocated without requiring repairs to the structural floor.

Price always has a bearing in relation to shelving installations and this can be affected not only by the choice between static and mobile shelving but also by the type of shelving. Shelving which uses slotted side frames into which shelf clips are inserted is less expensive than 'bracket' type library shelving where the shelf brackets are an integral part of the shelf.



Frequency of shelf adjustment is an important factor in determining choice but both shelving with frames and 'bracket' library shelving can be provided in either static and mobile form. Accessories such as dividers, drawers, pull out shelves and filing cradles combined with shelves of varying depths and widths give very considerable storage versatility. Newspapers and journals can be displayed on 'lift-up' sloping shelves with further copies being stored on the horizontal shelf behind the lift-up unit. Canopy labelling and signage simplify identification and security. Protection from dust can be achieved by fitting doors to shelving bays. Security can also be achieved in mobile shelving by fitting locks to one or more of the stacks so that, when in the 'closed' position, access to any unauthorised individual can be denied.

Environmental conditions can also be satisfied by high quality steel shelving. The material itself – when finished with a polyester powder coating – is inert and poses no risk to the materials stored. If additional ventilation for collections is required, this can be achieved by fitting perforated steel end panels and upright frames with perforated infill

panels to shelving stacks to enhance air flow. This is a particularly relevant factor if storage areas are required to meet BS5454:2000 recommendations for archival storage.

Experience has shown that discussing planning and budgeting at an early stage of any project with at least one potential supplier can be extremely beneficial to a library. The project architects and designers should also be a part of those discussions which should provide a very clear idea at a preliminary stage whether there will not only be sufficient space for housing the collection but also whether the likely cost will fall within the allocated budget.

In short, good quality adjustable steel shelving lends itself to many different storage needs in libraries and learning resource centres and, in its mobile form, offers considerable saving in space. It is also important for purchasers to look carefully at the supplier as well as the products being offered to ensure that there is the technical expertise to advise on both the best solution for the particular application and, if appropriate, to carry out any necessary surveys and prepare suitable proposals. Additionally, purchasers should satisfy themselves that the selected supplier has the capability to carry out the installation satisfactorily and that the future supply of additional components that may be required is ensured. If all these conditions are met, then the final result will be an efficient and effective one.



*Richard Ryan is Managing Director of Forster Ecospace, which specialises in supplying and installing mobile, static and library shelving systems in academic libraries and archives. Forster Ecospace has been a regular sponsor of SCONUL critical building visit conferences and has recently become a corporate member of SCONUL.*

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# Cafés in UK higher education libraries

Christopher West  
Director of Library & Information Services,  
University of Wales Swansea  
Tel: 01792-295174  
E-mail: c.m.west@swansea.ac.uk

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A brief survey of cafés in British and Irish higher education libraries was carried out in December 2004, via the SCONUL e-mail list. A total of twenty-four relevant responses were received: a summary of the responses follows. The total responses to some of the questions don't necessarily match the total number of respondents, as some of the categories are rather blurred. As ever, I'm extremely grateful to colleagues for their time and advice on this topic.

## NUMBER OF CAFÉS OR FOOD OUTLETS

Of the twenty-four responses:

22 had cafes/ food outlets  
1 was planned for later this academic year  
1 respondent didn't have a café

Obviously, this was a rather self-selecting sample, but we can summarise from this that there are at least twenty-two cafés or similar currently in SCONUL libraries. This, and the comments listed below, suggests that the provision of some form of café outlet is a growing trend in UK higher education libraries.

## TYPE OF OUTLET

In retrospect, my attempt at categorisation into either a learning café (along the lines of Glasgow Caledonian) or a more traditional coffee shop/ food outlet wasn't as helpful as it could have been. A number of respondents had something in between these two categories and the advent of wireless networks has made traditional facilities more hospitable to ICT:

*Learning cafés:* At least four, with a few more planned and some more halfway between a traditional and learning café.

*Traditional coffee shop:* 10

*Other* (usually somewhere in between, with cafés often next to PC facilities): 6

*Vending only unstaffed facilities:* 6

## COMMENTS:

- *A café serving food , snacks, limited hot food but also with wireless access*
- *The cafés in our LRCs are café study areas where students can choose to work over a cup of coffee / sandwich or just in a different environment. PCs set up same as for rest of LRC - i.e. access to everything*

## RANGE OF DRINKS AND FOOD PROVIDED

A fairly common pattern emerged, with most cafés providing hot drinks, cold drinks (one or two didn't allow canned drinks) and cold food. A minority provided hot snacks; the provision of hot meals was rare and was confined to pasta meals and so on. This probably reflects the space constraints in libraries and information centres, with minimal space for food preparation. It could also reflect concerns over intrusive cooking smells associated with some hot food preparation.

## OPENING HOURS

As might be expected, these varied considerably, but almost everywhere matched standard 9am to 5pm on weekdays, with several offering evening staffed opening until 7pm, or later. Only a few seemed to offer a staffed service at weekends, despite the recognised need for this.

## VENDING

As well as those libraries which had a vending only facility, most other cafés offered some vending outside of staffed café hours.

## CAFÉ OWNERSHIP

Owned by institution: 13

Owned by an external company / franchise: 6

The form of institutional ownership varied considerably, including being run by the library itself, business services, university catering, students union and separate companies within the university.

## EXAMPLES OF HIGHER EDUCATION LIBRARY CAFÉS

Noteworthy examples of higher education library cafés at the time of the survey were:

Glasgow Caledonian:

<http://www.realcaledonian.ac.uk/learningcafe.html>

KCL:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/iss/sites/chancery/cateringchancery.html>

Cambridge:

<http://www.unicen.cam.ac.uk/catering/ul.html>

UNN:

<http://www.unn.ac.uk/central/isd/lcafe.htm>

The Glasgow Caledonian learning café is a particularly interesting example, which has influenced the design of the new learning centre at the university.

## SELECTED COMMENTS

As ever, these are the valuable element of any survey of this type:

- *No regrets. Lots of positives - especially as an alternative study environment.*
- *We have a good café - and about to have a £20.4M learning centre built along the same lines.*
- *One of the best things I've done - I get an excellent cappuccino every morning, and a student web poll last year voted it the best place to eat on campus. So, very good PR for the Library. The space is currently too small for serious turnover - the servery only accommodates one member of staff, for example, and all drinks (at my insistence) are made fresh via proper equipment - so service can take time. No regrets, except that it isn't big enough!*
- *No regrets. The café has worked well over the years, even the VC comes in to get a sandwich most weeks! It is a very popular service both with staff and students*
- *Too early to tell, but users do like it. One of our top requirements for new building.*

- *The students are very appreciative of the facility, although it's fairly small.*
- *Importance of interdisciplinarity, particularly for non-termtimes - i.e. a place which academics and researchers can get together in or out of termtime*
- *I think they're great, would give more space if I could and make it a learning café - students work in there all the time. We're about to make it and other café areas into wireless network outlets across the campus. I avoided machines because of the need to keep someone cleaning up used cups etc. out of hours.*

## WHY HAVE A LIBRARY CAFÉ?

This survey shows a clear trend towards the provision of café facilities in UK higher education libraries, along with a positive reaction from customers and library staff to these facilities. Not every trend and fashion is a good thing, as can be seen in the displays of bulbous stomachs under skimpy tops in any high street. The rationale for providing a café has been outlined in the selected comments above and includes the trend towards more informal and flexible modes of learning, longer opening hours and, perhaps most importantly, evident popularity with library customers. Perhaps three factors underlie this trend:

- *The way our students learn has changed. There is far more emphasis on group or paired learning and learning outputs are now much more varied than the traditional essay. This means that our learning areas have to become more flexible to accommodate different learning styles, whilst not completely losing some more traditional silent study areas. As we have often faced in higher education libraries, a growing diversity in customer needs has lead to a classic market segmentation in demand.*
- *An increasing proportion of information delivered to our customers is in electronic format. Allied to this, there is a more recent trend away from fixed PC provision to mobile technology. This will continue to impact on the design of our learning spaces and, again, suggests that the traditional monastic silent study area is a minority requirement.*
- *Broader social trends, which have been highlighted in the work of the urban sociologist*

Ray Oldenburg. Oldenburg has developed the concept of the need for a 'third place', which allows a supportive environment for social interaction and community development away from the home and from work<sup>1</sup>. This has become increasingly important as an increasing number of alternatives to home and work like shopping malls and theme parks have become commodified and structured. Libraries have increasingly sought to be welcoming and relaxed spaces where our customer communities can engage with resources in a social context. The 'third place' concept, as both technology and our customers become more diverse and informal, seems an apt model for higher education libraries and information centres, with learning cafés contributing to this.

#### SUMMARY

- Cafés and food outlets are now relatively common in British and Irish higher education libraries, with some innovative examples
- Go for a larger café if you have the opportunity
- The learning café concept is popular and fits in with trends towards flexible learning, longer opening hours and more time constraints on students
- Most outlets provide hot and cold drinks, cold food but a very limited range of hot food
- You need to have some control over quality of food and drink provided
- You also need to have control over the space, furniture and ambience of the café

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## Life in the fast lane – well nearly: 24 hour opening pilot at the University of Liverpool, Harold Cohen Library



Laura Oldham  
User Services Manager,  
University of Liverpool,  
Harold Cohen Library  
Tel: 0151 794 5413  
E-mail: loldham@liv.ac.uk

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#### BACKGROUND TO 24 HOUR OPENING

It is with the utmost respect that I make the following observation: the University of Liverpool Library has fared well on its reputation for excellent quality of service, its dedicated and knowledgeable staff, and its traditional approach. We were, if you like, the Volvo of library services. By this I mean, exceptionally well made, offering an excellent track record for reliability and safety, and with many satisfied, loyal customers. We were, above all, risk free. This may have made us content to take the long view in the inside lane as we watched glossier, faster models flash past and, if some of us were a little envious of the speed of change and development of some other library services, others wondered sagely where it would all end. However it seems times may be changing as, without compromising our well earned reputation, the University of Liverpool Library service notches up a gear. As Maureen Wade<sup>1</sup> acknowledged in her recent article on 24 hour opening of the library at the LSE, we may not be the first university library, but for once we are amongst the first of Russell Group universities to take the plunge on 24 hour opening.



The issue of extending library opening is not new and, indeed, the library service has improved access to the main libraries on an annual basis. But 24 hour opening was a different matter. It had been raised by the Guild of Students with the university for a number of years, but up until fairly recently it had always been met with what David Winstanly, Guild President 2004/05, described, in a recent interview, as a 'disingenuous view from the university that anyone would want to use such a service, and that it was not really what a Russell Group university did'. So what has prompted this change of approach?

Phil Sykes arrived at the University of Liverpool in 2004, to take up the post of University Librarian having successfully introduced 24 hour opening at the University of Huddersfield Library. Working with the senior management team on the Library Development Plan 2005/09, he ensured that the extension of library opening hours became just one of a number of innovative developments to the library service. Staff here have benefited greatly from his recent experiences but, more importantly, were enthused with a refreshing 'can do' attitude that meant confidence was running high as we set about planning and executing the project.

Following a successful bid to the university information services committee, funding was provided for a six-week 24 hour opening pilot at one of the two main university libraries.

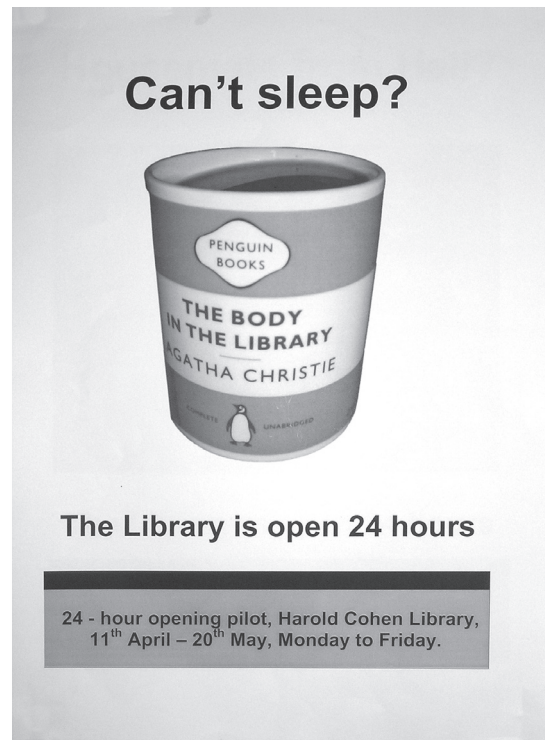
The decision was made to open the Harold Cohen Library which supports students studying engineering, medicine, veterinary science and science. As the smaller of the two main libraries, the decision to open the Harold Cohen was based upon its marginally higher computer quota and its superior network of security cameras in the nine PC centres.

#### **MARKETING THE PILOT**

Confirmation of funding for the pilot enabled the newly formed library marketing group to start work on their first project. A group of staff from various divisions in the library came together, full of enthusiasm after attending Antony Brewerton's marketing course, 'Marketing gives your library wings', and it certainly helped us get off the ground.

Our challenge was to sell the extended access to the Harold Cohen Library to students across the campus, including those that would not normally have used that library. After an initial brain storm,

where we found ourselves to be surprisingly creative, a poster campaign was launched across campus including academic departments, departmental libraries, the Guild and the sports centre. We managed to get articles successfully published in the Liverpool Student newspaper, *Precinct*, a newsletter produced by the university corporate communications unit, and in the *Liverpool Daily Post*.



#### **THE PILOT**

The pilot began on Monday 11 April. The library was open 24 hours a day, five days a week for six weeks. This period was chosen to coincide with end of year assessment. The building was staffed throughout the whole six week period by two building managers from the Building and Estates Department who worked between 10pm and 8am daily.

During the six-week pilot period 7003 visits to the library were recorded between 10 pm and 8am, the hours that the library would normally have been closed. Of this number 87% of recorded visits were by undergraduate students and 13% by taught postgraduate and research postgraduates. The analysis of weekly entries by hour illustrated, predictably, that most students entered the building between 10 pm and 1am; however a steady number of students continued to visit the building throughout the night. For the duration of the pilot the pattern of student visits remained consistent; numbers climbed steadily during the week from Monday and peaked on Thursday



nights, Friday remained the quietest day of the week. The first night of the pilot saw 101 visits, and this reached a peak of 476 visits on one night during the fifth week of the pilot.

Statistical data was collected from the Sentry access system. In addition, building managers were asked to undertake a head count each evening at midnight. The purpose of this was to ascertain where students were working in the library, whether they were in PC centres or making use of the reading rooms and book stacks.

#### STUDENT SURVEY

Four weeks into the pilot, members of the marketing group hosted a midnight coffee event for the students. This was ostensibly to publicise the pilot, but also to bribe students to complete the student survey on 24 hour opening. We settled on coffee at midnight due to the ever more desperate requests for caffeine that were received each night in the comments box! Representatives of the marketing group gathered at midnight in the library foyer to serve tea, coffee and biscuits to a large number of very grateful students. Forms were personally handed out to students and 248 (83%) were returned. The event was hugely successful and certainly generated not only a great deal of good will from the students, but also imbued those of us who took part with a deep sense of job satisfaction. The survey itself was intended to provide a snapshot of the student profile on a given night, as well as to providing a means to collect more detailed comments from the students on the extended opening. We were keen to ascertain how successful we had been at luring in the many arts, humanities, social sciences and law students normally served by the Sydney Jones Library and the Law Library.

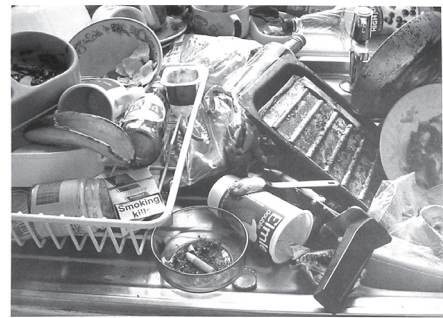


Breakdown by faculty demonstrated that we had some success in attracting students from across the campus. Science students (34%) made up the largest group using the library, followed by medicine (23%), engineering (18%), management school (9%), social and environmental studies (5%), arts (5%), and vet science (6%). Students were asked specifically about the purpose of their visit to the library. Contrary to initial expectations

fewer students than anticipated said they had visited the library to use a PC. Overall 49% students said they were using the library to study generally, 23% indicated they were there to use books and journals and 28% to make use of the computer facilities.

The nightly headcount undertaken by building managers not only recorded numbers of students but noted where they were working within the library, i.e. reading room, stack or PC centre. These statistics support the information provided by the survey: across the six week pilot most students in the building were working in the reading rooms and stacks rather than in PC centres. This may be explained by the fact that as the pilot ran up to and during the end of year assessment period, students were revising rather than completing assignments on a PC.

## Housemate from Hell?



### The Library is open 24 hours

24-hour opening pilot, Harold Cohen Library,  
11<sup>th</sup> April – 20<sup>th</sup> May, Monday to Friday.

#### PROBLEMS

Inevitably a number of issues raised from the student survey needed to be addressed, but there were no particular surprises given the limitations of a sixty seven year old building nor any insurmountable problems presented for the future.

Eating and drinking was rife and resulted in a build up of litter around the building and there seemed to be a general lack of toilet rolls, which quite rightly generated a number of complaints. It was not possible to organise additional cleaning during the pilot and we prevailed upon the good will of a number of staff to ease the situation. Building managers emptied waste bins and

undertook some general clearing of areas, and a couple of library staff volunteered to check paper supplies in the toilets and take action if necessary before leaving for the day. Cleaning is routinely undertaken during the night at the Harold Cohen Library, when the building would be closed. There were reports from cleaners that they had difficulty in carrying out their duties effectively for the duration of the pilot. The quality of the lighting in some of the older areas of the library proved to be an issue. The environment of the main reading room, normally light and airy by day, was reported to be 'dim and dismal' for students studying in the dead of night. Other comments included requests for the Sydney Jones Library to be open 24 hours and to extend week-end opening hours

### CONCLUSIONS

The pilot project was a great success and hugely appreciated by the student body. There were many comments of support for 24 hour opening and praise for the staff working throughout the night. The worries over safety and security that had been much discussed failed to emerge and there were no reported security incidents.

The pilot not only successfully raised the profile of the library within the student body and the university, but gave us the opportunity to put into practice one of the most significant objectives of the 2005/09 plan. The funding allocated by the university for the pilot project demonstrated support and recognition at a strategic level of the importance of extending library opening. The pilot also gave the library the opportunity to work cooperatively with colleagues from Buildings and Estates, the Computing Services Division and with officers from the Liverpool Guild of Students.

### THE FUTURE

Following the success of the pilot, funding for a 24 hour term time service in both the main libraries has been secured and plans to offer the service throughout the new academic year are well under way.

For Guild President David Winstanly, opening the library 24 hours a day is just the beginning. The Guild hopes to use the success of the 24 hour pilot and the subsequent commitment to extend opening across the year, to push for development of the 24 hour campus. They see at first hand the sense of community in the student body and acknowledge that the library plays a focal part in

this. By extending opening hours we have provided a continual environment conducive to study, a view that was reflected in some of the comments received:

*'Thank you for opening 24 hours! It's been a brilliant help as studying at home did not work and the library atmosphere and ethos is great to work in'.*

*'It is excellent and provides the opportunity for later study in a work focused environment. Gives the flexibility to use books and computers late and in your own time. Please keep it open 24 hours even if only during exam time'.*

*'It should be kept open 24/7 for the whole year because we really need it to complete course work and for research and studying. There is no other better place to study than at the library. At home we have a lot of interfering factors which are a hindrance to our studying like TV, chatting with house mates and most important the inviting comfortable bed'.*

The Guild is keen to see the development of social spaces for students which are not focused around the consumption of alcohol. In particular a service such as a 24 hour internet café which could provide hot drinks and refreshments throughout the night.

The pressure will now be on for other university services to follow suit and to extend access to services and support the 24 hour environment. This could include extending support for computer networks and those using them, and also improvements to transport for students to enable them to make use of the facilities on the university campus throughout the night.

For the library this is just the beginning as we look forward to planning not only the expansion of key library services, but also of buildings with a multi million pound extension to the Sydney Jones Library due for completion in 2008.

We're gearing up for life in the fast lane.

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# Fines: a survey of SCONUL libraries



Graeme Barber  
Library Services Manager,  
Southampton Solent University  
Tel: 023 8031 9867  
E-mail: Graeme.barber@solent.ac.uk

Up until October 2004 I had always worked in higher education libraries that had a policy of charging users for overdue items. When I joined Southampton Solent University (then Southampton Institute) it was refreshing to discover that, very much against the normal trend, the library did not charge fines but instead used a different system to enforce borrowing regulations. Since October 1994 the library has used a penalty points system that charges students points for overdue books at the following rates:

Short loans – 75 points on day one, 150 on day two, 200 on day three

One week loans – 3 points a day

Three week loans – 1 point a day.

Once 200 penalty points are accrued students are banned from borrowing items for 30 days, though mitigating circumstance, such as sickness, are taken into account. Students can still have access to library materials on a reference basis and access to electronic resources is unaffected. Such points schemes appear to be rare in the UK, with –as far as I am aware– only the University of Southampton and the University of Stirling using a similar scheme. However, penalty points (often called demerit points) appear to be quite commonly used in Australian libraries such as the University of South Australia and Flinders University.

Quite soon after I took up the post it became apparent that –as with other libraries– there was pressure to maximise the income generated. Accordingly I began the task of reviewing our policy on fines. The process began by reviewing the literature but it was surprising to discover how little there was of a recent nature with much of it dating back to the 1980s and hardly any that applied to UK higher education libraries.

This lack of recent evidence led me to decide it would be useful to explore the current situation

on fines/penalty points systems. A questionnaire was designed and then sent out via lis-sconul in late February 2005. Responses were collected by March with the analysis being completed by April. In total 54 librarians responded to the survey and the questions and responses follow.

## 1. Do you charge fines? 54 librarians responded to this questions

YES = 96.3% (52)      NO = 3.7% (2)

The use of fines is normal practice in libraries. Only two libraries (3.7%) out of 54 used a penalty points systems rather than monetary fines.

### 1.1 Fine charges:

Ordinary loans per day - 54 responded

Short loans per hour - 47 responded

No Charge	= 5.5% (3)	10p	= 2.1% (1)
5p	= 1.8% (1)	15p	= 4.3% (2)
10p	= 50% (27)	20p	= 2.1% (1)
15p	= 3.7% (2)	25p	= 2.1% (1)
20p	= 16.6% (9)	30p	= 6.5% (3)
25p	= 7.4% (4)	40p	= 6.5% (3)
30p	= 3.7% (2)	50p	= 45.6% (21)
40p	= 1.8% (1)	60p	= 2.1% (1)
50p	= 7.4% (4)	75p	= 2.1% (1)
50 Euros	= 1.8% (1)	£1	= 21.7% (10)

Per day - £1.50 = 2.19% (1)

£2.00 = 2.19% (1)

Fine rates for normal loans ranged between 5p and 50p a day. The commonest charge levied was 10p a day (50%). Short loan fines ranged between 10p to £1 an hour with daily charges of £1.50 to £2 being cited too. The majority of libraries charged fines of 50p an hour (45.6%) for short loans.

### 1.2 Do you charge different rates for different users (e.g. part-time students)?

52 responded

YES = 1.9% (1)      NO = 98.1% (51)

Most libraries (98.1%) do not charge different rates for different types of user e.g. part-time students. However, one respondent stated that research students were exempt from such charges.

### 1.3 Do you fine staff? 52 responded

YES = 88.5% (46) NO = 11.5% (6)

The majority of libraries fine staff as well as students. Only 11.5% imposed no charge on staff.

### 1.4 What income do you derive from fines? If you are able to please indicate how much income you raise per annum: 47 responded

0 – 10,000	=	17%	(8)
10 – 20,000	=	2.1%	(1)
20 – 30,000	=	10.7%	(5)
30 – 40,000	=	4.2%	(2)
40 – 50,000	=	2.1%	(1)
50 – 60,000	=	4.2%	(2)
60 – 70,000	=	10.6%	(5)
Over 70,000	=	48.9%	(23)

Income raised from fines ranged from under £10,000 to over £70,000 with one library disclosing a figure of £128,000 per annum. Nearly half (48.9%) of libraries stated they raised over £70,000 a year.

### 1.5 Do these funds go straight into library budget? 52 responded

YES = 80.8% (42) NO = 19.2% (10)

Most libraries seemed to view the income generated from fines as being important to their budgets. Income generated from fines was in many cases included as part of an income generation target.

There were some differences in where the funds went to, though the majority went directly into the library budget. Some libraries said the money collected went to general university funds or direct to finance rather than the library.

The use made of money collected was commented on by a few respondents. The areas cited were:

staffing – 3  
book fund- 2  
equipment and furniture –2

One library mentioned that funds were used for capital improvements such as the development of a learning café.

### 1.6 Has the income derived from fines meant that the normal library budget has been proportionately reduced? 52 responded

YES = 26.9% (14) NO = 73.1% (38)

The majority of libraries (73.1%) stated that fine income had not meant their budgets had been proportionately reduced. 26.9% said that this income had affected their budgets and led to a reduction.

### 1.7 Please can you state how the money is collected: 52 responded

Cash payment	=	98%	(51)
Electronic	=	32.6%	(17)
Other	=	28.8%	(15)

Other methods include: Cheque payment = 28.8% (15)

Cash was the most favoured means of collecting fines with 98% favouring that method. Electronic payments are clearly becoming increasingly popular with nearly a third (32.6%) of respondents saying they took payments in that format. Other methods cited included telephone payments via finance departments and cheques, the latter method being mentioned by 28.8% of respondents. Some libraries mentioned plans to introduce more flexible payment methods including Switch payments.

### 1.8 Have you had to employ extra staff to deal with money collection?

51 responded

YES = 3.9% (2) NO = 96.1% (49)

The vast majority of respondents (96.1%) stated that they did not employ more staff to cope with money collection. One library stated that they employed 1.5 staff to collect cash and this included dealing with fines income.

### 2.0 If you answered no to question 1 (i.e. you don't charge for fines) please state what other system you use:

#### 2.1 Penalty points: 2 responded

YES = 100% (2) NO = 0% (0)

Of the two libraries using a non-fines system, both used a penalty points system.

Out of the total number of respondents only 3.7% (2) of libraries use a non-fines scheme

## 2.2 Invoice/handling fee: 16 responded

YES = 87.5% (14) NO = 12.5% (2)

Handling charges were an approach used by many libraries (87.5%). The amounts charged ranged from £2 to a maximum of £10. The most common charge was £5 used by 50% of libraries responding to this question.

## 2.3 Suspension of services: 22 responded

YES = 100% (22) NO = 0% (0)

All libraries that responded to this question used suspension of services. Once a certain level of fine is reached borrowing was normally stopped until debts were paid off, though one library mentioned that renewals were permitted but no new loans. The level at which a block on services was applied ranged between a £3 threshold up to £20. The most common blocking level quoted was £10.

Three respondents mentioned that blocks to computer accounts were also used.

## 3.0 If you had a choice would you wish to carry on with a fines system?

53 responded

YES = 94.3% (50) NO = 5.7% (3)

A clear majority (94.3%) of libraries favoured carrying on with their existing fines system. The major reasons cited were that:

- Fines work
- They help get reserved books back
- Overall book availability is improved
- The income is important

Major factors helping fines to work well were:

- Suspension of services until payment is made
- A clear and robust system
- Provision of online and phone renewals
- Consistency in applying fines but with room for discretion too due to mitigating circumstances
- Full support of the organisation e.g. from managers, Principal
- Support of students and student unions for higher fines being introduced

On the negative side the following comments were made about fines:

- They create a negative image
- Frequent conflicts to deal with
- Fines can be viewed as a hire charge and books are still not returned
- May favour richer students who can afford to keep books out and pay fee
- Academic staff can be difficult to collect fines from
- Cash handling can be problematic

One respondent stated that a non-fines system created the best relationship they had encountered between users and the library.

## 4.0 Do you see any conflicts with charging fines and current higher education issues e.g. widening participation, top-up fees? 54 responded

YES = 22.2% (12) NO = 77.8% (42)

The majority of respondents (77.8%) saw no conflict with charging fines and current higher education issues. However, some respondents felt there were some potential conflicts, though the point was forcibly made that students could avoid any debts incurred by returning items on time. It was noted that staff frequently had to make judgments on ability to pay as some students were clearly better able to afford fines. Some students had objected to paying fines on top of existing fees while one respondent said there was a small danger of student drop-outs due to debts.

*continued over...*

**5 Please indicate which of the following statements you agree/disagree with:**

<b>Monetary fines –</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
5.1 Improve book availability	92.6% (50)	3.7% (2)	3.7% (2)
5.2 Increase books being stolen/ mutilated	1.9% (1)	64.1% (34)	33.9% (18)
5.3 Lead to student debt/retention	14.8% (8)	62.9 (34)	22.2% (12)
5.4 Fine collection is time-consuming	28.3% (15)	67.9% (36)	3.7% (2)
5.5 Important for generating library income	69.8% (37)	28.3% (15)	1.8% (1)
5.6 Ensure students return items on time	88.3% (38)	9.3% (4)	2.3% (1)

Most respondents felt fines improved book availability (92.5%) while most believe that fines aided prompt book returns (88.3%). Many respondents (64.1%) believe that fines had no impact on books being stolen or mutilated. A majority of respondents (67.9%) did not feel fine collection was time consuming and also stated that fines were important for income generation (69.8%).

<b>Non-fines system (e.g. penalty schemes) –</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
5.7 More equitable system	56.7% (21)	18.9% (7)	24.3% (9)
5.8 Effective in books being returned	7.8% (3)	21.9% (8)	71% (27)
5.9 Increases books being stolen/ mutilated	5.5% (2)	22.2% (8)	72.2% (26)
5.10 Administration is time-consuming	39.4% (15)	5.2% (2)	55.2% (21)

As there was limited practical experience of non-fines system many respondents were unclear about the effectiveness of such methods. A majority (56.7%) felt that a non-fines system was more equitable. Most libraries were unsure whether such systems were more effective in getting books returned (71%) or had any impact on book mutilation and theft (72.2%). Just over half (55.2%) of respondents were unsure whether such systems were time-consuming though 39.4% felt they might be.

- The backing of college/ university management for fines is important

**CONCLUSION**

To date no decision has been made to introduce library fines at Southampton Solent but the survey reported above has provided valuable information to inform our debate. We have also begun a process of consulting with our students to seek their views on this contentious issue.

Acknowledgements: My thanks are due to the 54 librarians who responded to the survey. Thanks are also due to LIS administration staff for all their work helping to analyse the results and to Elizabeth Selby, Bob Burrell and library staff for discussions on this topic.

**6.0 Additional Comments**

Further comments included the following:

- Conflicts can occur with users – and training would be useful for dealing with such confrontations
- Some student unions provided valuable support for the use of fines
- Many libraries look favourably on extenuating circumstances and will reduce or help users pay off fines over a period
- Suspension of services until fines are paid was regarded as being crucial
- Some libraries use fines for other breaches of regulations e.g. noise, use of mobile phones
- Some libraries send out warning emails before items become overdue
- During exam time higher fines may be desirable to stop items being kept out with complete disregard for other users

# Learning and information services support for international students at the University of Hertfordshire



Helen Singer  
Faculty Information  
Consultant Business School  
and International Strategy,  
Learning and Information  
Services,  
University of Hertfordshire

Tel: 01707 285560

E-mail: [h.j.singer@herts.ac.uk](mailto:h.j.singer@herts.ac.uk)

This article looks at how I tackled a new role offering Learning and Information Services support to international students at the University of Hertfordshire.

Last summer three of our posts for information professionals were re-focused to enhance our existing successful model of named LIS faculty information consultants working in partnership with each faculty, with complementary coordination of support for widening participation, international strategy and research strategy. These changes were part of the updating of LIS strategy, to link in with the university's strategic plan 2004-2007.

I was appointed to the international strategy post in November 2004. This post also provides support for the Business School, where a high proportion of our international students study. In addition to international students in this country, the University of Hertfordshire, in common with many other universities, has arrangements with partner organisations overseas. Support for this aspect of our international strategy is also part of my remit. However, in this article I am focusing on support for international students who are studying in the UK at the University of Hertfordshire.

When preparing for my role, I found that:

- The increase in numbers of international students studying in the UK already goes back a few years. In 1999 the prime minister announced the launch of an initiative (known as the Prime Minister's Initiative) to increase international student numbers by 50,000 in higher education and 25,000 in further education by the year 2004-05. This target was achieved early.
- There are currently about 270,000 international students at British universities, who pay £1.5bn a year in fees and contribute £3bn to the economy<sup>1</sup>. A British Council report from April 2004 predicted that the number of overseas students would triple to more than 870,000 by 2020 but warned of the importance of Britain keeping its share of international students against competition from other countries, and not just English speaking countries<sup>2</sup>.
- This warning has been echoed by the latest 'Education at a glance' report produced by the OECD, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The UK's market share of international students has declined since 1998. Six years ago, the UK enrolled 16 per cent of the total number of international students on higher education courses in OECD countries – second only to the USA. By 2002, Germany had an equal share to the UK with 12 per cent of international students. Australia enrolled 10 per cent and France 9 per cent<sup>3</sup>.
- In the UK, there has recently been a reduction in numbers of international students, especially from China, partly due to the increase in fees for visa renewals. Applications from overseas students outside the EU have fallen by 5.3 per cent this year, and Chinese student applications by 25.8 per cent<sup>4</sup>.
- There has been a general globalisation of higher education beyond international students coming to the UK. The Government strategy *Putting the world into world class education* identified 3 key goals:
  - 'Equipping our children, young people and adults for life in a global society and work in a global economy
  - Engaging with our international partners to achieve their goals and ours
  - Maximising the contribution of our education and training sector and university research to overseas trade and inward investment<sup>5</sup>

- Universities UK international strategy reinforces this theme: 'it is vital that we maintain our strength in international activities as higher education becomes an increasingly globalised activity and international competition for students, staff and research funding grows.'<sup>6</sup>
- UKCOSA: the Council for International Education's survey *Broadening our horizons: international students in UK universities and colleges 2004* details the results of a survey of nearly 5000 international students in the UK and finds high levels of satisfaction with the experience of studying here. However, there are significant challenges in maintaining this position<sup>7</sup>.

### TACKLING MY NEW ROLE

Supporting large numbers of international students at our institutions poses a number of cultural, communication and integration issues for us. I welcomed the opportunity to try to address some of these issues when I took up the post. My strategy in the new role was in three parts:

#### 1 Fact finding

- to find out what colleagues at other institutions were doing to support international students
- to conduct some desk research
- to find out as much as I could about the picture at Hertfordshire
- to make the appropriate contacts at Hertfordshire

#### 2 Support for our international students

- to identify and produce relevant materials for international students
- to promote their use

#### 3 Support for our LIS staff

- to produce guidelines
- to provide staff development

### TAKING THE WORK FORWARD

#### Fact finding

I started by looking at both internal and external reference points:

*LIS support for international students at other institutions*

When I took up the post I emailed lis-link and asked if any colleagues were in similar roles. I am very grateful to all those who took the time to reply. I received nine responses; none of the respondents had full-time responsibility for international students, but for some it was a formal part of their role.

The support provided is summarised as:

- Liaison: with international office (6), induction, tours (3), input to information sent out to students before they arrive, liaison with student association (1)
- Skills sessions: were usually provided by subject specialists but some offered separate orientation sessions for international students (2)
- Support materials: glossary of library vocabulary (2), web pages or plans for web pages (3)
- Displays: for international students day (1) bespoke international students display (1)
- Social clubs (2)
- Support for students at partner institutions overseas: (3) involving technical issues, training local staff and evaluating resources, licensing issues
- Liaison point for international students at international forum (1)
- Cultural awareness training sessions for staff (3)

#### Desk research

I set about reading as much as I could find about working with international students and used the information to write some short guidelines for our own staff when dealing with international students. I found *Overseas students in higher education: issues in teaching and learning* very helpful in discussing cultural attitudes to teaching and learning, and differences in the teacher student relationship<sup>8</sup>. Our systems value debate and discussion but some cultures defer far more to the teacher and value collective harmony. Janette Ryan's book *Guide to teaching international students* is very practical with helpful checklists.<sup>9</sup>

#### *International students and the University of Hertfordshire*

In 2003-04 about 15% of the 20,000 students at Hertfordshire were international students<sup>10</sup>.

In order to obtain a clearer picture of which countries our international students are from and what they are studying, I asked our registry information and systems development unit to



run a report of statistics showing international students studying at Hertfordshire for this year, and used it to produce some charts which I circulated to our staff. The report will now be run annually. This is helpful in informing us how we can target our work to support our international students.

### *Liaison at the University of Hertfordshire*

I spent the first weeks in my new post finding out who to deal with in the university regarding international students. Liaison has mainly been with:

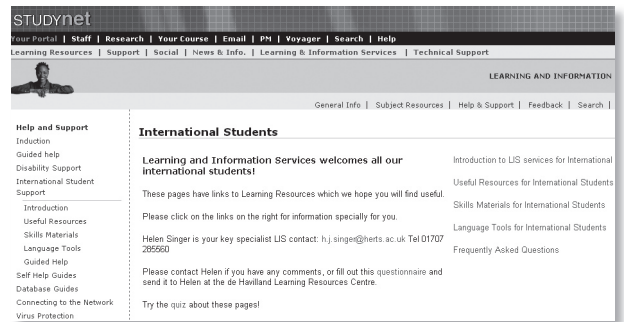
- International office
- English language teaching unit
- Organisers of the international Globalink club
- Registry
- Faculties and Schools with high numbers of international students
- Individual experts / staff
- Those teaching international students

As this is a new role, it took me a little while to find out who my main contacts were to be, but once I had established these I found staff were happy to help. Within LIS my colleagues, including my mentor, have also been extremely supportive.

#### **PUTTING SUPPORT FOR OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN PLACE**

##### *Identifying and producing relevant materials*

Having conducted my fact finding mission, I was able to identify and produce some initial support materials about LIS for our international students. I chose the university's managed learning environment, Studynet, as a key support environment. StudyNet, developed by our learning and teaching and development unit, provides a personal portal for each student, with access to all information about the university including the student's individual programme of study and targeted links to learning resources. So I decided that a priority was to implement pages on StudyNet directed specifically at international students:



These cover:

- An introduction to our services, including a pre-induction Powerpoint presentation with sound, using SMIRK software, developed here at the university (<http://smirk.herts.ac.uk/>). I also incorporated links to the help pages on StudyNet and to our LIS Guided Help facility.
- Selected useful resources and contacts, external and local – books, websites, general reference materials such as KnowUK, links to areas of the university which support international students such as the international office, English language teaching unit, the Globalink club and external organisations such as the British Council and HOST.
- Skills development materials with a glossary of key terms students would need when using Voyager, our library and resource management system, as well as more generic research terminology, and a quiz and online tutorial which I would also use with students in skills sessions
- Language tools such as international character sets, translation websites (with warnings about judicious use) and language help within MS Word

##### *Promoting engagement*

Having produced these materials, I now needed to make sure that students knew about them and could use them. I also needed to evaluate their effectiveness.

I have promoted the availability of these materials to students in a number of ways: via StudyNet itself and its news facility; through notices on our campus information screens; through our LIS helpdesks; and through other university staff and their roles in working with our international students. Our graphic designer is producing a flyer to be handed out to students in the orientation week for international students. A key point of liaison has been our International Office, both for including a welcome paragraph in the University information sent to prospective

international students and for arranging introductory sessions in orientation week.

To promote the support materials for international students to academic staff I have asked our faculty information consultants to advertise them within their faculties. As my other role involves working with the business school, I have been able to liaise with the relevant business school staff myself.

In addition I am working with the lead tutor for all the in-session English classes. I have devised a diagnostic quiz and online tutorial for these students. Those who find these difficult will be advised to attend a skills session. I also plan to run a skills session for students attending the international *Globalink* club and additional drop-in skills sessions in October.

As this will be the first start of the academic year where this support is offered there will be a need to monitor uptake of the materials and skills sessions carefully. Unlike subject specific skills sessions where liaison is with academic staff, I will be working with our International office, the student support and guidance office in the business school, the *Globalink* tutor and in-session English tutors about the content and timing of sessions. We will need to work closely together to ensure that the materials are used effectively. Once I have been in post for the full academic cycle it will be easier to reflect on how successful these strategies have been.

#### **SUPPORT FOR OUR LIS STAFF IN DEALING WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

From my desk research, it seems that issues for our staff are: cultural awareness and sensitivity; clear communication; and the importance of welcome, support, induction and skills development sessions for our students. The problems that international students encounter may arise from culture shock, the fear of asking for help, stress from living and studying abroad, and different learning and teaching styles. We can help here by avoiding the assumption that knowledge from one culture is absolute, being aware of stereotypes, encouraging an inclusive environment, and fostering an understanding and appreciation of differences so that all parties benefit.

I used this information to write two sets of guidelines, one for our information professionals, and a shorter version for frontline staff. All staff

have been alerted to these and their availability on the LIS intranet.

Staff development sessions were arranged for LIS staff, run by our English language teaching unit. These were very helpful sessions on communicating when English is not your first language. Practical exercises illustrated the need for clear communication and avoiding jargon. I also ran sessions showing our staff the StudyNet pages and materials for international students, with a quiz, and discussion of the guidelines. I was very pleased to be able to draw on the wealth of firsthand experience that our frontline staff have in dealing with international students, and welcomed their contributions. Feedback from these sessions was positive, and I plan to run refresher sessions and sessions for new staff in the future.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The past six months have been exciting. I have managed to put some initial structures in place to help LIS support international students here at Hertfordshire. I now need to undertake further development of our support measures, informed by the evaluation not only of the sessions I run with students but also more generally of the strategy I have adopted. Overall, I think the key success factor has been the importance of fostering good relations across the university with all those working with our international students and ensuring that our LIS support integrates with the wider experience of all our international students at the university.

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## It's good to talk!



Karen Jackson  
Academic Support Consultant,  
Information Services,  
University of Birmingham  
E-mail: [k.j.jackson@bham.ac.uk](mailto:k.j.jackson@bham.ac.uk)



Ann-Marie Ashby  
Academic Support Team  
Manager, Information Services,  
University of Birmingham  
Tel: 0121 4147515  
E-mail: [a.ashby@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.ashby@bham.ac.uk)

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As library and information services evolve, it becomes increasingly important that we proactively communicate with our growing range of stakeholders, and that we engage them in the debate surrounding the issues that currently face our services. The University of Birmingham joined the SCONUL / LIRG (Library and Information Research Group) Measuring Impact Initiative in July 2004<sup>1</sup>, and are using this initiative as a focus to explore and assess a range of methodologies aimed at gaining qualitative feedback from our users. A project is currently in progress, which seeks to investigate users' knowledge of and attitudes towards the development of the university's institutional repository, along with wider open archive initiatives; it also aims to clarify current practice in this area. We have collected baseline data to assess current attitudes and behaviours amongst academic staff from a range of disciplines with regard to the publishing and archiving of articles and papers, and intend to repeat the process in two to three years to assess if and how we have made an impact in this area.

### PROJECT PLANNING

As part of the second cohort of the national SCONUL / LIRG measuring impact initiative, we have drawn on the experiences of David Streatfield and Sharon Markless of Information Management Associates, who assisted with the planning stage.

An initial meeting in July 2004, with David and Sharon and all the institutions involved in the initiative, focused on the development of a sound project plan, measurable objectives and clear success criteria. Moreover, we mapped our evidence collection methods (questionnaires, telephone

interviews and focus groups in our case) to these, providing a sound basis for progressing the project. A second meeting in January 2005 was useful for sharing experiences and problem-solving with representatives from other institutions and for maintaining continued impetus for the project.

#### **QUESTIONNAIRES**

Phase One of the project involved the distribution of a questionnaire to academic staff and research postgraduates, which aimed to establish the level of awareness within the research community of the university, of the institutional repository and open access issues in general. Eighty questionnaires were returned. The results demonstrated that respondents were largely unaware of the existence of an institutional repository, and that they were also not generally aware of the issues surrounding open archiving more generally. This information was important for our collection of baseline data: however, it was of little use in providing more in-depth information about the way that academics currently publish, and the issues that they see as important, regarding the archiving of and access to their work – the kind of in depth information which we could use to inform our campaign to raise the profile of the institutional repository and to encourage academic staff to engage in the debate around open archiving.

#### **TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS**

Phase Two of the project was designed to follow up the information we had retrieved from the questionnaires, and to pursue a more in depth response to the issues we wanted to raise with our academic colleagues. We opted for a series of telephone interviews, which were designed to explore further some of the key issues around open access and publication in general with those currently involved in the process. In total we interviewed 30 people: 16 academics and 14 research postgraduates. The interviews explored three key areas:

- **Information seeking behaviour**

There was a broad consensus regarding methods of seeking information from across all interviewees: primarily they searched subscription databases, followed by Google. A significant minority regularly browsed specific journals and citations, and a small group who had set up alerts with Zetoc and other providers.

Interviewees generally found it easy to access material for their research – electronic resources made locating material straightforward, but sometimes getting the full text was problematic. There was a general reluctance, despite this, to use the inter-library loan service, or to visit other libraries. Views expressed on ILLs were concerned with delays and unreliability: ‘have delayed getting articles and made do with abstracts because it is so difficult’; ‘rarely use it, ILL is needed but try other ways of finding the article first’. Some interviewees said they would cut out the ILL process and contact authors directly for a copy of the article.

- **Publishing behaviour**

The vast majority of interviewees based their decisions about where to publish articles on the subject coverage of particular journals. There was a strong awareness of a hierarchy of importance of various journals – some talked about impact factors, others about importance or RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) ratings. Whilst this didn’t appear to directly influence decisions about where to publish, it did cause concern and several interviewees talked about aiming for more important or higher impact journals where possible: ‘x journal is a practitioner journal and ideal for getting the message out, but ranked quite lowly for RAE’; ‘it was a bad career move to send an article to X journal – the hierarchy of journals is very clear in this country – the US is much more interdisciplinary and open’. Another key issue for interviewees was the notion of communicating the results of their work to their peer group – reaching the right audience was seen as important.

Very few interviewees had experience, or had even considered, posting articles on personal or departmental websites, or on any other open archives unless it was a condition of their funding. One notable exception had used Xarchiv (an open archive of pre-prints in physics and related areas: [www.arxiv.org](http://www.arxiv.org)) extensively.

- **Opinions on eTheses, ePrints and Open Archiving**

Most interviewees were not aware of the current debate around open archives, but were generally enthusiastic about the idea of easier, more straightforward access to their own work, and that of others. There was particu-

lar enthusiasm for eThesis services – several commented on the difficulties of the current system, with comments such as ‘current access to doctoral theses is archaic and cumbersome.’ Advantages were perceived to be the ease of access to research, speed of access and, for postgraduates, the raising of their own academic profile and wider dissemination of their work.

The most significant benefit of open archiving was seen to be access to material: ‘sometimes I haven’t been able to access my supervisor’s articles’. Other general comments on the advantages of open archiving included raising the profile of the institution/department; social benefits – opening access to research to those in developing countries; and low cost of maintenance and access.

There were some concerns expressed – the issue that came up most often was that an institutional service would simply be another place to search: ‘if we already have access to the journal, what’s the point?’ Integration with other services, such as Xarchiv and Google Scholar, etc., was perceived to be a way to avoid this problem.

Other concerns were those of the ease of plagiarism and concerns about copyright: ‘what do publishers think? How does copyright/peer review work?’; and a few were concerned about potential administrative burdens on academic staff: ‘I am concerned about the complexity of the process: if the journal is widely available, is the extra workload worth it?’

## CONCLUSION

While the results themselves are interesting, but not entirely unpredictable, it was the methodology itself which was of particular interest. Using in-depth telephone interviews allowed us to gain a more detailed insight into current attitudes towards publishing and open access. Interviewing via telephone meant that the academic could be interviewed at their convenience in a familiar and comfortable environment – ensuring that they were relaxed and not inconvenienced by the process – which took between 20 and 30 minutes on average. It allowed users to express their views in depth and enabled us to get a picture from across the academic spectrum of current practice and attitude. Although it was a time consuming process, the detailed information we gained could not

have been accumulated effectively via a written survey or questionnaire.

The goodwill and interest generated by the telephone interviews was also evident. On the whole we found that academics and PhD students seemed to enjoy discussing these issues, and valued the fact that we took the time to talk to them. At Birmingham, we are considering using this methodology to consult with our academic stakeholders, and gain valuable feedback and ideas to inform a number of other proposed service enhancements.

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# Infoteach: developing an online community of practice of librarians who teach



Chris Powis  
Learning Support Co-ordinator,  
Northampton Business School Team,  
Learning Resources,  
University College  
Northampton

Tel: 01604 892229

E-mail: [chris.powis@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:chris.powis@northampton.ac.uk)

<http://www.infoteach.org>

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The library is at the heart of the learning experience in higher education. Even in the 'Google age' this statement should hold true. Whether we maintain our collections and deliver our services through a virtual or physical space the acquisition, organisation and promotion of knowledge remains central to the learning process. Although the teaching role of librarians has not always been accepted in the academic community or by our peers<sup>1</sup>, it is now the norm to find librarians delivering teaching to groups and individuals, in classrooms or online. There are many reasons for this: the dramatic increase in the amount of information available; the changes brought about by electronic delivery of information in all its forms; the rise of the skills and employability agendas; and the needs of a more diverse student population, many of whom are unused to locating and manipulating information. Librarians are also ideally placed to take a lead in exploiting the opportunities presented by e-learning and we have seen the gradual re-conceptualisation of user education into information skills/literacy. At a time when the role of those staff most identified with teaching and learning in academic libraries, the subject librarians, is at best being reappraised and at worst being made redundant, we should consider the staff training and professional development required to maintain and develop our active role in the learning process. It is the *active* integration of our practice with the learning and teaching

strategies of the institution that will enable us to progress towards information literate students and institutions.

This article will examine the opportunities for academic librarians to develop their skills in and understanding of teaching and learning. It will also introduce the Infoteach project that stems from my National Teaching Fellowship (awarded in 2004) which seeks to create a community of practice of librarians who teach.

For academic librarians to operate effectively as teachers in higher education we need to collaborate, engage and train for the role. I would define two forms of collaboration. Firstly, working with their academic colleagues, especially when working in the traditional subject librarian role within a school or faculty. Secondly, collaborating with the structures, culture and systems of their institutions. This means that the library matches the learning and teaching structure of the faculties or schools and works with the institutional model towards a common goal. At Northampton we have a library learning and teaching co-ordinator and a library learning and teaching group which produce strategies and implementation plans alongside the schools. The plans go to an institution wide committee and are open to the same scrutiny and monitoring process as the schools. It is not enough to write strategies in isolation or to simply represent the library on such committees.

Librarians need to engage fully with, and be prepared to contribute to, the development of teaching and learning across the institution. Academic librarians, and perhaps especially subject librarians, have often been reticent to join debates outside of their narrow field but we should have much to bring to discussions on subjects like student engagement or e-learning.

The final requirement for effective teaching is training. Teaching and learning should be part of any librarian's professional identity. Teaching is far more than standing in front of a classroom and all library staff who work on enquiry desks or design web pages or guides need to understand how the library, and their contribution, fits into the processes of learning and scholarship. Professional training for library and information work has been notably slow to recognise this and it is usual for newly qualified librarians to join our libraries with little experience and even less knowledge of teaching. It is important that we address this deficiency on two levels: as part of generic training in learning and teaching using

the same routes and methods as those used for new academics; and by recognising the differences in our teaching context and working with these differences. The latter mirrors the academics who develop their teaching strategies within the context of their discipline.

We must overcome a reticence to engage with pedagogy. This reluctance often manifests itself in an avoidance of the scholarly material on teaching and learning generally and in higher education specifically. The rationale given for this is often that it doesn't recognise our special situation but even if this were true –and more material is being produced on the teaching of information skills<sup>2</sup> – it should not matter. We should be reading widely on teaching and learning, and indeed contributing to the literature ourselves. The same would apply to conferences, symposia and workshops in teaching and learning. The Higher Education Academy (HEA), Staff Education Development Agency (SEDA), the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and others run excellent events at which academics from any discipline are able to find common ground in discussing pedagogy. Librarians are certainly welcome at these events but our attendance is usually limited to a few familiar faces. This externality in our practice should also embrace membership of, and engagement with, bodies like the HEA and applications for institutional and national teaching awards and grants.

Most higher education institutions will offer an HEA, or possibly SEDA, accredited qualification in teaching in higher education. Librarians are not always encouraged on to these courses but where they have been admitted they have not only reaped the benefits for their own practice but also found fresh credibility for their teaching amongst their academic colleagues. Most institutions will also operate a peer support framework for academics and academic librarians should seek to take up peer observation (including pairing with academic colleagues) and teaching mentor opportunities.

Working with academic colleagues in this way is vital not only to cement our integration into the academic culture of the institution but also for our professional development as teachers. But, just as academics will use their discipline networks to explore the teaching of their subject, we should also recognise the need to develop similar opportunities within our context. EduLib<sup>3</sup> and its spin-offs –along with the popular Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

(CILIP) courses run centrally or by special interest groups like the University, College and Research Group (UCR)– have shown an appetite for staff development in teaching for librarians. The Information and Computing Sciences Subject Centre, although not serving the teaching of information skills or information literacy as such, has some useful material and the work of the Information Literacy Group (part of CILIP's Community Services Group), SCONUL and academics such as Sheila Webber are beginning to address some of the issues in the teaching of information literacy. However, the debate still tends towards discussion of the nature and importance of information literacy rather than pedagogy.

The funding opportunity offered by my National Teaching Fellowship has allowed me to try to address this gap. The aim is to create an online community of practice (Infoteach) for librarians and information workers who teach. It will be international and cross-sectoral for we have much in common with librarians in Australia, Canada, the United States and elsewhere as well as colleagues in public and workplace libraries. The plan is for a portal with, at its heart, a Wikipedia style information resource<sup>4</sup>. This would cover the sort of pedagogical issues that concern all those involved in teaching and learning but within a library context. The Wiki software means that people can submit, add and edit entries and will allow the community to 'own' the portal. Wikis are easy to use and very low maintenance and although their nature does open the content to poor quality entries or potential abuse it is hoped that the community will act as both peer reviewer and self-regulator.

Around the central resource will be the usual portal activities. This will include book and article reviews, links to learning objects and other resources, mentoring opportunities and a discussion board. This will develop in line with the community's needs but the Wiki will remain the core. I am not looking to reproduce what already exists elsewhere but to bring together the best of theory and practice, and deliver a dynamic information base for practitioners in the issues inherent in teaching and learning development in our context.

Although not an essential component of the project, there may be an opportunity to develop an online course to supplement existing teaching qualifications.

I hope that this article will encourage more practitioners to get involved in Infoteach by adding material to the Wiki or by using the discussion board. It is live at <http://www.infoteach.org> but needs content. I would also be happy to come and talk about the project to interested parties in your institutions. Contact me on Chris.Powis@northampton.ac.uk or 01604 892229 or, better still, visit <http://www.infoteach.org>.

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## WHELF: wherefore, whereto?



Elizabeth Kensler  
WHELF's Development Officer  
and University of Wales,  
Aberystwyth  
E-mail: [eak@aber.ac.uk](mailto:eak@aber.ac.uk)



Andrew Green  
Chair of WHELF and Librarian,  
National Library of Wales  
E-mail: [ang@llgc.org.uk](mailto:ang@llgc.org.uk)

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In keeping with its collectivist traditions, Wales has for many years taken a cooperative approach to the management and provision of higher education, and national library and information services.

The main driver for collaboration between libraries in the higher education and national library sector in Wales today is the Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELF)<sup>1</sup>. WHELF began in 1993 as an informal group to exchange ideas and offer mutual support. It has since developed into a professional and action-centred body intent on devising and carrying out new initiatives in library and information service provision. This transition has been achieved without losing the friendliness and social cohesion often remarked on by guests at our meetings. We normally meet at Gregynog, the loveliest piece of real estate owned by any UK university. Gregynog's famous cellar bar serves to lubricate WHELF's social bonds (and other organs).

WHELF includes the directors of library and information services of all higher education institutions in Wales – most are converged services – and the Librarian of the National Library of Wales (NLW). It has been particularly active in the past five years in pioneering cooperative access schemes for researchers and students in Welsh academic libraries, leading successful joint project bids<sup>2</sup>, developing a very active staff development and training group<sup>3</sup>, and managing the recent HELP (Higher Education Libraries in Partnership) Project<sup>4</sup>. More recently WHELF has appointed a part-time development officer, and established a



development group to prepare business for the full membership.

The 18-month HELP project, funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), investigated and proposed future initiatives for an increased collaborative approach to library and information service provision in Wales. The resulting action plan has developed into the Virtual Academic Library for Wales (VALW) programme, which has prioritised activity in the following areas:

- Developing a cooperative library network in Wales
- Implementing collaborative services and developments
- Promoting shared access to e-services and e-resources
- Providing mutual support and opportunities for sharing good practice
- Staff development and training opportunities
- Marketing Welsh academic and national library services

The collaborative agenda for Welsh libraries has been further boosted in the past year by the establishment of a new division of the Welsh Assembly Government – CyMAL: Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales. In the few months since its creation, CyMAL has already established an ambitious agenda to develop collaborative partnerships within and between domains and its programme complements many of WHELP's aims.

Initial stages of the VALW programme include:

#### **Consortial purchase of e-resources**

In the context of work by CyMAL looking into central procurement for online reference resources for the libraries of Wales, WHELP is currently examining the potential for a consortial purchasing deal for e-books and other e-resources for higher education libraries. The feasibility of a Wales-wide approach to licensing seems favourable, with the NLW taking a lead role. WHELP is drawing upon the experience of successful working national licensing models in, amongst others, Nordic countries and New Zealand.

#### **Widening access to collections**

WHELP is investigating how to better promote academic and national library services to users in Wales. As a first step, it is investigating how to make the NLW's resources and services more accessible to its academic users through a usage survey, through seminars to academic librarians, and by promoting awareness and use of the

Library's online resources to existing and new users.

#### **Eprint repositories research**

With an objective to promote shared access to e-services and e-resources in Wales, WHELP is preparing a feasibility report on e-print repositories in Wales. It will draw upon the experiences of a consortium group of NLW, the University of Wales Aberystwyth and the University of Wales Swansea, who have recently received JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) funding to investigate linking Welsh university digital repositories with a regional repository held at the NLW; this project will look at the interaction between two different digital asset management systems, DSpace and Fedora.

#### **Reviewing need for a shared research store in Wales**

Monitoring current work, especially research by the M25 consortium of academic libraries into a shared research store for London, and the experiences of the pilot collaborative academic store for Scotland (CASS) launched in early 2004, WHELP is currently reviewing the need for a shared store of lesser-used materials for Wales.

#### **WHELP organisational changes**

WHELP's recently established development group is to implement specific programmes and activities, monitor funding opportunities and manage the WHELP development fund. It has also appointed this year a part-time development officer, Elizabeth Kensler, to undertake specific research and activities.

#### **Dissemination of cooperative initiatives in Wales**

As part of the HELP programme WHELP gathered details of existing cooperative initiatives and services in Welsh libraries. It is keeping this data updated and available via the WHELP website to inform future activities and to enable libraries to easily call upon good practice in service delivery. WHELP is promoting knowledge and use of the various extended access and borrowing schemes throughout the regions of Wales, plus examining how the cross-sectoral reciprocal borrowing scheme in north-west Wales, Linc y Gogledd, could be extended to all regions.

We hope this brief summary of current activities will be enough to show how a not particularly large collection of libraries is able to develop an action-oriented approach to collaboration, largely

on the basis of a coherent group of people sharing a common vision of the way ahead.

*Elizabeth Kensler (eak@aber.ac.uk) is WHELP's Development Officer.*

*Andrew Green (ang@llgc.org.uk) is the Chair of WHELP.*

#### REFERENCES

- 1 <http://whelf.ac.uk/>
- 2 An example is the 'Wales on the Web' directory of Welsh websites (<http://www.walesontheweb.org/>), which now also includes 'Collections Wales', a directory of printed collections in Welsh libraries, itself a WHELP initiative (<http://www.walesontheweb.org/cayw/guides/en/110>)
- 3 Namely, WHISD, a joint committee with HEWIT, WHELP's sister body for IT managers. WHISD organises an annual week-long Colloquium at Gregynog for library and ICT staffs in Welsh higher education institutions.
- 4 See <http://whelf.ac.uk/initiatives.htm> for copies of the HELP reports. The results were reported at a UK conference held in Cardiff in September 2004 (<http://www.glam.ac.uk/lrc/whelf/collaboration.php>)

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## An overview of SCURL's current activities and projects



Jill Evans  
*SCURL Service Development  
Manager, National Library of  
Scotland*  
Tel: 0131 623 3700  
E-mail: [j.evans@nls.uk](mailto:j.evans@nls.uk)

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL) is a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees of the National Library of Scotland. The current membership of 25 comprises the Scottish university and other higher education libraries, the two major public reference libraries in Edinburgh and Glasgow, the National Museum of Scotland, the Scottish Agricultural College, the National Library of Scotland and the Open University. Representatives of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and of the Scottish Library and Information Council also attend meetings as observers. Two academic research libraries in Northern Ireland, Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster, also have observer status.

There are five meetings annually for the SCURL members and these are held in members' institutions around Scotland. The business committee meets between the full SCURL meetings to drive the agenda and it subsequently reports to the full SCURL meeting. The variety of projects and initiatives currently focusing attention are wide-ranging, innovative and always challenging!

#### INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORY

SCURL members are actively engaged in widening access to users with a number of initiatives. A recent partnership bid to the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) to investigate the implications and practicalities of a Scotland-wide institutional repository was successful and IRIScotland (Institutional Repository Infrastructure for Scotland) will soon begin to emerge. The partners are the University of Edinburgh on behalf of SCURL,

the National Library of Scotland, the Scottish Crop Research Institute, the Scottish Library and Information Council, the Centre for Digital Library Research Strathclyde University, and the universities of Aberdeen, Abertay, Dundee, Glasgow, St Andrews, Stirling and Strathclyde, Glasgow Metropolitan College, and the European library cooperative, OCLC PICA. One of the aims of the project is to enable smaller institutions, who may not wish to create their own IR, to benefit from a collective hosting environment.

#### **OFF-SITE STORE**

The Collaborative Academic Store for Scotland (CASS) continues the theme of access to collections as six participating libraries in the pilot are storing their low-use material off-site, currently in the National Library of Scotland's Causewayside Building. The shelf space is now 82% occupied with over 63,000 items held in stock. A document delivery service is available and requests for the material may emanate from both the owning library and other libraries. Documents may be supplied on loan, electronically or by photocopy and over 500 items have been supplied to date. A CASS catalogue, with over 7,000 records, is available at <http://cass.nls.uk> to facilitate access to the collections. The CASS Project continues and the steering group, or more particularly the project officer, Neil Dumbleton of St Andrew's University, is working on a business model for the long term continuation of the project as a service.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Universal accessibility in SCURL libraries is the aim of the Special Needs Working Group and a guidance booklet, Supporting library users with disabilities: a guide for front-line staff has been recently published to raise awareness of good practice guidelines. The document is available on the sCURL Special Needs website at <http://scurl.ac.uk/WG/SNG/documents.htm>. The Group also wishes to explore the potential for collaborative purchase of equipment to assist the special needs of users.

#### **FULL ECONOMIC COSTING**

Initiated by the Health Group of SCURL, a recent seminar on full economic costing raised awareness on assessing the costs of providing a range of information services to members' own and other institutions' users. This issue has now broadened out from the Health Group into a full SCURL agenda item.

#### **AWAYDAY ON ACCESS**

The former SCURL development director, Catherine Nicholson, and now the SCURL service development manager, Jill Evans, have been and are responsible for organising an annual Away Day for the entire SCURL membership. The subject for 2005 focused on governance and access with the Chair of the M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries, Rob Hall, describing the choice of libraries and study space open to the users of its 52 member institutions. This resonated with the achievements and future aims of the SCURL member institutions, including two small specialist institutions not in membership of SCONUL, who have signed up to SCURL Research Extra which enables academic staff and postgraduate users to have access to, and in most cases borrowing rights from, the libraries and printed collections held in other SCURL libraries. A SCURL Research Extra card is issued to users and comprehensive guidelines to the scope of the SCURL libraries' collections is available on the SCURL website at <http://scurl.ac.uk/about/access.html>. Future consideration may be extended to undergraduate provision. This and a branding access for different levels of access are being considered by the SCURL Access Group.

#### **EVENTS AND FUND RAISING**

SCURL, as a collaborative and cross-sectoral group, actively engages in hosting events with other Scottish library and information groups. Examples are the annual Information For Scotland Conference, this year to be held on St Andrew's Day, 30 November, to discuss strategic aspects of information access in Scotland on a cross-domain basis and involving colleagues from the archives and museums sectors. This year's conference will address science information and collections in Scotland.

The annual E-Book Seminar, scheduled for October 2005, provides an opportunity for SCURL, in partnership with the Scottish Library and Information Council and the Multimedia, Information and Technology Group Scotland to provide a programme on e-resources, e-services such as SMART cards and RFID, and e-marketing.

Both events are charged at a price to encourage delegates from across Scotland and the UK, but also to allow any surplus to be shared between the organisations involved for further benefits of the profession in Scotland.

## **RESPONDING TO SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE INITIATIVES**

SCURL responded to the Cultural Commission for Scotland's discussions, focusing on the services libraries would deliver in the future, and the cultural space required. Attention was drawn to the variety of new skills now demanded of librarians and information resource managers. These groups have responsibility for managing the traditional printed and electronic collections, and now also have responsibilities for digitisation, preservation and making available the range of Scottish cultural collections held in libraries (such as museums, art works and archives). The Executive's response to the Commission's report will be issued on St. Andrew's Day.

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002 (FOI(S)A)**

SCURL has included FOI(S)A on the agenda of both the business committee and the plenary meetings to share expertise and good practice within the member libraries. Two of the SCURL members were invited to participate with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS) Working Group to research and produce a practical guide for library staff to react to, and address, the questions received as FOI enquiries. An electronic version of the guide is available at <http://www.slainte.org.uk/files/pdf/cilips/foisa04.pdf>.

## **COMPLYING WITH FOI(S)A**

The minutes of SCURL meetings are available on the SCURL website thus complying with FOI(S)A. Again another partnership arrangement is demonstrated, as the Centre for Digital Library Research University of Strathclyde assist the SCURL minute secretary and the service development manager with the maintenance and upgrade to the content of the website.

## **SHARING WITH WALES AND HONG KONG**

The minutes to the plenary SCURL meetings are shared and exchanged with two other academic library groups: the Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELP) (<http://whelf.ac.uk/>); and also the Joint University Libraries Academic Committee in Hong Kong (<http://www.julac.org/>). It is salutary to learn that the content of discussion at both the WHELP and the JULAC meetings resonate and match those of SCURL. An example is the Scottish Science Information Working Group (SSISWG) which is currently engaged

in assessing the potential of consortial electronic subscriptions with major publishers for Scotland's population to access freely; this is matched with JULAC's members interested in similar exercises.

*SCURL represents 25 member libraries in Scotland but we are keen to share and learn of partnerships with libraries representing all sectors both within the UK and beyond. For more information visit the website at <http://scurl.ac.uk/> or contact Jill Evans at [j.evans@nls.uk](mailto:j.evans@nls.uk), telephone + 44 (0) 131 623 3700.*

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# The Open Rose Group

Disability awareness training for libraries

Produced by The Open Rose Group/  
Learning and Information Services,  
Leeds Metropolitan University, 2005

DVD (running time: 51 minutes) and CD of supporting training materials

Cost: £40.00

Availability:

Order form available from: <http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/lis/lss>

(click on: Information for Disabled and Dyslexic users - Open Rose Group - disability awareness training for Libraries);  
email: [openrose@email.com](mailto:openrose@email.com)

Reviewed by

Antony Brewerton

SCONUL Focus Editorial Board and  
Subject Team Leader,

Oxford Brookes University Library

Tel: 01865 483139

E-mail: [awbrewerton@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:awbrewerton@brookes.ac.uk)

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Regular readers of SCONUL Focus will already be familiar with the Open Rose Group and their training package. In issue 31's review of the SCONUL Conference 2004 mention was made of the Group's success in the SCONUL Staff Development Award for that year<sup>1</sup> and in issue 32 Christopher Beevers, Lois Burt and Paul Conway described the work of the Group and the development of their Award-winning staff development tool. It is now my pleasure to review their DVD *Disability awareness training for libraries*.

For those of you who are not regular readers (and shame on you!), the Open Rose Group is a collaborative organisation concerned with opening up access for disabled users of academic libraries in Yorkshire. The Group comprises representatives from the University of Bradford, the University of Hull, the University of Huddersfield, Leeds Metropolitan University, the University of Leeds, Sheffield Hallam University, the University of Sheffield and the University of York. The brief introduction to this package (narrated by Patrick

Stewart – the Chancellor of Huddersfield rather than the Star Trek star) gives more details about the Group's work and how the DVD can be used as a staff training aid and a 'spring board for discussion' in any library.

The DVD covers four key areas of disability: dyslexia; hearing; mobility; and vision. Each section is clearly broken down into short (typically 2-3 minute) sub-sections, covering a wide range of issues, thus:

- **Dyslexia**
  - o Induction and user education
  - o Staff and services
  - o Using OPACs
  - o Finding material
  - o Assistive technology
  - o Coping with change
- **Hearing**
  - o British Sign Language
  - o Communication
  - o Environment and safety
  - o Visual aids
  - o Library services
  - o Perception and awareness
- **Mobility**
  - o Access
  - o Library support
  - o Induction
  - o Library services
  - o Awareness and assumptions
- **Vision**
  - o Assistive technology
  - o Learning environment
  - o Access to information
  - o Library support
  - o Transcription centre service

The disc is very easy to manoeuvre (though sometimes the yellow 'cursor' against a gold background was a bit difficult to spot) and it would be easy to break up any training session in this way.

A second disc, a CD-ROM, contains files to print off (in Word and PDF versions) covering the points included in the introduction plus separate files for the four sections mentioned above. These fall into two types. The trainee documents include quizzes (to assess knowledge and to provide the basis of a library audit) plus topics for brainstorming exercises. The trainer guides are slightly fuller, providing answers to quizzes and ideas for directing the exercises. These are easy to

use and could be adopted in various group exercises or even for individual self-paced learning.

But enough of description, what did I make of it?

One of the biggest strengths for me is that the DVD is completely user-focused. There are no clips of worthy librarians telling us what 'we' should be doing for 'them'. Instead we get a cross section of customers (one academic and a collection of students of different ages and backgrounds) talking about what works well and what works less well in their information retrieval and handling. All of this makes it clear that there is no one right way of dealing with customers with disabilities. Some groups like some services (hearing impaired users give the thumbs up to self issue) whilst others find them confusing (one dyslexic student gave up and left without any books when faced with self-issue). Even grouping by disability is folly though, as the discussions on Assistive technology rooms show. The key message here is –of course – that individual users have individual needs.

Another key message is that of awareness. Library staff get a very good press here, but we are not always aware of the issues. This awareness gets raised in all sections of the disc and the whole package is a good way of addressing this. Especially useful are the quizzes on the accompanying CD-ROM.

The talking to camera approach throws up lots of practical advice and suggestions for developing services and made me really think about some of our services at Brookes. Lip reading is made difficult if there is a window/light behind the speaker. Have you got a large light-filled window at the back of your enquiry desk? (We have on sunny afternoons). Another issue raised by a hearing-impaired user concerned feelings of safety when you have your back to the rest of the room when using a computer. How many of us put our PCs around the walls like this? And have you considered the pitch/tone of your closing message? All of this is very thought-provoking indeed.

Although some sections are a bit technical (for example the discussion on JAWS (Job Access With Speech) technology under *Vision*) and one section is Yorkshire-centric (the Leeds Transcription Centre service is rightly praised but I am not sure how far the service extends) these are small criticisms and the assertion that this could be used in any library – because the issues are universal

– is quite true and I think this would be useful as a disability awareness aid for staff at all levels.

I would even go beyond this. I think this is would be a useful brainstorming tool for considering all aspects of service delivery. In many ways this feels like a focus group on a disc. Comments about jargon and pleas for staff to get out from behind the desk and help, I think, can refer to all our students. And one quote from a nursing student with dyslexia had me thinking for a very long time:

'I'm being asked to walk up to a stranger and saying 'I can't do this.' I'm vulnerable.'

At Oxford Brookes University Library we have Disability Awareness Group. I was going to end my review by saying I think the group would find it useful. But I won't. I think we all will.

Use it, think and act.

#### NOTES

- 1 A. Brewerton, 'Setting the compass: strategic directions in human resource management (SCONUL Conference 2004, Belfast, 31 March – 2 April)', *SCONUL Focus*, 31, Spring 2004, p.83 – 88, see p.86
- 2 C. Beevers, et al., 'The Open Rose Group: opening up access for disabled users of academic libraries in Yorkshire', *SCONUL Focus*, 32, Summer/ Autumn 2004, p.55 - 57

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# Supporting e-learning: a guide for library and information

## managers,

edited by Maxine Melling

London: Facet Publishing, February 2005

ISBN 1-85604-535-8 (hardback  
£39.95)

Reviewed by:

Hilary Johnson,

Chief Librarian, University College

Northampton

Tel: 01604 892045/6

E-mail: [hilary.johnson@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:hilary.johnson@northampton.ac.uk)

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This volume takes as its focus the 'new and complex links between aspects of learning and learning support that have previously been able to exist in isolation, or at least to operate only in parallel with one another' as Maxine Melling in her introduction (p xiii) describes them. The diverse contributions explore the background, ideas and experience of those grappling with models of these new links. There is now a real possibility of a bridge across the 'sacrosanct chasm between libraries as the keepers of information and the faculty as the keepers of the pedagogical flame' (Moretti, p 90).

Sarah Porter (**'Managed learning environments: strategy, planning and implementation'**) sets the scene in respect of managed learning environments, illustrating cogently how the one term 'MLE' is being used to mean subtly different variants of approach. In her three scenarios, the involvement of library and information services ranges widely. The paper covers all the areas librarians need to be aware of, ready to think about, and ready to engage with other professionals about. For this reader one of the most useful sections was that dealing with the nature of the connection linking the resource description aspects (standards, storage and digital repositories, linkages to library cataloguing systems) to the fundamental design and delivery of any form of 'e-' or 'blended' learning.

Oleg Liber (**'Process and partnerships'**) takes a high-level approach, considering organisational change in higher education institutions as a result of technology and pedagogy-led strategies. The paper discusses the 'phases' of technology engagement from multi-media, through the internet, to virtual learning environments, to managed learning environments. More recent is the idea of a 'service-oriented architecture' approach, based around an integrated suite of web-based functions. This is at the core of the JISC 'E-Learning Framework Programme'. The author sees this as leading 'inevitably' to information and library service departments being expected to play a leading part in helping the consequential organisational change. This will impact on 'service department identity'. Oleg offers a tool to help with this – the 'TASCOI' methodology – which asks the questions which need to be answered to assist with managing the change process, emphasising the importance of establishing through wide participation a shared view of the broad requirements. The paper notes that to undertake this, LIS departments need to be supported and empowered.

**'Change management'** is the focus of the paper by Robert Hunter, Stephen Clarke and Michele Shoebridge. This paper considers change for the LIS department emanating from the need to support e-learning, or to provide for learners an 'intensely supported learning environment' (ISLE). The authors stress the importance of strategy, within which questions such as 'one VLE or many?', 'home-grown or commercial?' can be addressed. A model of layers for an 'e-learning service' is proffered – activities, components, resources, software, data, operating systems and hardware. The impact on staffing and structures is discussed, using the University of Birmingham experience as an example.

Frank Moretti's paper (**'Support in the use of new media'**) begins from the point of view of the creator of the learning materials, and provides a heady sweep across the landscape of digital technologies on campus. His experience at the University of Columbia's Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning provides a number of 'real-life' case studies. He points out that the process of supporting and serving in the digital age frequently includes a 'fundamental reconstruction of the enterprise of teaching and learning itself', and likens the impact of digital technologies now to that of the printing press in the early Renaissance. In this environment 'attitude becomes paramount' in the creation of digital service organisations.

Moretti deplures the too-ready assumption that the World Wide Web is a 'magical incantation that would cure all educational woes for students, young and old', pointing out that the presence of information in the 'data mall of the web' does not in and of itself motivate students to think and learn. 'Information as a collectible fungible commodity only becomes a value when situated in a process of meaning making and knowledge construction' (Moretti, p 90). The paper makes the case for the 'new partnerships' made possible by the ubiquity of digital technologies as information purveyors together with the 'use scenarios that provide the context to make students work activity driven and purposeful'. Moretti offers a number of very practical ways in which these deep issues may begin to be addressed, bringing about the vision of service organisations as growing networks of collaborations between 'service providers' and educators.

Drawn by the title, I approached Peter Stubley's paper '**Just one piece of the jigsaw: e-literacy in the wider perspective**' with alacrity, and indeed, read it first. Alas, I found no new understanding of 'e-literacy', a term which I think continues to defy satisfactory or even useful definition. Peter's paper uses the terms 'information skills', 'information literacy' and 'e-literacy' more or less interchangeably, taking the pragmatic line to not get bogged down with definitions.

Peter adopts the metaphor of 'sailing free' – the librarian as free spirit, leaving the 'lee shore' of a focus on 'rarefied confection' of user education and information literacy, towards the splendours of the open ocean of – what? Peter exhorts consideration of context (the waters mapped, the weather report considered) if the maximum effect of information literacy is to be pursued and achieved, so the paper considers the context of the modern student – preparedness for higher education, motivation, strategic in their rationing of time and attention-span, and their skills needs. Similar consideration is given to the modern academic's situation in respect of skills, both for themselves and as enablers of others' skills development. Those who see the relationship between the librarian and the academic as necessarily problematic come in for criticism.

At Sheffield University they too have developed a 'New Partnership' arising from an in-depth needs analysis stimulated by the use of WebCT at the university. Some of the practical outcomes of the needs analysis and follow-up work have a '*déjà vu*' sense – instead of reading or book lists

there is the concept of 'resource lists' – *plus ça change*, one is tempted to mutter. The idea of using the VLE itself as a means of improving the delivery of information skills development is not new either. However, the depth of the engagement reported, and the overall outcome of the 'new partnership' in the stimulus it is giving to strategic thinking in the university is heartening.

The final contribution, from Frances Hall and Jill Lambert (**'Collection management'**), brings our vessel back into the familiar waters of collection management, specifically in the electronic environment. 'What constitutes the collection that we are managing?' the authors ask, in a context of increasingly blurred categories. The paper usefully surveys the issues of formats and procurement, cataloguing and links to VLEs. Mention is made of copyright and licensing issues, although from a rather traditional perspective. Perhaps one lack of this volume overall is that of in-depth consideration of the crucial digital rights management issues.

The useful aspect of this book for this reader is that the papers have as much, if not more, to say about the organisational change consequences and possibilities of thinking about e-learning, as they do about the technicalities of such building blocks as VLEs, MLEs and digital information environments.

'What is required for the effective support of learners in an electronic environment is a new service convergence which has less to do with structural organization and more to do with the adoption of common terminology and approaches to support' (Introduction, p xiv) A common theme running through the book is that of dialogue and communication. 'The most important factor' writes Peter Stubley 'is the dialogue'. The idea of 'common terminology' is echoed and endorsed in the article by Moretti. 'Service entities engaged in proactive efforts to recruit faculty partners must always do so in the spirit of wanting to start a conversation, specifically, pedagogical in character' (Moretti, p 98). The language of learning is one which librarians involved in organising services and supporting learners must master quickly and deploy with fluency.

This volume is greatly to be welcomed as a stimulating and engaging, easy to read, and cogent surfacing of the really hard questions about roles and contributions. This is a valuable contribution to the current debate about e-learning, indeed learning in general. I commend it to learning-oriented librarians everywhere.



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# Guidelines for colleges: recommendations for learning resources,

edited by Andrew Enyon for the  
Colleges of Further and Higher  
Education Group of CILIP, seventh  
edition, London: Facet Publishing,  
2005, 70pp ISBN: 1-85604-551-X

Reviewed by  
Lindsey Martin  
Academic Liaison Co-ordinator (HMSAS),  
Learning Services,  
Edge Hill College of Higher Education  
Tel: 01695 56401  
E-mail: martinl@edgehill.ac.uk

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I volunteered to review this book for two reasons. Firstly, my role includes working collaboratively with colleagues in four further education college libraries in order to support foundation degrees delivered in partnership with Edge Hill. Secondly, this book is a pleasingly slim volume.

My first impression of the book was that slim didn't necessarily equate with an easy read – but I was wrong. It drew me in, particularly the excellent section on quality and fitness for purpose. I should mention that as well as working collaboratively with further education partner library services, I am also required to conduct assessments of partners' library services on behalf of Edge Hill's academic quality unit that are used to inform new foundation degree validation events and as part of an ongoing cycle of review to ensure that fitness for purpose is maintained. So I am always excited when an opportunity arises to inform my own practice with good quality evidence-based guidance and indicators that benchmark minimum provision in key areas.

However, I am getting ahead of myself. The aim of this new edition is to assist learning resource managers of further education and sixth form colleges in planning their learning resource services. It does this by first making ten achievable recommendations that form the basis of excellent service

provision. The eight chapters that follow expand upon these recommendations.

The eight chapters are:

- Facilitating learning (new to this edition)
- A quality framework
- Promotion and advocacy (new to this edition)
- The learning environment
- Accessibility (new to this edition)
- Learning materials
- Human resources
- Finance

The core content is drawn from best practice identified within the sector and incorporates the results of CILIP's 2003 UK survey of library and learning resource provision in further education colleges. The survey data puts flesh on the bones of the guidelines, providing a snapshot of current service delivery that shows the wide variations that pertain. Quantitative performance indicators, where appropriate, are listed at the end of each chapter.

I think the book does live up to its promise and it is hard to disagree that the good practice guidelines and recommendations apply equally to higher education libraries. I will definitely keep a copy to hand to inform future learning resources audits of potential further education partners. The only area where I felt that the guidelines could have been expanded (and this is only my own self interest speaking here) is in examining collaborative partnerships with higher education, providing examples of best practice and recommendations for the management of these often complex relationships. But then, I am not the target audience and maybe, this is another set of guidelines altogether, to be written from the higher education perspective.

Despite this last observation, I am sure that these *Guidelines for Colleges* will be of considerable use to learning resource managers in further education and those of us in higher education that collaborate with them.

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# Valnow goes from strength to strength

Julie Hitchen

*Information Officer (Marketing and e-Developments Team), University of Central Lancashire*

Tel: 01772 892267

E-mail: [LLRSpartnercolleges@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:LLRSpartnercolleges@uclan.ac.uk)

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The Library and Learning Resource Services (LLRS) at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) has been supporting its partner colleges since 1997 with our VALNOW service. VALNOW (Virtual Academic Library of the North West) offers a range of library and information services, including document delivery and information skills sessions, to students on UCLan higher education courses around the north west of England<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to regular visits, twice-yearly management and user groups were held with all the colleges to discuss the service and exchange ideas. However, from an initial seven colleges, membership has grown and recently doubled from 11 to 22. This made it logistically difficult to continue with meetings in the usual format and a decision was therefore taken to revamp the structure. In its place came a steering group comprising six representatives from the previous management group plus the UCLan team, a revamped user group, and a yearly conference.

The inaugural VALNOW conference was held on 26 May 2005 with speakers and break-out sessions on themes which had come out of meetings, visits and site reports. Highlights of the day included Jayne Evans on how the Cephalonian method of induction is being used at Manchester Metropolitan University and Jon Humfrey (Myerscough College) with his unique approach to induction which includes magic tricks, a tea-towel chicken and Flat Eric! The colleges were also interested to learn how UCLan is branding itself in preparation for 2006 as 'The ones to watch' in a presentation by our new head of marketing, Phil Chapman.

The day proved a great success. A common theme in feedback was that the library staff valued the opportunity to share experiences and good practice with other colleges. Several also complimented us on the friendly relaxed atmosphere and enthusiasm of the staff and speakers. Roll on next year's conference!

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1 Services for Partner Colleges (<http://www.uclan.ac.uk/library/valnow/index.htm>)

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# The summer meeting of the Universities Science and Technology Librarians' Group (USTLG) held on 13 June 2005 at the British Library, St Pancras

Reviewed by:  
Frank Parry  
*Academic Librarian, Academic liaison  
for Human Sciences, Information Science,  
Loughborough University*  
Tel: 01509 222404  
E-mail: F.Parry@lboro.ac.uk

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The 2005 Summer Meeting of the USTLG was held in the British Library which gave the group the superb opportunity to discover more about one of the world's foremost collections of science material.

The meeting was scheduled for the afternoon but was preceded in the morning by tours of the British Library for most of the participants. Tour details took in the planning and design of the new library; admissions policy which has recently changed to allow freer access to undergraduates; retrieval of books in the collection and future storage plans – St Pancras is already nearly full; the impressive King George III collection displayed in the atrium which, when donated to the library by George IV nearly doubled the size of the then young library; the map library with the rare Klencke map donated to the library by the Dutch in 1660; and the various science reading rooms.

The afternoon schedule began with **Sue Manuel**, IT Support Officer at Loughborough University, who gave a talk entitled **To blog or not to blog? – using weblogs in libraries**. Sue described how blogs could be used as interactive tools for librar-

ies acting as a central source of reference, bringing together in one place library staff who may otherwise find it difficult to meet and communicate with their colleagues. In the case study of Loughborough University, the blog is used to communicate new developments to the information team, provide links to commonly used resources and information sheets, and an archive of postings which can be used to answer information enquiries. The study noted the successes of the blog, notably improved communication between staff, clarity and ease of use and ready access to important information. There were also some ongoing concerns such as the reluctance of some staff to check the blog or move away from email as the primary source of information. The study also noted the technical requirements in setting up a blog, such as the choice between web-hosted or installed software; lists of other blog services and studies; posting and maintenance protocols. Research has shown that the blog is well used and appreciated by most staff, with a steady, but manageable stream of postings.

The second talk of the afternoon was by **Rachel Henning** and **Dr Eliot Randle** of Infotrieve who described a new product called the **Life Science Research Centre (LSRC)**. This is a web-based search and discovery tool designed for scientists and researchers in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical areas. LSRC provides a platform where researchers can not only *search* for journal articles, patents, book chapters, industry news, web resources and drug and gene data, but also *discover* new relationships between their search outputs. Results display link-outs to subscribed material, an order facility from Infotrieve, web resources, open url and link resolvers. The 'discovery' aspect of the product is achieved by displaying scientific entities such as organisms, diseases and genes which are extracted from within the full text, and clustering which is a hierarchical grouping of commonly used phrases and concepts connected to the search terms employed by the researcher. LSRC can be customised for individual researchers and collaborative areas can be set up between groups who wish to share information and data. In addition to the sources used by LSRC, customers are able to set up expanded – or federated – searches using other databases. LSRC is the first of a series of planned platforms and will be followed with one for chemical information.

The third planned talk of the afternoon was to have been by the British Library Intellectual Property team, but this unfortunately had to be cancelled.

The last event of the day was an update on the operation of the **science reading rooms** by **Mark Parsons** of the British Library. Mark outlined the division of the science side of the British Library between the Business and Intellectual Property section, Science Reading Room 1 for social policy and information service and engineering, Room 2 for life sciences, medicine and chemistry, Room 3 for physics, earth sciences and electronics. The science collection is research based and, unlike other areas of the British Library, has open access shelves with up to around ten years of current material available. Material can also be ordered from Boston Spa with a turnaround of about 48 hours. Items can also be ordered offsite via the internet. Readers have access to approximately 17,000 current serials and 4,500 e-journals. Bibliographic databases such as Compendex, Inspec, Chemical Abstracts are also available. The Business and Intellectual Property section has been designed to attract small and medium sized businesses and it is hoped to provide a centre for innovators and entrepreneurs. It has a collection of around 49 million patents and a sizable collection of company reports, directories, newspapers, market reports. The science rooms have help desks which aim to assist readers with all their needs, though more complicated searches may be passed on to specialist research teams. The Research Service is fee-based and can be contacted at [scitech@bl.uk](mailto:scitech@bl.uk) or by telephone. Mark and his colleagues then gave the meeting tours of the reading rooms and answered questions.

The meeting thanked all of the speakers, the organisers Moira Bent and Linda Davies and the generosity of the British Library for the use of their facilities and time.

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## A report on the 'Developing an Institutional Repository' workshop at the University of Glasgow, 27 June, 2005

William J Nixon  
*Project Manager (DAEDALUS) and Deputy  
Head of IT Services, Glasgow University  
Library, Hillhead Street,  
Glasgow G12 8QE  
Tel: 0141 330 6721  
E-mail: [w.j.nixon@lib.gla.ac.uk](mailto:w.j.nixon@lib.gla.ac.uk)*

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Institutional repositories, that is, 'digital collections capturing and preserving the intellectual output of a single or multi-university community' are in development across the world using a range of free and commercial software such as GNU EPrints and DSpace. At the University of Glasgow, this work has been taken forward by the JISC-funded DAEDALUS Project which ended in July 2005.

In June 2005 the project ran a one day workshop for thirty-five university librarians and computing staff to share the lessons and experiences in developing repository service at Glasgow.

The workshop provided those attending with an overview of the issues and challenges which universities face in setting up an institutional repository service. It also set the scene with an update on the open access movement and in particular the Scottish Open Access Declaration launched on 11 October 2004. This declaration has now been signed by all the Scottish universities.

In the afternoon the focus was on practical implementation. Two parallel sessions on advocacy activities and service development provided the opportunity to further engage with project staff, to ask questions and to consider how to develop a repository at one's own institution.

DAEDALUS was a three year (2002-2005) JISC-funded project as part of the Focus on Institutional Repositories (FAIR) Programme. It established a number of different repositories services for research material at the University of Glasgow including the Glasgow ePrints Service as well as a wide ranging advocacy campaign. The services developed by the project are now being taken forward by the university. DAEDALUS also provided the technical support for an open access e-Journal on e-Literacy, called JeLit and a subject based repository for the ERPANET (digital preservation) project called ERPaePRINTS.

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# News from SCONUL

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## **SCONUL'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: MAJOR STRATEGIC CHANGE**

At the AGM on 6 April members were presented with proposals for a new SCONUL strategic framework and development programme.

Four major initiatives were approved:

- 1 A one-off tariff to kick-start development of a strategic fund in support of all members (£150 for current standard rate members and £50 for other members).
- 2 Development to increase income from other sources to help support the recommended increase in SCONUL activity, including:
  - introduction of a new corporate membership category
  - a sponsorship strategy
- 3 The introduction of banded subscriptions in 2006 (based on moderation of the JISC model).
- 4 Realignment of current committees and groups and the introduction of a revised portfolio of fixed Working Groups and shorter life Task and Finish Groups.

## **SCONUL'S ADVICE IN DEMAND**

In May we saw a flurry of consultations between SCONUL and various bodies we seek to influence. On the 6th, teams from SCONUL and UCISA met Victoria Eaton of the **Higher Education Academy**; on the 13th and 14th I led a workshop on copyright at the annual meeting at University College Cork of **EBLIDA** (European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations) and was elected to their Executive Committee; on the 16th – as a direct result of our press-release about SCONUL Research Extra – I had a one-to-one meeting with Patricia Ambrose, Executive Secretary of the **Standing Conference of Principals**; on the 17th our Chair Suzanne Enright, and the Executive Director of CURL, Robin Green, and I, met Dr Michael Jubb, Director of the **Research Libraries Network**; on the 20th I was a member of a focus group on strategy at

the Museums Libraries and Archives Council and (later) attended the launch of a report at the **British Academy** (see below); on the 24th I participated in focus groups on the **World Summit on the Information Society** organised in Manchester by the British Council and attended by Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials - including the UK's ambassador to the UN in Geneva; and on the 27th I assisted at a consultation meeting held in Birmingham by **JISC** on the governance of IT in higher education. Meanwhile, amongst other things, our Chair took part in the **Association of Research Libraries** members' meeting in Washington, 25-27 May. Interestingly, at all these meetings except the one-to-one, **SCONUL's** representation was either formally or at least informally side-by-side with our colleagues in **CURL**, **UCISA** or **CILIP**.

#### **HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY: STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Academy published its plan in May and is available at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/documents/StrategicPlan2005.pdf>

It says encouraging things about consultative working, which the **SCONUL** and **UCISA** Executive Boards are building upon.

#### **UK WEB ARCHIVE**

The first phase of a searchable archive of websites – selected for their scholarly, cultural and scientific value – is now available at <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/>.

Developed by the UK Web Archiving Consortium (**UKWAC**), the archive is aimed at the broad research community and marks the first systematic attempt to create an archive of social, historic and culturally significant web-based material from the UK domain.

**UKWAC** – comprising the British Library, **JISC**, the National Archives, the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales and the Wellcome Trust – are working together to address these issues and share responsibility for collecting web-based material. Beyond this, one of the key objectives of this two-year project is to define sustainable methodologies and metrics for the long-term preservation of such born-digital data.

The project has been archiving material for six months and the archive contains 299 titles and 1090 individual websites, amounting in all to 84 GB of data. **SCONUL's** own website has recently been selected by the British Library for inclusion in its web archive.

#### **BRITISH ACADEMY REPORTS ON E-RESOURCES**

On 20 May the British Academy launched their report on e-resources

<http://www.britac.ac.uk/reports/eresources/report/eresources-pdf.pdf>

which is broad in scope and deals extensively with the open access question. The report suggests rather modest changes in publishing practice by scholars.

#### **'NATIONAL' STUDENT SURVEY (NSS)**

Students in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland have been surveyed on behalf of the relevant higher education funding councils by market research company Ipsos UK, which reports a 60% response rate. The outcome will be published on the Teaching Quality Information website ([www.tqi.ac.uk](http://www.tqi.ac.uk)). The draft version of the survey issued with a consultation in May 2004 contained one question on library resources and one on computing resources (attracting unfavourable comment from **SCONUL** and **UCISA**).

#### **SCONUL'S NEW GROUPS**

In June the Executive Board formally appointed many **SCONUL** activists to our new groups.

#### **PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION: NEW UK REGULATIONS 1 JULY**

The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations will come into effect on 1 July. They are the kind of law that librarians get asked about. Happily we do not need to be expert on them because, following successful lobbying by **SCONUL** and others when the relevant Directive was being adopted, they do not apply to libraries, nor indeed to educational or research institutions. They aim to make it easier for publishers (etc.) to use information provided by public sector bodies, which will, for the most part, be obliged to allow the re-use of their information. The regulations may be seen at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051515.htm> and guidance published by the Office of Public Sector Information (which now includes HMSO) is at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/advice/psi-regulations/advice-and-guidance/guide-to-psi-regulations-and-best-practice.doc>

Points to note:

- the regulations apply only to material made available to the public, under an access regime such as Freedom of Information or otherwise
- the regulations do not apply to material in third party copyright
- the regulations do not apply to information held by educational and research establish-

ments such as schools, universities, archives, libraries and research facilities (such as research councils) or cultural establishments, including museums, and performing arts establishments such as opera companies, theatres, ballet companies and orchestras. [Notes based, with thanks, on those of my colleague Tim Padfield of the National Archives]

#### **JISC's £4M PROGRAMME FOR INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES**

On 16 June JISC announced a new £4M programme to encourage the growth of repositories in universities and colleges across the UK. A repository is a digital store, principally of research outputs and journal articles, but also potentially a wealth of other information, created by teachers and researchers and made openly available to all. Their great advantage is that they enable the free sharing of information, encouraging collaboration and the widespread communication of UK education and research activity.

In 2004 the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology praised JISC's work in exploring new models for accessing and sharing academic resources. Hitherto repositories have focused largely on research outputs. JISC's new programme will develop the concept still further by encouraging the growth of repositories for learning materials, data and much else, helping institutions to manage their assets more effectively and to encourage the development of collaborative communities across UK education and research.

#### **THE BRITISH LIBRARY: NEW STRATEGY**

In June Jan Wilkinson, Head of Higher Education at the British Library announced the Library's new three-year strategy *Redefining the library: the British Library's strategy 2005-2008* see <http://www.bl.uk/about/strategy.html>

#### **IMPACT OF HIGHER EDUCATION LIBRARIES: RESEARCH REPORT**

A special issue of the Library and Information Research Group's journal, *Library and information research* (volume 29, number 91, spring 2005), reports on the first phase of the LIRG/SCONUL initiative that seeks to measure the impact of higher education libraries. Included are articles on the initiative and reports from the ten libraries in the first phase: Birkbeck, University College Chester, Glasgow Caledonian University, University of Gloucestershire, University of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University, Northumbria University, Open University, Teesside University, and Warwick University.

#### **SCONUL AND ALLIES RESPOND TO RESEARCH COUNCILS UK'S OPEN ACCESS PROPOSALS**

The Chairs of CURL and SCONUL and the President of CILIP have written jointly to Research Councils UK in response to their consultation on their proposals for access to research outputs (see our home page at [www.sconul.ac.uk](http://www.sconul.ac.uk))

#### **STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR SCONUL**

At a residential meeting in Cambridge in August, SCONUL's Executive Board went into conclave with the Chairs of our working groups in a major planning exercise which the Board will develop in the coming weeks.

#### **SCONUL'S OPERATIONAL PLAN**

Meanwhile our 2005 Operational Plan has been completed and mounted on the website at <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/opplan05.pdf>

#### **NEW SCONUL MEMBER**

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine is joining SCONUL and also the SCONUL Research Extra scheme. A warm welcome on both counts!

#### **RIN SUPPORTS SCONUL RESEARCH EXTRA**

The Research Information Network has made its first grant: SCONUL is to receive RIN funding sufficient to support SCONUL Research Extra for a further year 'in the first instance'.

#### **SCONUL'S WORKING GROUP ON HEALTH STRATEGY**

With the Board's thanks to her for her pioneering work, Judy Palmer (Radcliffe Science Library, Oxford) is bowing out from chairing our Working Group on Health Strategy. In its short life so far, the Group has established the basis for a strategic relationship between SCONUL and the National Health Service through prominent figures such as Ben Toth (Head of Knowledge Management at the NHS Information Authority) and Sir Muir Gray (Director, National Electronic Library for Health). Judy is succeeded by Maggie Haines (King's College London), who will provide additional links to CILIP through its Health Executive Advisory Group and associated work.

#### **NEWS FROM BRUSSELS**

A meeting in Brussels on 6 September heard a report on the European Commission's study of the scientific publications market in Europe. Tony Kidd of Glasgow University Library attended. At LIBER's annual conference in July Françoise Vandooren gave a presentation about her part in the study. Powerpoint slides at: <http://liber.ub.rug.nl/presentations/Vandooren.ppt>

On 9 September library lobbyists and their allies met in Brussels to consider a new legislative proposal for criminal penalties for copyright infringement. SCONUL's Secretary took part. SCONUL responded in July to a European Commission consultation on cross-border collective management of copyright (an initiative affecting collecting societies such as the Copyright Licensing Agency and its counterparts in other countries). The Commission has evidently been weighing up changes affecting collecting societies and the rights-holders they act for; without thinking very much about the possible effects on the customers of collecting societies.

#### **MORE ON COPYRIGHT LICENSING**

The Copyright Licensing Agency has issued its new trial photocopying and scanning licence for UK higher education institutions after negotiating its terms with Universities UK. See <http://www.cla.co.uk/support/he/index.html> The Museums Copyright Group is seeking help in negotiating a licence with the Design and Artists Copyright Society to permit museums, galleries and libraries to digitise 'artistic' materials within their collections for use by staff, students, and the public.

#### **FORTHCOMING SCONUL CONFERENCES**

29 November 2005

E-learning strategy through partnerships: the art of the possible (at the British Library, London)  
[http://www.sconul.ac.uk/event\\_conf/egm2005/programme.html](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/event_conf/egm2005/programme.html) bookings open mid-Sept

21-23 June 2006

Residential conference and AGM,  
Newcastle upon Tyne

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## 'Move away from SCONUL's 'Saga' image!'

The 2005 SCONUL membership survey surveyed

Mary Morley

*Former Chair, SCONUL Working Group on Communications and Marketing and Librarian and Director of Information*

*Services, Loughborough University*

Tel: 01509 222340

E-mail: [m.d.morley@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:m.d.morley@lboro.ac.uk)

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So now SCONUL is a refuge for those 'of a certain age', as well as for 'lonely chief librarians' (a quote from the 2002 membership survey) ...

The 2005 membership survey, available online for three weeks in April, was completed by 367 people, 43 of them heads of service. There were 22 more respondents than in 2002, when 46 heads of service were included. The results were analysed by Claire Creaser of LISU, the Library and Information Statistics Unit, whose report can be found <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/comms/surveyreport.pdf>

#### **PERCEPTIONS OF SCONUL**

While the same number of people as in 2002 feel that SCONUL is an organisation for heads of service only, the total actively disagreeing with that statement has risen by 6%, which is encouraging. It was also pleasing to see the percentage believing that SCONUL has a positive effect on professional work and development in the sector rise from 76% to 83%.

The number of people finding the website valuable has increased significantly, by about 20%. Responses relating to SCONUL publications and discussion lists were more or less unchanged, and the resources are generally well regarded. That 30-40% of respondents still have no opinion on SCONUL electronic and print resources is a concern, however.

#### **SCONUL ACTIVITIES**

There is a close correlation between familiarity and perceived value, with the highest profile



activities identified as access arrangements and publications. The lowest are the buildings database and *Vision 2010* (but this had only just been published at the time of the survey.) People, especially front-line staff, prefer to receive *SCONUL Focus* electronically – heads of service are the main advocates of hybrid delivery.

Not unexpectedly, heads of service claim that *SCONUL* and its activities are promoted effectively within their organisations, while front-line staff hold the opposite view ...

#### **FUTURE PRIORITIES**

Of the areas that emerged from the October 2004 survey of 'top concerns', respondents were asked to rank their top three in order of priority as areas in which *SCONUL* should develop advice and guidance. The highest were:

- 1 the impact of e-learning, including portals, VLEs and institutional repositories
- 2 access to services, including the implications of collaborative schemes
- 3 legislative compliance.

These now inform the planning and development of *SCONUL* activity.

#### **SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW *SCONUL* COULD DEVELOP AND IMPROVE ITS SERVICES**

In 2002 about two-thirds of the 90 free-text comments related to the need to address negative perceptions of *SCONUL*; to promote inclusivity by reaching out to staff below head of service level; and to increase visibility - including publishing everything online (which is now the case) and improving the website.

In 2005 more than half of the 50 comments were again about inclusivity and visibility (and negative perceptions – see the title of this article). There were also several requests to provide training or career development help: it obviously needs to be made clearer that this is not part of *SCONUL*'s current mission. And the Executive Board was pleased to see significantly more accolades for *SCONUL* in this set of comments than in 2002!

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The survey identified a continuing dichotomy between those who think *SCONUL* is only for heads of service and those who do not; and a

lack of awareness of *SCONUL*'s products and services that is widespread in some areas. Thus while analysis of responses to the two surveys shows that there have been measurable improvements since 2002, there is still a long way to go before *SCONUL* achieves universal recognition and impact in member institutions below head of service level and throughout the sector.

The outcomes of the survey, together with other recent membership consultation exercises (focus groups last summer; top concerns in the autumn) formed very useful background to discussion at the strategy and planning meeting attended by the Executive Board and *SCONUL* Group Chairs in August 2005. *SCONUL* is grateful to all staff in member institutions who took the trouble to complete the survey.

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# Health strategy for SCONUL

## Report from the SCONUL's Health Strategy Group

Judith Palmer

*Chair of SCONUL Working Group on  
Health Strategy and Keeper of Scientific  
Books, Oxford University Library Services  
Tel: 01865 272820  
E-mail: judith.palmer@bodley.ox.ac.uk*

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On 6 December 2003, the SCONUL Executive Board invited Nicky Whitsed, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Health Services (ACHS) to attend in order to advise and comment on the current activity of the group. As a result of the discussion, and the announcement that both the Chair and Secretary of ACHS intended to stand down in 2004, the Board agreed that SCONUL needed to plan for a new way forward and address important issues regarding health libraries including:

- funding of higher education (HE) libraries serving National Health Service (NHS) users;
- technical infrastructure issues in HE and the NHS;
- the NHS University (NHSU);
- liaison across the many disparate groups involved in health libraries.

It therefore set up a short life Task Force with a remit to consider SCONUL's work in this area, and to investigate its future activity. The group was convened by Chris Bailey (SCONUL Board member) with Sheila Cannell (Edinburgh), Judith Palmer (Oxford), Kath O'Donovan (Sheffield), and Christine Stockton (Chester).

The Task Force reported to the Board meeting in June 2004 and it was agreed:

- 1 That the Advisory Committee on Health Services (ACHS) as currently constituted be stood down, with thanks to all participants for their efforts and especially to Nicky Whitsed and John van Loo (Secretary)
- 2 That a new high level Working Group be constituted to consider strategic health related issues for HE libraries – this new group would be small, drawn from members at Director level who are conversant with the

issues and who have the authority to engage at national level; this group would not try to act as an umbrella group for all interests (as ACHS often did).

The group was set up by SCONUL's Executive Board in May 2004. It was agreed that it should take a lead role in considering strategic health related issues for HE libraries and be the principal conduit and focus in SCONUL for all issues relating to health information and health libraries.

The Group first met on the 8 October 2004 under the chairmanship of Judy Palmer and agreed a name, future membership and terms of reference. The simplest and most apt title was agreed to be Health Strategy Group. The Group did not believe that there should be representative membership - regional or otherwise. Instead it was felt important to invite SCONUL members who had a wide ranging and extensive experience of working with the NHS. John Lancaster agreed to become a member. It was also felt that Ben Toth from the NHS would offer invaluable experience so was likewise invited to join.

The terms of reference were articulated as being:

- to engage at a senior level with the NHS and appropriate bodies/organisations such as the Strategic Learning and Research Advisory Group for Health and Social Care (StLAR), the National Library for Health (NLH), the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Department of Health (DoH), other government departments, Universities UK (UUK), the Research Councils UK (RCUK), the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and aim to work in partnership with these groups
- to remain alert to new developments (nationally and internationally) that may impact upon health information issues
- to inform and advise SCONUL Representatives on behalf of the Executive Board, and stimulate further policy development and strategic thinking
- to take account of and engage with (where appropriate) existing collaborative initiatives between NHS and HE.

Current membership is: Judy Palmer (Oxford, Chair), Paul Ayris (UCL), Chris Bailey (Glasgow), Sheila Cannell (Edinburgh), Maggie Haines (King's College London), John Lancaster (Huddersfield), Kath O'Donovan (Sheffield), Ben Toth

(NHS National Library for Health), Christine Stockton (Chester). In September Maggie Haines will take over the Chair.

The Group has now met a further four times and set out an agenda for work which includes, in the first instance, the need to make contact with key individuals in the NHS and in JISC. The relationship with the NHS/HE Forum has also been clarified and Paul Ayris, whilst maintaining a close relationship with the Forum, now becomes the HSG representative to that Group. His chairmanship of the NHS/JISC Joint Procurement Group will ensure that the voice of SCONUL is heard appropriately in that context.

Other members of the Group have taken the responsibility to contact key individuals in the NHS and Government. Margaret Haines has met with Aidan Halligen (Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health and Director of Clinical Governance for the NHS), Judy Palmer with Muir Gray, who has recently been appointed as NHS Director of Clinical Process, Knowledge and Safety.

For more details on the Groups' activities go to [www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/health](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/health).

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# CURL/SCONUL Digest of Scholarly Communication News

Fredrick J. Friend  
Honorary Director, Scholarly  
Communication,  
University College London,  
JISC Consultant, OSI Information Program  
Senior Consultant  
Tel: 01494 563168  
Email: [ucylfjf@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ucylfjf@ucl.ac.uk)

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*This is taken from the CURL/SCONUL Digest of Scholarly Communication News of June 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.*

## **DELAY IN PUBLISHING RCUK STATEMENT**

No official announcement has been made by the Research Councils UK (RCUK), but the publication of the long-awaited RCUK statement on the 'Dissemination of and access to UK research outputs' appears to have been put on hold for several weeks. The replies from universities to the draft statement were largely positive, and although some changes of wording were suggested, these changes would not seem to require significant changes to the text of the draft agreed by RCUK in April. (Not all universities made a response but the Joint CURL/SCONUL Scholarly Communication Group would be glad to have sight of those responses submitted.) There is speculation that lobbying of the Department of Trade and Industry by commercial interests may have led RCUK to consider substantial changes to the statement in respect of open access repositories. In March 2005 Lord Sainsbury gave an assurance to the HC Science and Technology Committee that 'Research Councils are 'totally independent' in

their capacity to make policy on this front' (House of Commons Science and Technology Committee Sixth Report HC219.) It is to be hoped that external pressure would not be successful in introducing a 12-month delay in repository deposit, a change already made in the US NIH (National Institutes of Health) policy. Such a delay in deposit of articles written by a university's own staff could have an adverse effect upon the development of university repositories.

#### **DUTCH 'CREAM OF SCIENCE' FREELY AVAILABLE**

On 10 May the SURF Foundation launched a website, [www.creamofscience.org](http://www.creamofscience.org), making available over 25,000 publications in full-text from 207 authors selected to represent the best of Dutch science. The universities wished to make more publications available but copyright restrictions imposed by publishers made this impossible at the present time. SURF report that universities without any authors in the selection are asking for the database to be expanded. The website received half a million hits in the 24 hours after it was launched and crashed through the heavy use! This mirrors the experience of the Public Library of Science website when it was launched last year and illustrates the huge demand for access to scientific literature when price and licensing barriers are removed. The immediate success of the Dutch initiative has led to discussion of the possibility of either a similar UK service or alternatively a European 'Cream of Science'.

#### **MORE SIGNATURES FOR BERLIN DECLARATION**

The Amsterdam meeting which witnessed the launch of 'Cream of Science' also witnessed the addition of eight further signatures to the Berlin Declaration, including that of Reg Carr on behalf of JISC. (N.B. The Berlin Declaration website records Malcolm Read's signature officially but Reg actually put pen to paper!) The other new signatories are leaders of Dutch academic organisations and also the Director General of the Swedish Research Council. Like JISC and other organisations in the UK, Dutch and Swedish research bodies have already been applying the principles of the Berlin Declaration in practice. The act of signing indicates a wish to work with equivalent bodies in other countries, as JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) is already doing with SURF.

#### **PRACTICAL HELP FOR HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE**

##### **PUBLISHERS**

SPARC (the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) and the University of Michigan Library's Scholarly Publishing Office (SPO)

have launched a 'Publisher Assistance Program' to facilitate open-access publishing in the social sciences and humanities. SPARC and SPO aim to provide a business planning process to ensure the sustainability of selected journals under an open-access or cost-recovery model, including the transition from a print, subscription-based model to an online open-access model. The Publisher Assistance Program will include free online hosting for open-access journals and a variety of digital publishing options that SPO will offer on a cost-recovery basis. This is a parallel development to JISC's support for publishers willing to make the transition from subscription to open access but with more 'hands-on' practical support than JISC is able to offer. It could also be compared to BioMed Central's programme for hosting open access journals.

#### **WELLCOME TRUST ANNOUNCE OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING PLANS**

The Wellcome Trust has announced that from 1 October 2005, all papers from new research projects must be deposited in PubMed Central or UK PubMed Central - once it has been formed - within 6 months of publication. The Wellcome Trust has also announced that from 1 October 2006, all existing grant holders must deposit any future papers produced from Trust funding into PubMed Central or UK PubMed Central. This delay in extending the grant condition will allow existing grant holders time to adjust to the new policy. An 'expression of interest' invitation has been published by the medical granting agencies hoping to establish a UK PMC. A full tender proposal will be issued later in the year once formal support has been agreed by the agencies involved.

#### **MORE UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF OPEN ACCESS**

In recent weeks the University of California Berkeley, Columbia University, the University of Kansas, Cornell University and Case Western Reserve University have all passed Senate resolutions in support of open access repositories and open access journals. The Kansas and Case Western resolutions are particularly interesting in addressing one of the barriers to academic support for open access, in agreeing (in the words of the Case Western Resolution) to 'support the consideration of peer-reviewed Open Access material during the promotion and tenure process'. All three US university resolutions also addressed the key question of copyright transfer. Similar policy decisions in UK universities have largely been more low-key but nevertheless significant. For example, the Deans of all University College London (UCL) Faculties have now agreed

to support deposit by their academic staff in the UCL web-repository, while the University of York has agreed to 'strongly encourage staff to archive research papers in the repository, where copyright allows'. The CURL/SCONUL Scholarly Communication Group would welcome notification of more examples of this type of policy decision.

#### **STRUGGLE TO TAKE FORWARD WIPO DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

Various Latin American and Asian countries, supported by international consumer, library and disabled interest groups, are struggling to take forward the WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation) Development Agenda set in motion by the Geneva Declaration of September 2004. In summary, a group of developing countries managed to get access issues onto the WIPO agenda and since last October work has been progressing on an Access to Knowledge Treaty to be considered by WIPO. The Treaty would balance the interests of rights-holders with the needs of developing countries for access to information. The proponents of the Treaty are facing an uphill struggle against the in-built prejudices of the WIPO organisation in favour of rights-holders, and against the support of US and some European Governments for commercial interests. The outcome of this struggle is still in doubt. The parallels with struggles on copyright and publishing models within individual countries are very clear to those involved.

#### **JISC REPOSITORIES PROGRAMME**

The Advisory Group for the JISC Repositories Programme has agreed funding for 21 projects as the first stage of the Programme. The response to the Call for Proposals was so great that the total cost of the bids received was three times the funding available. Successful and unsuccessful bidding institutions are currently being notified by JISC staff and the projects will commence over the summer. In addition to the projects, JISC staff will continue to work on a number of features of the Repositories Programme, such as exploring the route to a national infrastructure for the building-up and sharing of repository content. The results from the FAIR (Focus on Access to Institutional Resources) Programme projects are also being made available through Neil Jacobs, the Repositories Programme Manager. The Repositories Programme is co-ordinated by the Repositories Programme Advisory Group with Helen Hayes of Edinburgh University as Chair.

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# News from member libraries

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## University of Birmingham

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#### **LIBRARY STRATEGY**

The library service at the University of Birmingham is delivered from the Main Library and twelve libraries and resource centres, located on the Edgbaston and Selly Oak Campuses, at the dental school and Shakespeare Institute. We are currently developing a vision and strategy for the twenty-first century academic library. In order to deliver this strategy we will be consulting with the academic schools of the university, and other users. We will also be working with a facilities management company to carry out a review of the space, with the aim of developing a blueprint for the future.

#### **LIBRARY SURVEY**

Information Services participated in the LibQual 2005 international library survey, as part of the SCONUL consortium.

The survey took place from 28 February to 24 March. We received a total of 2,135 responses from staff and students across the university. The survey measured user's perceptions of the library as a place (physical environment), affect of service (customer service) and information control (resources and services). A prize draw took place with a laptop (donated by Discount Computing Supplies Ltd, based at the university) as the prize. The winner, Anna Kalberer, a postgraduate student studying an MSc Money, Banking and Finance was chosen at random.

#### **CHAT WITH LIBRARY SERVICES DIRECT ONLINE**

Library Services Direct, our one stop shop for library services, has launched a new service. 'Ask a Librarian' is a pilot chat service which enables users to chat with Library Services staff via a link on the library's web site.

#### **NEW eLIBRARY TO BE LAUNCHED**

Metalib and SFX have been implemented in order to provide a new service, which will be launched at the beginning of September 2005. The eLibrary will improve access to eJournals and eResources, providing seamless access to both by search, subject and a-z listings. It will mean users can simul-

taneously cross search a number of resources such as databases, catalogues and websites with quick and easy access through one simple search screen. They will be able to save and email search results and create lists of favourite resources. The eLibrary will be integrated with the university portal, my.bham.ac.uk, and WebCT.

#### **SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

The special collections department is to receive the historical records of the Guild of Students of the University (formerly known as the Guild of Undergraduates).

The archives were deposited in the summer of 2004 and are a significant and welcome addition to the official archives of the university. The archives record the political, social, sporting and cultural endeavours –amongst other activities– of the student body over more than a century. The collection comprises minutes of the governing body and its various committees, financial records, copies of publications and photographs which date back to 1900. The deposit also includes two minute books of the Students' Union which begin in 1881, when the university was based at Mason College in the city centre.

Some of the Oswald Mosley papers held in the special collections department have recently been catalogued as part of the Pay & Power Project. The project began in March 2004, and will catalogue and promote collections from local archive services in the West Midlands, selected for content that reflects aspects of the political and economic development of the region. To celebrate this project there is an exhibition exploring Mosley's early political career and also features some of the personal and political papers of his first wife, Cynthia Mosley (née Curzon).

The Illuminating Faith exhibition at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery showcases one of the department's collections. The Mingana Collection, which was recently entrusted to the university by the Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust, consists of around 3,000 Arabic (Islamic and Christian), Syriac, Turkish, Persian, Hebrew, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, Samaritan and other manuscripts dating from the ninth to the nineteenth centuries. The Collection was brought together through the generosity of Edward Cadbury and collected by Alphonse Mingana during three travels to the Middle East in the 1920s.

Regular online exhibitions are being designed to promote the international renowned collections

that are housed within the department. Special Collections website has both permanent exhibitions, such as images from the Monumental Brass Society and YMCA archives and also monthly exhibitions: visit [www.special-coll.bham.ac.uk](http://www.special-coll.bham.ac.uk).

#### **UNIVERSITY TO TEAM UP WITH INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING GROUP**

University of Birmingham publications are moving on to a new home. An agreement has been reached with Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, to purchase the back list and the work in progress of the University of Birmingham Press.

Continuum specialises in academic publishing, with their main area of focus including theology, biblical studies, linguistics and literature. Birmingham titles will benefit from Continuum's place in the market, providing a wider forum and improved exposure for our academic authors. The university will retain the UBP imprint and the right to publish new titles which in future will be of specialist interest to the university or region. There is an option to co-publish new titles with Continuum.

The Press's breadth and range of subject matter is diverse. For example, *John Constable's skies* (by John Thornes, School of Geography and Environmental Science), is a study of the weather effects portrayed in Constable's paintings, while the series *The New Germany in context* explores issues as diverse as German cinema since reunification, and the myth and reality of Buchenwald children.

#### **UNIVERSITAS21 PROJECT**

A member of staff from Information Services has won a U21 fellowship to investigate information literacy and ICT skills developments in UK and Australian U21 universities.

In order to promote its involvement in Universitas 21 (U21), the university recently invited proposals for U21 fellowships: small-scale projects to foster collaboration and develop best practice within U21 universities. Ann-Marie Ashby (a.ashby@bham.ac.uk), academic liaison team manager was a lucky recipient of one of these, for her proposal to investigate information literacy and ICT skills developments in UK and Australian U21 universities.

Lisa Barwick  
Communications and Marketing Officer  
Tel: 0121 414 2554  
E-mail: [l.t.barwick@bham.ac.uk](mailto:l.t.barwick@bham.ac.uk)

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## Brunel University

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### **INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**

Brunel Library has achieved recognition as an Investor in People, following a successful assessment in April 2005. The library is the second department within the university, after human resources, to achieve IIP status. The assessment highlighted the changes in planning processes, staff development and culture that had taken place in recent years and congratulated the library on meeting IIP standards despite disruptions caused by building work and campus closures.

### **CLOSURE OF TWICKENHAM CAMPUS**

The Twickenham campus library closed its doors at the end of July following the sale and closure of the campus, and staff and stock moved to Uxbridge. The Twickenham library, which housed collections to support the education department – from 2004 part of the School of Sport and Education –, has a long history. Maria Grey College, the teacher training college founded in 1878, moved to Twickenham in 1944, becoming part of the West London Institute of Higher Education which merged with Brunel University in 1995.

Planning is already under way for the closure of the Osterley site, housing the School of Health Sciences and Social Care, next summer. Summer 2006 will be the third summer in a row when library staff have had to close a campus library and consolidate stock on the main campus site.

### **COPYRIGHT ADVICE AND SUPPORT**

In January 2005 Monique Ritchie was appointed to the new post of copyright and digital resources officer, based in the library but with a university-wide responsibility for managing copyright licences and providing a copyright advice and support service. With the imminent arrival of the CLA digitisation licence (as I write) and a university working group investigating e-theses, the need for a full-time copyright post has become essential. The university is fortunate in having a dedicated copyright officer, with a particular focus on digital resources in a VLE environment, and we hope to provide more details on this role in a future issue of *SCONUL Focus*.

### **TRANSPORT HISTORY COLLECTION**

Although the Runnymede campus library closed in 2004, the university has retained the site and the university archives are currently being transferred to the old library building. The library's special collection on transport history, which doc-

uments the history of railways and includes books, maps and ephemera, has been split between this building and a series of locked rooms at Uxbridge. It is now being consolidated at Runnymede, with new shelving and, in due course, a reading area for visitors, and once this work has been completed it should be more accessible for researchers. This will tie in neatly with the university's 2006 celebrations – which jointly commemorate the 40th anniversary of the university's royal charter and the bicentenary of the birth of Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Nick Bevan

Director of Library Services

E-mail: Nick.Bevan@brunel.ac.uk

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## Cambridge University

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### **STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2010**

The Library Syndicate has recently approved the University Library's strategic plan for the period 2005 to 2010. The plan reaffirms the library's mission to deliver world-class library and information services to meet the needs of the local, national and international scholarly community and to support the university's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

Over the next five years, library services will be provided in a more complex and challenging environment. The library will have to meet the challenge of providing an integrated infrastructure for research, by expanding the digital library and at the same time safeguarding the paper-based collections that still underpin research in many subjects. Planning will be needed for a potential move to electronic-only provision of journals in some of the sciences.

Specific plans include the provision of improved access to the collections via the online catalogue. The Greensleeves Project, to convert the records in the green guardbook volumes, is on target for completion at the end of 2005. Plans are in hand for continuing this project to other catalogues not currently accessible online. A range of web-based services is also planned, including improved access to the growing collection of electronic journals (now approaching 9,000 titles), and the DSpace digital repository will move from a project to a university-wide service at the beginning of 2006.

The strategic plan is at: [http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/strategic\\_plan.doc](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/strategic_plan.doc).

#### **THE FOOTLIGHTS ARCHIVE**

In February 2004, the archives of the Footlights Dramatic Club were presented to the University Archives as a gift under the will of Dr Harry Porter, Senior Archivist 1978-2003. They are proving as popular with students of theatre and comedy history as with TV production companies sourcing visual records of the many actors, satirists and comedians who cut their teeth in Club productions. Performers down the decades have included Jonathan Miller, David Frost, Peter Cook, Clive James, John Bird and John Fortune, 'Pythons' John Cleese, Graham Chapman and Eric Idle, 'Goodies' Graeme Garden, Tim Brooke-Taylor and Bill Oddie, Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie and Emma Thompson. Recent graduates include Matthew Holness (star/creator of Garth Marenghi's Darkplace on Channel 4) and Robert Webb (of Peep Show on Channel 4 and The Smoking Room on BBC).

The Footlights archives are extensive from the start, thanks to the efforts of Harry Porter. Records of Club administration survive, along with material relating to productions and performances, such as scripts, photographs, posters and programmes.

#### **CATHERINE COOKE COLLECTION**

The library has recently acquired a substantial collection of Russian books, journals, posters and other items from the estate of the late Dr Catherine Cooke. Dr Cooke, who had a world-wide reputation as an expert on Russian and Soviet architecture and design, was killed in a car accident early in 2004 at the height of her powers as a researcher and teacher. She bequeathed the bulk of her estate to the University Library.

Her bequest includes rare books published in Russia in the early years of the twentieth century and particularly the period just after the Revolution of 1917, when debate about theories of art and architecture in Russia had yet to be stifled. At the time of her death Dr Cooke had just mounted an exhibition on Russian graphic design, entirely composed of items of her own, at the St Bride Printing Library in London.

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## Leeds Metropolitan University

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#### **SELF SERVICES**

From a slow build up in 2003-04, self services in the library has taken off this year with an average of 66.5% of issues and returns of books now being carried out on a self service basis at our Headingley and Civic Quarter libraries (audio visual material is still issued via the counters). Library staff have worked hard throughout the year to ensure students are able to use the new technology and have been giving them demonstrations of benefits such as on-line renewals and reservations as well as how to borrow and return books. The technology means that students can borrow materials for themselves when the library is open overnight and late evenings at weekends.

For further information contact  
D.A.Young@leedsmet.ac.uk

#### **SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

The library has been investigating how it can support the university's corporate aim of internationalisation. Among a wide range of ideas was the decision to designate specific responsibility for international students to one of our librarians. Maria Kulas will liaise with the international office and elsewhere within the university to ensure the library is proactive in its support for international students. The role will also include encouraging the development of a library collection and environment to reflect an international perspective for all our staff and students. Maria can be contacted on [M.Kulas@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:M.Kulas@leedsmet.ac.uk)

#### **STAFFING NEWS**

Fiona Middleton has joined the university as deputy campus library manager at Civic Quarter and senior learning adviser for the Faculty of Health. Fiona has previously worked at the University of the Arts, Birkbeck College and the University of Westminster.

#### **RECOMMENDED READING**

Over the last year Wendy Luker, campus library manager at Headingley, has led a project identifying how we can improve access to resources on reading lists and in high demand. As well as encouraging more use of our short loan collection the team utilised management information from the library management system to identify titles requiring action. This could mean buying additional copies from a budget allocated to the project, either urgently from our NEYAL (North East and Yorkshire Academic Libraries) suppliers or directly from the university bookshop; one item



arrived in the library within ten minutes of being ordered! For the 2005-06 academic year we are also trialling a standard two week loan period for the majority of our stock. This will reduce to one week for any new loan or renewal of an existing loan once a set number of reservations have been placed. The advantage of this is that items are automatically loaned for the most appropriate period depending on the level of demand at the time of issue without the need for time consuming administrative intervention. The initiative has been welcomed by the students' union and helps us meet one of the priorities highlighted in our recent library survey of 'copies of more popular books'. Further evaluation of the project will continue as well as continuing to look at other ways of improving access for example via reading list management on Sentient Discover. Contact Wendy Luker for further information (W.Luker@leedsmet.ac.uk)

#### **LIBRARY DAY OUT!**

As a summer treat a group of library staff paid a visit to the library at the University of Lincoln. They received a warm welcome and hospitality from Lincoln staff throughout the day and were impressed with the architectural details, particularly the very distinctive contrast between ultra modern design and original features. The use of glass doors to group study rooms was just one of the 'why don't we do that in our library' comments arising from the exchange of views and ideas. Staff were paired with those doing similar roles and enjoyed the opportunity to chat with colleagues, discovering lots of differences in working practices, but also much in common.



*Picture of Leeds Met staff being shown self-issue and return by Lincoln staff*

Helen Finlay  
Planning and Marketing Manager  
E-mail: h.finlay@leedsmet.ac.uk

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## National Library of Scotland

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#### **HISTORIC NEWSPAPERS SAVED FOR THE NATION**

NEWSPLAN SCOTLAND, an ambitious campaign to preserve almost 4 million pages of Scotland's endangered historic newspapers from the period 1700 to 1950, led by the National Library of Scotland (NLS), has now been completed. The campaign formed the Scottish element of the UK NEWSPLAN Project, which was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund with contributions from the newspaper industry, participating libraries, and others. NEWSPLAN SCOTLAND adds 606 Scottish newspaper titles and 9,846 reels of microfilm to the National Library of Scotland's collection as well as extending the holdings of local libraries across Scotland. Many titles were filmed from original newspapers already held by NLS.

As a result NLS now has the most comprehensive archive of Scottish newspapers in the world, including some copies of newspapers previously held only by the British Library. This offers readers the opportunity to access the content of titles that have not been read in Scotland since they were first published – some of which date back to the early 18th century.

Researchers and local historians can now retrieve early editions of current newspapers or historic titles which are no longer in publication – such as the Aberdeen Shaver, Caledonian Mercury, Cambuslang Pilot, Dumfries Mercury, Piper O' Dundee, Edinburgh Star, Glasgow Clincher, Greenock Election Squib, Highland Echo, Scottish Prohibitionist and Saturday Smile.

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## University of Reading

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#### **RE-INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE**

We successfully achieved re-accreditation as an Investor in People in July 2005.

#### **MUSIC LIBRARY**

On 1 July 2005, Reading University Music Library closed its doors permanently following the recent decision to close the Intra-School section of music. Situated in the Music building since the early 1960s, the library was developed into a large teaching collection during Dr Margaret Laurie's 36 years in post as music librarian. The current music librarian, Christopher Cipkin, has been managing a project to rationalise duplicate stock in preparation for integrating most of the library with the other music collection at Bulmer-

she Court at some stage in the future; a fetch and carry service has been operating in the meantime to ensure continued access. The collection will continue to be used by Music Education within the Institute of Education and as a general university resource to support ongoing wider musical activity on campus.



Rachel Redrup  
Marketing Co-ordinator  
E-mail [r.m.j.redrup@rdg.ac.uk](mailto:r.m.j.redrup@rdg.ac.uk)

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## University of Warwick

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### **THE PAPERS OF SIR BILL MORRIS**

As the culmination of a cataloguing project financed by the Transport and General Workers' Union, the papers of Sir Bill Morris, one of the most significant figures of the British trade union movement in recent years, have now been fully catalogued and the catalogue mounted on the Modern Records Centre's website. These papers predominantly cover Sir Bill's term of office as General Secretary of the TGWU, with some earlier papers, and include appointments diaries, engagement files, speech notes, correspondence and subject files covering a wide range of topics of professional and personal interest, and a large collection of publications in the same fields. The catalogue is available at:  
<http://www.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/ead/126bm.htm>.

Gareth J Johnson  
E-mail: [Gareth.Johnson@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:Gareth.Johnson@warwick.ac.uk)

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# New from LISU

## **Availability of accessible publications by Suzanne Lockyer, Claire Creaser and J Eric Davies**

**(Loughborough: LISU, 2005)**

**Published May 2005, pp 47 A4**

**£20 post paid UK (overseas postage:**

**Europe £3.30, rest of world £5.50**

**ISBN 1-901786-91-9**

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This report, published with the permission of the Royal National Institute of the Blind, documents the results of the Availability of Accessible Publications project, undertaken by LISU for the RNIB.

The findings support the Right to Read Alliance's campaign, which aims to significantly increase the proportion of publications available in accessible formats.

An estimate of the availability of alternative formats for all books published over a five-year period was made, based on a random sample from the British National Bibliography (BNB) for the years 1999-2003. An estimate was also made of the availability of alternative formats for a selection of specific categories (adult fiction, junior fiction, biography, cookery, gardening and sport) based on a random sample from BNB. A sample of popular biography titles was selected from The Bookseller Buyer's Guide for the same five-year period.

The report discusses the background to the study, describes the methodology used and presents the findings from the two stages of the project.

The report is available to download free of charge from the LISU website: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/dis/lisu/>.

Clear print copies can be ordered from LISU, tel 01509 635680, email [lisu@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:lisu@lboro.ac.uk) or via the web.

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# Online Information 2005

29 November – 1 December 2005,  
Grand Hall, Olympia, London,  
[www.online-information.co.uk](http://www.online-information.co.uk)

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Online Information is a three-day international exhibition and conference addressing online content and information management solutions. It is designed for information professionals, information management professionals and senior business decision-makers.

In addition to meeting the many business information and science, technology and medicine information providers, visitors can discover a whole spectrum of information management solutions with two major co-located events: a conference and an exhibition.

The conference will be addressed by over ninety information industry experts and business leaders in over thirty sessions.

The keynote address will come from David Weinberger, co-author of *The cluetrain manifesto* on 'The new shape of knowledge – everything is miscellaneous', giving insights into the direction of the digitally connected world.

The exhibition will feature over forty new exhibitors. Visitors will be able to compare and contrast suppliers of business information and scientific, technical and medical information, and meet the leading suppliers of web and enterprise CM at co-located Content Management Europe. Exhibitors will also demonstrate the vital role of enterprise document and records management in compliance with freedom of information laws and risk management.

Members of SCONUL will benefit from the following conference booking discounts:

- Register by 1 November 2005 for the Association Super Early Bird discount, saving 25%.  
Total cost: £561 + VAT
- Register after 1 November 2005 for the Special Association Delegate rate saving 15%.  
Total cost: £636 + VAT.

To view the conference programme in full, or book your place online, please visit: [www.online-information.co.uk/conference.html](http://www.online-information.co.uk/conference.html).

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# Advice for authors

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*SCONUL Focus* is the journal of SCONUL, the Society of College, National and University Libraries. It aims to bring together articles, reports and news stories from practitioners in order to generate debate and promote good practice in the national libraries and the university and higher education college sector.

Contributions are welcomed from colleagues in all fields and at all levels: we merely request that the items contributed are concise, informative, practical and (above all!) worth reading.

Although we do not make strict stipulations about length we do recommend authors to consult a recent issue of *SCONUL Focus* to see if their approach seems in keeping with other published pieces.

*SCONUL Focus* is published in both paper and electronic versions. The electronic version is on open access via the SCONUL Web site. Any author who does not wish to have their article made available via the Web should let the Editor know.

The copyright in items published in *SCONUL Focus* remains the property of the author(s) or their employers as the case may be. Items are accepted on the basis that SCONUL will normally expect to grant permission for the reproduction of articles, on paper or in other media, for educational/research purposes. Authors should contact the Chair of the Editorial Board if they would like to discuss this policy.

A copy of *SCONUL Focus* can be supplied on request to a member of the Editorial Board or from SCONUL's office at 102 Euston Street, London NW1 2HA, email: [sconul@sconul.ac.uk](mailto:sconul@sconul.ac.uk). An online version can be found via [www.sconul.ac.uk](http://www.sconul.ac.uk).

Items should be submitted (preferably) via email or on disk to your contact on the Editorial Board or Antony Brewerton ([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:

Antony Brewerton,  
Editor, *SCONUL Focus*  
Oxford Brookes University Library,  
Headington Campus, Gipsy Lane, Headington,  
Oxford. OX3 0BP

Tel: 01865 483139;

Email: [awbrewerton@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:awbrewerton@brookes.ac.uk)

We look forward to hearing from you.