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Contents

Life begins at 40

Welcome to issue 40 of *SCONUL Focus* (née *SCONUL Newsletter*).

Such a milestone is invariably the time to take stock and reflect on the past but also to look to the future.

Recently I was involved in a Chartership session with Jessica Duffield and Katharine Widdows, two of our Chartership candidates at Warwick, and their mentor, Christine Bradford. We decided to assess the future skills needed by librarians by reviewing some recent job adverts in CILIP's *Gazette* and the person specifications allied to these posts. In our quest for the future we partly ended up by reviewing the past and (Chris and I) assessing how librarianship had changed over the last ten years. Posts today invariably mention 'customer care' or a 'customer-centred approach'. Ten years ago I remember our library's discussion list buzzing with debates about the correct term for our 'users'/ 'readers'/ 'clients' ...and 'customers' was not universally popular! IT skills, once 'desired', are now expected. And 'working under pressure' or 'able to cope with change' seems to appear everywhere, really showing the increasingly dynamic nature of our profession.

But what of the future? We explored these developments to encourage Jess and Katharine – not that they need much encouraging – to consider the skills they will need to help them to be successful as they proceed in their careers.

This future-looking theme is continued in this issue of *SCONUL Focus*. Young librarians (including our two Chartership candidates) give their impressions of the future. Mary Antonesa gives an overview of the drivers for change and the likely effect on our wider profession. We look at future trends for induction and have a suite of articles reviewing the use of Podcasting and other Web 2.0 technologies in the Library world. Even our *Week in the Life* this time comes from Jenny Delasalle whose job is to research the current landscape and plan future innovative service delivery.
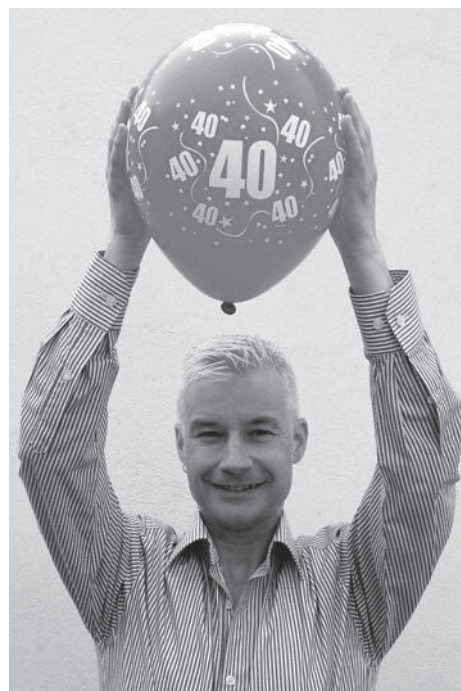
So welcome to issue 40. Welcome to the future…

Antony Brewerton
SCONUL Focus Editorial Board

Future librarians: how today's young professionals see tomorrow's profession

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'We are all interested in the future, for that is where you and I are going to spend the rest of our lives'.

So begins Ed Wood Jnr's classic B-movie *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. Eddie made some pretty strange films and had some pretty strange ideas, but few could argue with this piece of homespun wisdom.

Why this interest? Is this mere curiosity? Or is there more to it than that?

Isn't part of our interest concerned with *anticipating* the future? Isn't part of it to do with anticipating what skills we might need to be successful in the future …and making sure we develop these skills while we are waiting for the future to turn up?!

Another one of my favourite (and admittedly more sensible) quotes about the future comes from the historian Thomas Carlyle in his 1831 work *Essays: characteristics*:

'To-day is not yesterday: we ourselves change; how can our Works and Thoughts, if they are always to be the fittest, continue always the same?'

The 'fittest'. To be successful we need to be providing the best fit. And this comes from planning, at a library level and at an individual level.

For the manager it is all about providing best fit with the changing environment. This is why business leaders are so obsessed with environmental scanning and scenario planning. This is why SCONUL regularly brings together The Great and The Good to conjure up the SCONUL Vision (see www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/pubs/vision 2010). Informed by such activities, business and library managers can ensure their organisations adapt and grow and hence (hopefully) develop a sustainable competitive advantage.

But what about the individual? If our Works and Thoughts are to be the fittest we likewise need to make informed career choices. As individuals, we need to second guess the future.

But how best to do this? As a mentor I have sometimes encouraged mentees to undertake a personal SWOT analysis. As with an organisation, Strengths and Weaknesses are internal, that is personal, whilst Opportunities and Threats are external. Strengths and Weaknesses are useful for identifying training needs (to maintain Strengths and eradicate Weaknesses). Threats indicate what you need to guard against (again informing options for self development). But probably the most interesting is Opportunities, possible developments out there that you should be capitalising upon.

It was some of these thoughts that lay behind an email that I sent out to various library lists (including the Chartership list lis-cilip-reg) in March. For this future-looking 'life begins at 40' issue I asked young professionals on the 'right' side of 40 (older readers can address letters of complaint to the Editor!) to consider:

• What will libraries look like in the future?
• What will be real and what will be virtual?
• What will make for a successful service?
• What roles will information professionals have (assuming we survive) and what skills do we need to develop (to make sure we do survive)?

So what did our younger colleagues come up with? What follows is how today's young professionals see tomorrow's profession (plus a personal view from a slightly older – but still sprightly! – journal editor on what will be needed to be successful in the future).

I would like to thank all those who took the time to polish off their crystal balls and send their ideas to Focus.

It looks to me like our future is in pretty safe hands.

A balancing act, or the 'without a safety net' generation

Pete Smith
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Here *and* there. Virtual *and* physical. To borrow Walt Crawford's word, *balanced*.

I see the libraries of the future as places where the products of human imagination are made available, and where new forms of production and sharing are made possible. Not so different from libraries now, in many ways.

Many of the information services will be virtual – e-books, online journals and so on.
Yet to me, libraries aren't only in the provision-of-information business, which seems to doom them to obsolescence. They should be about information in its context, whether that is a learning context or the life of a local community.

Physical libraries will have a role as a community space which supports the work of the wider community. As an example, a college library would act as an exemplar of scholarship and as a place in which students work together and make their own contribution to scholarship.

And the librarians of the future? We will need to be flexible, so as to be able to adapt to change; but along with this flexibility we will need discernment, so that we're not swept along by every new idea or technology. Many of the skills of librarians past – selecting, organising and making the materials people need accessible – still apply.

Libraries and librarians will be *there*. Wherever there is.

The future of libraries: new learning environments for 21st century users

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When I was looking at degree courses the library would rarely be on the agenda at the University open day. But today the academic library -its collections, services and most importantly its learning space- has become a key tool in the University recruitment drive. Libraries are increasingly becoming powerful marketing symbols of the institution's values, and of its commitment to the student learning experience. As Universities continue to work harder to meet their paying customers' needs, the next ten to fifteen years will see the arrival of more innovative learning spaces. Rather than the collection-driven repositories of knowledge of yesteryear, these spaces are flexible, technologically-focused, collaborative working environments. They may not even be 'libraries'. Instead, they are learning cafes, learning grids and information commons – where coffee drinking is acceptable and no librarian ever says 'ssshh.' That's if we're still even calling ourselves 'librarians'…

The Age of Empowerment

Laura Jeffrey
Learning Support Librarian
Durham University Library

The future is a challenging prospect and yet for some the present is a little too revolutionary. We face resistance to e-only access from academics, bemusement from students over our forays into Web 2.0, and reluctance by some colleagues to embrace new developments that see a shift from face-to-face to online support. We are moving towards an age of empowerment for our users as we lose our traditional hold on mediating between them and the resources they desire. The challenge is not specifically the move to remote delivery and cyber services but to maintain the pace of change seen in recent years, stay open to new innovations and strengthen our advocacy campaigns. The librarians of the future will need to build on the current creativity of some notable individuals and retain this flexible outlook in order to thrive.

A central essential service

Jessica Duffield
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Libraries need to transform themselves into lively, inspiring twenty first century establishments, in order to be accessible to everyone, and re-establish their importance within society. In doing this libraries must take into account the need to adapt and change.

The way libraries are marketed is key to the future role of the service. There is a need to move away from the traditional stereotype, listen to users and maintain flexibility to evolve as appropriate. For example, by removing the specific title of "Library", libraries could re-brand themselves as "Centres of Information" enabling them to reinvent themselves as a central essential service that can be easily accessed.

In addition to these changes, there may also be a need to alter the physical space. A variety of learning styles has to be catered for. Greater emphasis within learning has been placed on social and collaborative interaction; this could be reflected in a wider variety of study spaces within the library, together with the more traditional independent study environment. It is important to ensure that the library user's experience is a positive one and that they will be encouraged to return. This may mean introducing services into the space that previously had not been associated with the library, such as cafes or crèche facilities. In addition, any open informal spaces could be utilised to house visiting exhibitions or aspects of local interest, thus involving the local community and developing a greater sense of public ownership of this facility.

A wider view of the function of the library needs to be investigated; the views of stakeholders should be sought and an adventurous and visionary development plan needs to be formulated to enable libraries to move successfully into the future.

The library in your pocket

Graham Fennell
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It's amazing what you can fit in your pocket. You can already buy so-called mobile phones which act as PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants), web browsers, sat-navs, MP3 players, digital cameras and so on in a single device. In the future you will be able to add 'library' to that list. The university student of the future will access almost all the resources they need from a single pocketable device. E-books, e-journals, e-prints and VLEs are already moving learning resources online. In the future – the near future – students will be using their mobile 'phones' to do literature searches and to read books, journals and other online resources. So what will become of physical libraries? For a start the increasing intrusion of PCs into library spaces will reverse as more and more students have their own handheld computers. Replacing rows of PCs will be cafes, chill-out areas and private and group study booths. Book and journal collections will stop growing as emphasis is placed on e-materials. As for librarians, well, we'll still be needed. It's just that the primary emphasis of our jobs will be on dealing with online enquiries, subscriptions to e-resources and various IT and technical issues related to our library systems. We will be online digital learning resource specialists. It's the future. And it's also the present.

An Information Renaissance?

Melissa Wyatt
Library and Information Manager
RTPI

The great thing about the future of information professionals is that with courage of conviction and patience you can adapt your profession to suit you. You could be a researcher, collection manager, librarian, an information manager, a learning resource centre manager, a teacher and an academic all rolled into one.

It's about leading with imagination as well following your passion. Easier said than done. The more you love a specialist role such as art librarianship, the less likely you are to see it advertised in the recruitment pages. It really is down to us to create

the opportunities. Not great news. There is hope however: the library and information profession is still growing in many ways. Without the career choices we make, the profession would stagnate. New life is being breathed into the profession through web development, research and widening IT skills. It takes time and perseverance. Personal development and expectations determine how much one is motivated to pursue career development opportunities.

What does the future hold for libraries? I think they will be integrated into more open plan environments, merging more life long learning educational facilities, be it a national, specialist university or public library. The role of the professional could be more home- as well as library-based, with the improved technology in online cataloguing, information databases and research networks. Some commentators are criticising the profession from both ends of the spectrum. According to some, librarianship is on its way out, and knowledge management is a passing trend; others view knowledge and information management as a part of a major professional renaissance. I believe this change is giving us an opportunity to put a value on our professional roles. There are aspects of information management practice that bear a close resemblance to librarianship. The importance of knowledge creation, networking, and greater involvement in long term strategy requires us to develop a multitude of skills.

I have met so many gifted, supportive and inspiring individuals during the process of Chartership. I believe faith in librarianship – combined with support, motivation, and imagination – will encourage others to make the transition into this ever-evolving profession.

Multi-Resources Hubs and Library Guardian Technologists

Jane Hindle
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I started my LIS career in the late '90s in Further Education and at the time held what I considered a grandiose title of LRA, Learning Resources Assistant. Even then, though, developments were taking place and this was personified by the (then) Head of Service who maintained a 'no-nonsense' approach to the management of resources

and firmly held a mantra of 'adapt and change'. So, as Library personnel, we were never, ever Library Assistants. Why you may wonder? Our roles encompassed a large element of 'IT' related work. I, 'fresh faced' into the world of LIS, found myself wanting to learn all library skills yet feeling daunted as I was steered towards the IT arena.

Time and tide and several posts later, I no longer find myself in that scenario. Instead, I'm eager to embrace developments of e-resources and though one could argue the pros and cons of such a development, I feel this is not just about my personal acceptance of change. There seems to be an 'expectation' by some students that I should be that all-embracing 'library guardian technologist'.

So, as I sit here 'clacking' away at the electronic typewriter churning out spine labels (much to the bemusement of the students), I dream of a future library. Or should we call it a 'multi-resources hub': a collection predominantly of e-resources with a preserved print collection. Just think: no fines and no waiting list for the same book.

Now there's a thought!

We're too sexy ...for our stereotype

Katharine Widdows
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What is the future of British Libraries and what skills will librarians need to add to their already impressive repertoire in order to ensure a future for our profession?

We already have the skills and ability required to ensure the continuance of an excellent service for our users, as long as they see the value in having one. Librarians are fast-learning and multi-talented, they are already project managers, communicators, organisers, motivators, web designers, teachers, authors, policy makers, problem solvers, administrators, and more.

Our services develop all the time. Change is nothing new to the LIS professional, and librarians consistently rise to the challenge that development presents and, frequently, exceed expectations in meeting it. The potential future threat to our profession is not a result of inability to grow

or adapt, it comes from being misperceived, mis-understood, and undervalued as a result. In short, our problem is our stereotype.

The libraries and the librarians of the future must challenge the opinions that devalue the services they offer and the work they do. Libraries need to be willing to compete for recognition. They need to be attention grabbing, engaging, and outward reaching. This is a tall order and will require a new skill set, not to help us do our jobs, but to help us raise our profile.

Future librarians will need to be presenters, publicists, ambassadors, attention seekers!

The librarian of the future will be known for being bold and forward, exuding confidence, oozing energy, stimulating and enticing, smart, sassy and passionate. They will sell and market what we already have, what we already do, what we already know ourselves to be.

The stereotype of the future? Libraries are exciting! Librarians are sexy!

Librarians without walls

Antony Brewerton
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What will mark out our future? Breaking out of the confines …of our libraries, of our training, of ourselves.

A few years ago one of the buzz terms for the profession –reflecting on the effects of new and exciting e-developments- was 'libraries without walls'. Increasingly important in the future will be the concept of 'librarians without walls'.

Part of this will be concerned with physical outreach. Our stock (e-books, e-journals, online databases) is already without walls. We, how-ever, are a bit more like Googie Withers: within these walls! We have lived –up until now– in a world where we sit behind desks and wait for our customers to come to us. This model has helped confirm our authority. It has also helped to pro-vide a barrier. Don't get me wrong. The support we offer provides us with a sustainable competi-tive advantage over competition like Google. But

we no longer live in an Oliver Twist world where timid users are expected to come up to the desk in search of information to ask "please Librar-ian, can I have some more?". We need to look to other, non-library models for lessons in survival. Look at HMV, the High Street music retailer. How has HMV reacted to online competition? Partly to develop its online presence but –more signifi-cantly– by really improving customer care in its stores. You don't have to queue up at a desk to ask where 'grime' CDs are kept. Look lost and someone is at your side in seconds. We need to be doing the same with rovering/floor walking activities.

But we also need to be getting out of the library. One of the quotes that will most inform my future comes from that leading light of the National Health Service, Muir Gray:

> "The most valuable resource in any library is the librarian, but they can be even more valu-able outside the library."

We need to be working with colleagues outside the library. We are good at networking with librarian colleagues outside our own libraries. We need to be working more with other colleagues: academics, other support agencies, university management and the like. We need to be devel-oping services in partnership with customers, champions and other service providers. We need to be less tied to organisational structures and focus more on organisational needs. We need to get out of our comfort zone. We need to get out of the library more.

I think this is becoming easier. More of us feel comfortable outside the library because more members of the profession have a wider experi-ence outside librarianship. A future trend will see individuals developing skills outside the LIS sector and bringing them into that sector to good effect. We may even get 'boomerang profession-als', 'boomerang librarians' moving from the library world to other sectors and back, bring-ing skills from one to the other, industry skills to librarianship …and vica versa. I have worked with colleagues from retail backgrounds who have brought a highly developed customer care focus to libraries. My own marketing training has really influenced how I view libraries at an opera-tional and (increasingly) strategic level. What other key development in the business world could we appropriate for librarianship? Spot that, spot a winner, young librarian, and your future will be secure.

Challenging times: some thoughts on the professional identity of the academic librarian

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INTRODUCTION

'The most enduring and flexible learning institution is the Library, organised for well over two millennia – predating the first universities by well over one millennium – to provide self paced and self selected transmission of knowledge.'[1]

This article reviews the professional identity of the academic librarian within higher education in the 21st century. It considers the challenges that libraries and library staff face in supporting learning. Massification and technological advancements are two key changes that have significantly impacted on library users and library usage. This article will review these developments and will focus in particular on how they have transformed the professional identity of the librarian working in higher education. 'Librarians function in a series of larger environments'[2] and these environments are dealing with a growing number of contexts for information. This article suggests that the concept of librarian as teacher is increasingly strengthening in library discourse and that this role will shape the future professional identity of the librarian working in higher education.

TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION

Technological changes are impacting on all professions within higher education and we should not underestimate the radical changes they bring to the way all those involved in higher education carry out information seeking, retrieval and delivery.

The research opportunities now available for both interdisciplinary and cross-country collaboration were unimaginable in higher education 30 years ago. Instant communication allows researchers across the world to work in real time on real projects. Never before has so much information been available. Researchers now have access to thousands of electronic journals and can cross-search databases of library journals in their library building but also from their offices, labs or homes. Library users have increasing functionality when engaging with material and these functions, such as printing, saving, e-mailing and receiving alerts via newsfeeds and blogs and so on, make the nature of reading and finding information a more dynamic experience than before. A trip to the library is no longer a necessity for getting information because thousands of library resources can now be accessed with the click of a button from any computer.

These technological changes have implications for teaching and learning, and therefore naturally for the place of libraries within these practices. New tools such as virtual learning environments (VLEs) are heavily used for teaching purposes, allowing higher education providers to offer courses to students off site and even in other countries. Face-to-face contact, while desirable, is no longer a necessity. Librarians need to ensure that they can support learning wherever it is taking place, regardless of whether it is in a classroom or in a VLE.

All of these changes are impacting on the work of the professional librarian. As it becomes less necessary for library users to come to the library building to gather their required information it becomes more necessary for library staff to go outside their library building to provide the help and support needed.

MASSIFICATION

'Massification, the shift from elite to mass education, brings ensuing issues such as greater diversity of student background, higher staff/student ratios, more entry pathways, more credit transfers, higher use of technology in teaching and more flexibility of enrolment and delivery.'[3]

The development of mass higher education after World War 2 encouraged students from middle-class and then from working-class backgrounds

to enter and stay on in secondary school. Growing numbers of these students qualified for entry to higher education and this growth in the numbers of students seeking and entering university-type education had a number of consequences for higher education systems in terms of the growth of the old elite universities and the creation of new universities.[4] Massification has changed the nature of the student body and its relationship with the university. The 'student body' is constantly evolving and libraries need to find ways to support learning for all our users.

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY – WHAT IS CHANGING?

While these changes are affecting all sectors in higher education, they have significant implications for libraries. The emergence of hybrid libraries – where traditional library material such as books and journals co-exist with newer, more emergent forms of information – is seen as one of the great changes in recent times to libraries and the profession. The functions and operations of the traditional library have changed and these have impacted greatly on professional identity. Increasingly there is more collaboration between libraries and computer centres / information technology departments and this offers new possibilities where both parties are involved in providing training and there is a joint use of information technology skills. Collaboration between libraries and teaching and learning centres is also a new development in recent years and has the potential to be a powerful partnership.

NATIONAL POLICIES

National policies such as lifelong learning, fourth level learning and the expansion of the higher education sector and the numbers within it are major drivers of change in the LIS (Library and Information Science) sector.[5] Large and rapid increases in student numbers and the resulting staff–student ratio imbalance have had a significant impact upon teaching and learning, as have modularisation of degree courses and shorter timeframes between the submission of assignments and examination timetables.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Changes in methods of communication have also impacted on libraries. The unimagined growth in information and communication technology, coupled with the increasing use of information technology in teaching and learning, has changed the way users view their libraries. When they

come to an information desk users expect to get answers on how to use email and VLEs as well as how to find a journal article. Within higher education library staff have found themselves dealing more and more with computing and learning support enquiries.

INFORMATION LITERACY

We are also seeing the strengthening of the concept of information literacy, and this is very significant for the professional identity of librarians. Much has been written about information literacy[6] and the definition most used is the one coined by the American Library Association (ALA): that information literacy is the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyse and use information. While librarians have always supported users in finding information, now more than ever this is seen not just as a skill for higher education but also as something needed for full participation in a democracy. An information-literate person is able to think critically, evaluate information and make informed decisions. It has become increasingly clear that students cannot learn everything they need to know in their field of study in a few years at college. Information literacy equips them with the critical skills needed to become independent lifelong learners.

SHAPING INTO THE ROLE REQUIRED FOR THE FUTURE?

The librarianship profession has much to offer and should be leading in these changing times in higher education. 'Librarianship should be the empowering partner of all professions in the age of information and knowledge'.[7] However, in reality it must be asked whether the professional identity of the librarian is shaping into the role required for the future. On the ground, professional staff are adapting to these changes and job advertisements reflect this.[8] The need to promote library resources and to teach users how to seek and retrieve information effectively is now a central skill in the library profession and it is reflected frequently in job advertisements. It is a key new part of the professional identity. However, it would appear that traditional identifiable library skills are being subsumed by more generic, transferable skills that are not specifically related to library qualifications. Libraries are looking for staff with qualifications in areas other than librarianship in order to respond to the growing demands on the profession. These are reflected in more generic roles and more generic job titles and descriptions within the library profession. In adapting this way, the profession is taking on

and developing new skills. However, as Kennan argues, 'there is growing lack of clarity about the skills, competencies and qualifications required for professional librarians and the jurisdiction of librarianship'.[9] Library and information science qualifications need to continually update their curricula to ensure that the profession can acquire key necessary skills. There are more changes ahead, the beginnings of which we can see now in terms of the heightened functionality of electronic information and tighter management of library resources. It is likely that over the coming years change will remain a consistent feature of library work.

CONCLUSION

More research needs to take place on these issues. For now, it appears that libraries need staff who can promote, market and teach library users how to make the best use of library resources. This support needs to take place at the point of learning. The evidence from literature and job advertisements indicates that learning support and teaching are featuring within the professional discourse and professional identity. Despite all the changes outlined above, it is still difficult to imagine a university without a library. The sense of a 'library space' is more important than ever, no matter what forms this space will take. Supporting our learners regardless of whether they are in the library building or using our resources off campus is a challenge. It is this challenge that will shape our professional identity in the coming years.

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A week in the life

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My role is to run evaluation and pilot projects that could enhance the library's services and it involves collaboration with many other staff within the library and across the university, as well as keeping up to date with the latest library developments. There is one other service innovation officer at Warwick, Alejandro Chiner Arias, and the research and innovation unit where we work is managed by John Dale, who also heads up the systems team and the 'learning grid' at the University of Warwick library as a part-time role alongside his role as head of eLab, Warwick's own e-learning technology development team.

MONDAY

First thing in the morning I have a meeting with Rachel Edwards, manager of the Learning Grid, to discuss plans for the e-Learning Showcase day that will be held there in June. We meet in University House because that is where the learning grid is and where Rachel's desk is, and because it's on my way from the car park to the library. Also, the café there does the best hot chocolate on campus so it's a good way to start the day. I arrive at Rachel's desk with hot chocolate and croissant, to discover that she's polishing off a coffee and Danish … so we decamp back to the café for our meeting.

The e-Learning Showcase day promises to be a big event. Our steering group for this event comprises the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, and representatives from our teaching quality unit, e-learning advisers, our centre for academic practice and development advisers and the library. Rachel and I have sent print and e-mail invitations to academic staff who have been using innovative teaching practices to contribute to the day, which is to be held in the learning grid.

Rachel and I discuss how many responses we've had to the e-Learning Showcase day invitations and what people seem to be willing to contribute

in the way of demonstrations, presentations, posters, etc. We consider whether people who are unable to attend on the day might be willing to contribute some video footage that can be playing in one of the areas of the learning grid, in the same way that we plan to feature podcasts.

Liaison for planning the event has so far involved our communications office, the e-learning development team, a printing firm, hospitality and our Unitemps temping agency. We are finalising draft contributions from each of the main services involved for a brochure to accompany the event itself, detailing the role that each of our services play in supporting electronic teaching and learning activities, with a particular focus on the electronic.

I spend most of the rest of the day planning for tomorrow's scanning practice event. This event seems to have been sorely needed as I proposed it last autumn and got lots of positive feedback on the idea. I've had lots of advice from Lizzie Gadd at Loughborough who manages the jiscmail list lis-copyseek on the programme and feel glad to have secured so many good speakers. There has obviously been a lot of prior planning but there is always more to do, especially tweaking my own presentation.

I receive one or two last-minute apologies so the delegate list needs altering and the name badges taking out. The final version of the delegate list and programme are printed and copies are made. I run though my checklist: signs to point to our room, welcome signs, water jug and cups for speakers, vital phone numbers, taxi-booking sheet, and so on.

TUESDAY

This is a busy day and I come in early to make sure that everything is in order for our scanning practice event. I manage an early morning cup of tea before Alejandro and I go across to the mathematics building where our event is to be held. One or two people got there super early, so I regret my cup of tea! Still, we set up the reception desk and the refreshments arrive quickly afterwards. Albert the porter is great and sets out some chairs for people to sit on in the foyer where the refreshments are served.

As the delegates arrive and Alejandro hands out their badges and programmes, I check the room out. I have a brief panic when I can't turn the projector on, but audio-visual services come out

very quickly and sort it in no time. The speakers' slides are all up there ready and I manage to great them as they arrive. I take the first two speakers up to the room to settle in then start rounding the others up.

At the end of the day I reflect on how well it went overall. There are one or two lessons I have learnt for next time, such as that the air conditioning in the maths building is very noisy and when it kicked in it distracted from the speaker. Also, I should have announced where the food was being served before we broke for lunch, although people did find it anyway! I have made lots of contacts and learnt loads about what others are doing with their scanning, which was the whole point of the day, so I go home feeling tired but pleased.

WEDNESDAY

I use the research and innovation unit (RIU) blog to record information about the new scanning service that the British Library spoke about at the scanning practice event yesterday. Our blog began as a way of trying to tell people in the library what a research and innovation unit does in a library, and it has become more widely read – we have readers from all around the world, according to Google analytics. Occasionally we get comments from students or other staff at Warwick, and occasionally from other library professionals. Keeping the blog up to date is a useful way of recording our thoughts on innovative technologies and developments, so we can refer back to websites we've found interesting in the past if we get a new project on a topic we've blogged about in the past.

I go for lunch with the careers service information team whom I worked with on a secondment in 2006 to cover their manager's maternity leave. I really enjoyed that secondment and it's nice to keep in touch. I was very pleased to recruit the careers' service's second graduate trainee, Emma, whilst I was working there, so I am happy to see how she's getting on.

The careers service is based in the same building as many of the university administration departments at Warwick, including finance, student records, the international office, etc., so I made lots of useful contacts whilst working over in that building. Working for the careers service gave me a different perspective on the university whilst also remaining within the information profession.

I spend the afternoon investigating OpenURL matters relating to our tool, Build-a-Link. I came up with the idea for a tool to create links to journal articles when you type in the reference details. My manager, John Dale, is also the manager of eLab, part of our IT services department here at Warwick, and he put me together with one of his eLab team to co-ordinate the creation of Build-a-Link. It was originally designed to look up the base url of a provider and append metadata elements to the url to make the OpenURL link. However, this caused us problems when a provider merged with another, so the urls created by Build-a-Link no longer worked when the domain name ceased to be used. Instead we're going to generate links that go to our OpenURL resolver, WebBridge, so the links created by Build-a-Link will last much longer.

THURSDAY

A telephone call comes in from an academic wanting an article to be scanned urgently for tomorrow. I go through our seven checks to work out whether the article can be scanned or not, find it on the shelves, scan it, record it, add the copyright notice and put it on the library's website with restricted permissions, before e-mailing the tutor with the url. It's lucky for that tutor that he called on a day when I had the time to do all that! Two more requests come in by e-mail but they can wait until tomorrow when Alejandro returns, and we can further refine the procedure we have for processing extracts.

I take some time to check out the Mindjet MindManager software that is mind-mapping software available to Warwick staff. I create a basic mind map of copyright to get me started, adding links to web pages, documents and mailing lists. I have a feeling that this map is going to grow rather fast, but I like the fact that I can structure all my links in a visible way.

FRIDAY

Alejandro and I use the RIU forum to discuss the process for scanning extracts: this way manager John Dale can track the conversation, as he is based on another campus for most of the week. Also, we can refer to the forum at a later date to check what we said, and so can other members of staff.

As I promised that I would publish a web page for the PowerPoint slides from the scanning practice event before the end of the week, I chase

one speaker and load it all up before e-mailing all the delegates to inform them of the url. I also look up one or two other websites to link to from mine, relevant to people's enquiries on the day. I've had so many nice e-mails about the event that I forward them on to the library managers: I enjoyed organising the event, so it's good that they should know it was a success.

At the end of the day I frantically print out maps and gather paperwork in preparation for LILAC (Librarians' Information Literacy Annual Conference) on Monday. Train tickets, hotel reservation, event details, laptop, out of office auto mail, voicemail: CHECK! Ready for a weekend off …

Podcasting: if Terry Wogan can do it, so can we …

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Yes indeed … if Terry Wogan, the well-known BBC Radio 2 broadcaster, can produce podcasts, so can Aberdeen University Library. Our journey into completely unknown territory, in acquiring new creative and technical skills, has been an education in many ways. The library 'Pod-Squad' (alias Claire Molloy and Elaine Shallcross) would like to share our experiences of producing podcasts with library teams who are considering having a go themselves.

First of all, don't be afraid of the technology. It is not difficult to create a basic MP3 audio file using open source software such as Audacity. It doesn't even cost a great deal – the important question is 'Can you see a need in your library to provide information and guidance in an innovative and alternative format?'

WHY DOES OUR LIBRARY PRODUCE PODCASTS?

How many people do you see on your way to work, and in your library, with the familiar white earphones plugged into their ears? Our guess is that you see a significant number. Many people of all ages have MP3 players – we want to exploit the popularity of the medium to deliver important information about the library to members of the university and visitors alike.

Podcasts can be produced on any topic and tailored specifically for different groups who use the library. Some staff and students have additional learning needs, and many students prefer

independent learning to more formal induction lectures and tours – what better way for them to learn more about the library than by downloading a visual and audio tour? It's quick, it's easy, and it costs the user very little.

Long before the podcast project was proposed, our team of information consultants identified a need to provide an alternative to the traditional library induction sessions on offer – particularly for those students who arrived late or who simply didn't have an induction as a formal part of their course. With full teaching schedules it isn't always easy to fit in extra talks, so podcasts are viewed as viable alternatives to conducted tours.

Providing support for international students, particularly those whose first language is not English, is an important role for the library. We hope that these students may benefit from being able to listen to a podcast when they are using the library, and as many times as they need.

The university recently introduced an 'applicants' portal' for every prospective student in order to communicate all the information required when they are considering applying for a place. We want to utilise this facility by making podcasts easily accessible via this platform, with the hope that they can learn more about library services, facilities and resources on offer before they even leave their homes.

Lastly, some visitors are simply intimidated by the prospect of making their way through security gates and finding where to go in a large building on six levels. Listening to a podcast can prepare them for their first visit to the library.

How we started

We began by reading articles and books on podcasting and listening to podcasts produced by academic libraries. Our first step was to listen to a presentation by Chris Kretz from Dowling College about podcasting in academic libraries.[1] Jack D. Herrington provides useful tips on professional-quality podcasting in his book, *Podcasting hacks*.[2]

After getting acquainted with the terminology, ask for advice on the range and quality of hardware and software available for podcasting. There are two ways to produce a podcast and the equipment you use depends on the size of your budget, how many people will be involved in the project and how many podcasts you intend to produce. It is possible record and edit a podcast for less then

£30 using the freeware Audacity,[3] a set of headphones and a cheap USB microphone. With these you can create simple MP3 podcasts. The alternative is to invest in hardware and commercially available podcast software to produce higher-quality sound files in several different formats. We were fortunate to be able to borrow all the necessary equipment before making the decision. A member of academic staff in the music department of the school of education recommended (and supplied) a good-quality digital recorder (MAudio). A colleague in the learning technology unit suggested looking at an Apple product, iLife 06,[4] as it contains GarageBand, a piece of sophisticated podcasting software that would allow us to create two different file types: simple audio-only MP3 files and enhanced podcasts in M4a format containing digital photographs, floor plans and links to web pages. Using borrowed equipment, we were able to test the feasibility of producing podcasts whilst being largely self-taught, and so we could avoid costly mistakes.

The sound quality of the audio tracks and the ability to compile enhanced formats were both important factors in a decision to purchase quality hardware which will be used predominantly for podcasting.

What podcasts do we produce?

We began on a very small scale with a plan for a simple audio tour of the main branch, the Queen Mother Library - all six levels in one podcast. The experienced 'podcasters' amongst you will be shaking your heads at this point and thinking 'That's not very practical.' We soon reached the same conclusion; that it would be more helpful to users (as well as easier for us!) to create short snappy podcasts focusing on individual floors.

Starting with the security gates at the entrance, we worked round the ground floor identifying the main points a new user would need to know about – core services, how to get in, where to get help, how to use a photocopier. With the ground floor recorded, the subject floors were scripted, recorded and photographed. To help the listener follow a tour of a floor, each podcast is divided into chapters marked by stops. Colourful posters marking each stop are posted around each floor and floor maps are provided to aid navigation.

Whilst we were recording, further ideas for podcasts came to mind, such as guidance on using library resources and collections, and equipment, particularly the self-issue and return machines. At

the start of every academic session new students often struggle to use these machines – queues build up – frustration sets in. As a fix, library staff take turns to stand by the machines to give instruction. We thought that an enhanced podcast, containing photographs of each step in the issue and return processes, would be an easy way to learn how to use library equipment independently and still look cool.

With the podcasts in such an early stage of development we hadn't anticipated how the concept would take on an appeal far beyond our expectations and beyond the corridors of the library itself. In a very short time we had orders coming in from the colleges for podcasts of applicant open day library induction talks.5 Bear in mind that we had received enthusiastic support for our project from staff right up to the Vice-Principal himself, without one single podcast having been created to listen to. They were sold on the concept. No pressure, then!

How we compiled the podcasts

Using podcasting software involved a steep learning curve of Everest proportions! In the very early days the freeware, Audacity, was tested to edit audio files, remove microphone hiss and the odd cough and amplify quiet sections. In fact, even with GarageBand, which has all the same editing features, we still find it easier to amplify recording levels for .wav files in Audacity, then import them back into GarageBand.

Despite having started the project by recording a tour of the ground floor the first podcast we completed was about the teaching resource collection.6 This section of the library contains a rich variety of materials for Education students to use when on teaching practice, including text books, big books, interactive 'kits', DVDs and CD ROMs.

Typically, a script would be written, edited and recorded by library staff and photographs taken to illustrate the script. GarageBand allowed us to easily drag and drop audio files, backing music files and photographs, and to insert URLs onto a timeline. Once compiled the .band files can be saved in M4a format within GarageBand or exported to iTunes or Audacity to save in MP3 format.

How long does it take to produce a podcast?

Accounts of other podcasters' experiences of producing similar files seemed to suggest that it

wouldn't take more than a few hours to complete and publish a tour of the library. How wrong could we be? Scripting a 'project' doesn't take long, recording can be relatively quick if too many mistakes aren't made and taking the relevant photos isn't time-consuming – but put them all together and even a five minute broadcast could take more than an hour to make.

Each 'episode' has to be compiled from a number of different audio files, with photographs added at the appropriate points in the script, backing music inserted to mark the beginning and end and sound levels adjusted. Then, to cater for user preferences and varying ages of equipment, each podcast has to be saved in MP3 and M4a formats, published on specially written library web pages and exported to iTunes …! Allow at least half a day to produce and publish a five-minute podcast from start to finish.

How do you get people to use them?

Our first live podcasts were induction talks for the applicant open days in late February and early March 2007. These were made available via specially created library web pages which also explained how to download them.7 Information went out with other publicity about the university to all attendees. The library had a stand at the MA applicant open day with a laptop playing the MA podcast and podcast tours of the relevant subject floors. Weeks later the download statistics still looked good.

We have a news item on our library homepage and word is spreading as we promote library podcasts to academics in meetings. The learning technology unit has been using our podcasts as examples in their 'How to podcast' seminars for academic staff, but the big push will come in August and September 2007 when the new academic year starts.

Thinking of producing podcasts yourself?

Our advice:
- Find a space to talk, record and play podcasts, where you won't disturb others and, more importantly, where you can be creative without interruption. A quiet space away from extraneous noise is essential – we have made recordings with a background accompaniment of noises from jets coming in to land, motorbikes, noisy car exhausts, sirens, library announcements over the tannoy, telephones ringing and photocopiers at work – annoying

when you are on the third or fourth attempt at recording a piece. Do some test recordings to see if the room has an 'echo'. You will be surprised how acoustics differ from one room to another. You are advised to use the same room for all recordings – they will all then sound the same.

- Find time – it takes more than an hour! It works best if you can dedicate yourself to it. Working in short snatches here and there is not the most effective way.

- Find funding – do some costings. It is quite possible to make simple podcasts without pictures for an outlay of less than £30. Alternatively, be prepared to spend around £1,500 to purchase an Apple Mac computer and carrying case, digital recorder and digital camera. We purchased an iPod and a microphone attachment to have a second recording device and to demonstrate how to download and play podcasts. We decided quite early on that a library tour without pictures would not be popular and so we went for the 'enhanced' format. Statistics of downloads have confirmed this assumption. Consider purchasing a laptop because it can be shared and moved around library offices and sites easily.

- Find volunteers – coerce as many library staff as you can to make recordings. Podcasts benefit from the rich variety of voices and accents found amongst library staff – and you will probably discover some real stars of the airwaves!

The future

We will expand on our present series of podcasts to complement the print and electronic library information guides and web pages currently available. Then there are vodcasts; plans are in place to begin work on a vodcast for the school of education distance learners in April 2007. Finally, we will continue to promote our sessions to academic staff and students at every opportunity with the aim of raising awareness of the wide choice of formats now available to access information.

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Virtual reality: launching a podcast for the Oxford Brookes' business library

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The idea for a library podcast came out of our team's brainstorming session for our operational plan in the summer of 2006. For the last couple of years we had been in the habit of putting together a library tour in the form of a quiz in which students found their way round the library by answering questions to solve a 'mystery'. Although these were great fun, they took a huge amount of time and effort to prepare and we questioned whether the traditional paper route was doing the job we wanted. As a small team, we did not have the staff available to offer induction tours to all new students each year and we wanted to reach as big a number as possible. We thought a podcast would be much more 'cutting edge', in keeping with the image of a modern library, and that it was the kind of technology that would attract those who were reluctant to use the library. It would also have the additional attraction of providing a tour of the library for distance learners and disabled students who might not be able to manage an actual physical visit, and for dyslexic students who might prefer to listen rather than to read information.

This shows what Wheatley Library podcast looks like on iTunes
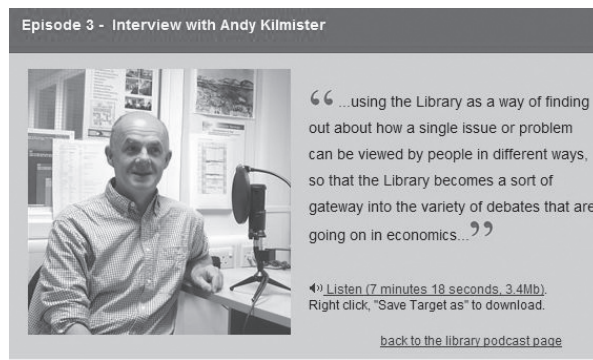
This is a screen capture from our web page of our first interviewee, Andy Kilmister, Senior Economics Lecturer, with a quote from his podcast interview

We then decided that interviews with academic staff about the best use of library resources would add a certain 'pull factor'. A sampling of potential users found that there was a lot of interest in the possibility of interviews being made available. By adding RSS feeds to our clips, we allowed people

Andy Kilmister, Senior Economics Lecturer, our first interviewee

to subscribe to the podcast, and we intended to create a series of 'episodes' which would include the audio tour, a 'what's new' episode and an interview about the use of the library with a member of the teaching staff. We launched the podcast with one interview and plan to maintain interest by adding more as 2007 progresses. We hoped that as well as being a useful tool for new library users it would help academic staff to encourage their students to make full use of the library facilities.

The whole exercise took about three months from conception to launch. The script for the existing tour was edited to reflect the changes made to the library building during the summer of 2006 and academic staff were sought who would be willing to be interviewed. We decided that transcripts of the

interview and other episodes should be made available on the Library web pages to help hearing-impaired and foreign-language students. We aimed to record the tour and an interview with a member of the teaching staff for the first two episodes, together with a 'What's new?' section in time for the beginning of the new semester (Autumn 2006).

The Library podcast pages include a slideshow that allows students to look around the Library, this image is of the library counter

Deciding what to have in each episode and writing scripts and interview questions was the easy part! Making the recordings sound professional and getting the look of the web pages right was much more difficult. We had to obtain proper equipment and find a quiet place to do the recording. Bearing in mind that for most of the summer the library was a building site this was no mean feat!

This whole project would not have got off the ground without the research done by subject assistant Jane Knight and the support and encouragement of our IT officer, Steve Burholt, whose dedicated work on the technical side meant that we achieved a professional standard of recording. We also needed to be able to upload the podcast seamlessly to the library web pages, and it took a lot of work to produce pages that would do that, working outside of the main web-development environment. We were extremely lucky to have Steve onside.

Was it a success? Judge for yourself by going to the podcast using this link: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/library/podcast/wheatley/home.html

There have been over a thousand hits in the first semester for the tour, so it seems students *are* find-

ing it useful. The real proof will be if enquiry staff find that the numbers of basic general enquiries are falling at the enquiry desk. We shall have to wait and see. We certainly could not have taken more than a thousand students on actual physical tours, so we must be reaching more people than before.

Where next? Having got the bit between their teeth, the 'Podcast team' are keen to progress and video podcasts are next on the agenda. We have the technology – as they say – and with the positive experience of the audio tour behind us, the confidence to venture further. You never know: a 'helpful' student might post our video on 'MySpace'!

Podcasts and podcasting – JISC Legal's latest publication explains the law relevant to the new technology

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The steady adoption of podcasting within the academic sector has opened up a new range of teaching and promotional opportunities for institutions seeking to retain the interest of the 'point and click' generation. Modern students are not excited by the prospect of sitting in large lecture theatres at a time designated by the lecturer, but prefer to access information via computers or hand-held technologies, at times they choose – video streaming, social networking sites, wikis and blogs are all being added to the portfolio of educational delivery methods in addition to the podcast. The pedagogical reasons for following the preference are reasonable and for some things it may certainly be a more effective way to deliver elements of a course – giving medical students a sound file of a heart murmur must be a better way to learn how to diagnose the problem compared to a verbal description. With these new developments has come an increasing amount of literature outlining how institutions are using podcasting – case studies, strategic reviews and technical reports may all be found. There is, however, one critical aspect which has very little coverage within this general body of material. It is the law and how it impacts on the whole activity of podcasting. Failure to grasp its importance could leave your institution exposed to legal challenges and penalties or being forced to revert to more conventional forms of course delivery. In response to this gap, JISC Legal (based at the University of Strathclyde) has published a new paper by Gavin Sutter called 'Podcasts and the law'. It is available on the service's website at: http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/publicationspage.htm

WHAT IS A PODCAST?

A podcast is a media file which is made available over the internet but downloaded by users at their request. The file can be downloaded onto MP3 players and mobile phones as well as the more traditional laptops and PCs. There are various file formats which may be included in order to deliver images, sound or document files. You should familiarise yourself with the relevant aspects of the law if any of your teaching or promotional materials are currently delivered in this way, or if you have been set the task of storing such materials for an institutional archive. The new JISC Legal paper can raise your awareness of the law in order to prevent it becoming a barrier to podcasting.

CHECKLIST OF PODCASTING ISSUES WITH LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Legal implication
Is the audience restricted – intranet-only access – and what legal protection might an authentication system give?	Broadcasting law is currently being reviewed by the EU and may soon include podcasts, but with a possible exemption for non-commercial services
Is the audience public – general internet?	Broadcasting law and possible compliance with laws outside the UK, jurisdiction may need to be considered
Who has made the recording?	A copyright licence may be required in addition to intellectual property rights policies for treatment of material created by the institution's own staff
Are the works of others included?	Copyright permissions may be required from producers, film directors or performers as well as, more conventionally, the author
Are any trade marks or trade names mentioned?	There may be trademark infringement
Are any critical comments about other people or products included?	Defamation?
Is there the intention to amend or edit the podcast after the initial loading?	Consider agreements to waive the moral rights of the original creators
Can or will the person downloading the podcast copy it or further distribute it?	Consider licensing agreements and acceptable-use policies

The law is continually under review, particularly in the area of new technologies and electronic data. JISC Legal monitors all such developments and reports back to the academic community via its website, printed publications, workshops, regular email newsletter and help-desk service. Other topics investigated this year include cyber-crime, accessibility law and ISP liability. The JISC Legal website is at: http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk

Podcasting – putting the library back at the centre of learning

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During the first three months of 2006 Glasgow University Library looked at the use of podcasting following a request from Joe Maguire, a final-year student who wanted to carry out a project to podcast a talk on how to gain entry to the building. The introduction of podcasting at Glasgow University has been a user-generated project developed with a user perspective from conception to end service.

Other factors were coming into play:

- Academic staff in subjects as diverse as psychology, philosophy, computing, veterinary medicine and dentistry were all using podcasts and online learning. As more students move to part-time, distance and evening classes we are being required to provide more flexible support at point of need. The university also plans to further increase the number of postgraduate students (PGs) we have, an area we already find difficult to support due to our current ratio of PGs to liaison librarians.

- Accessibility: students now use web 2.0 socio-collaborative technologies as a way of life and we need to key into their methods of working and how they run their daily routines rather than ask them to use older methodologies. The eventual aim is to have the library podcasts and other information sitting on their hand-held devices, being updated via Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds so they can call it up whenever they need to. Lecture podcasts, journal articles, library services will all be on their hand-held

device, accessible to them, fully interactive and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Accessibility: using these new technologies we can easily, simply and cheaply produce multiple versions of ours. The ease and simplicity of production reduce our overheads in the support of all library users. Interestingly, the majority of students prefer to use these new delivery methodologies.

In May of 2006 Joe and I submitted a project bid to the library management team for us to investigate the use of Web 2.0 technology to produce finished-product podcasts for the library. Once the project was approved we needed to address the practicalities of the equipment we had available to us. The university does have a large, professional media production unit and a full studio on campus. Discussions were had over the quality, speed of delivery and lifespan of the materials we were thinking of producing. The library is not MGM or Paramount. Weighing up the time scales, potential staff-time costs and the disengagement of the people developing the podcasts from the production of them it was decided that using the big studio would lose the point of utilising web 2.0 communication technologies. Using and being involved in the production of the script, production of the RSS feeds and playing with the recordings all served to increase staff enthusiasm towards the project and fire the imagination as to how these technologies might be used in other ways.

Examining the PCs the subject librarians had revealed they were of a high enough specification that it became feasible to download and use open-source software to record audio-only files, produce graphics, write an RSS feed and then upload the resulting podcast to the web. However, the main drawback was that it would be incredibly time-consuming to do enhanced podcasts using PC technology available at the time we used an Apple Mac and software called GarageBand to produce the enhanced (with images) podcasts. To produce the four-minute enhanced podcast using a Mac laptop took around an hour. To produce the same podcast using a PC would currently take a lot longer and required a much more detailed skill-set than was present amongst library staff. This may change in the future with the release of open-source software similar to that available for Macs but, as at March 2007, the only feasible solution seems to be to use GarageBand on a Mac. This software allows you to 'bundle' the images,

audio and RSS feed into an .m4a format with an incredibly easy user-friendly interface. We used Audacity to record the vanilla, audio-only podcasts. Inkscape was used to produce the graphics and Notepad to write the RSS feeds. As an update, I have started discussions with our learning technology support unit who are currently investigating doing some work with the Audacity open-source software (OSS) in order to allow Flash to be used as a delivery method. They are also exploring whether a method for non-programmers exists to produce enhanced podcasts on a PC.

At the end of the project we had produced the following, in the three formats of vanilla podcasts, enhanced podcasts and interactive transcripts:

- a short Xpress tour – a four-minute podcast showing how to gain entry to the building and the main areas used during year one
- a longer Xtended tour – much more detailed 35-minute tour detailing library services and how to take advantage of them, touring students around all areas of the library and demonstrating how both subject information and physical materials are arranged in the building
- a law tour – introductory tour to the legal information materials and services, aimed at freshers
- a maps and official publications unit introductory tour – showing the facilities and services available to the general public as well as to Glasgow's university community
- audio only – detailed library-guide episodes on, for example, how to find and borrow a book.

Our library community can access all of these as podcasts via various sites such as iTunes and PodcastAlley. Users can also access them as à la carte, static downloads onto their own hand-held devices, such as mobile phones, mp3 players or iPods. Finally library users can view them on a PC anywhere in the world using Quicktime. Transcripts are made available as web pages in an accessibility compliant format with dynamic linking to images mentioned within the transcript. Interestingly, we have had an e-mail from a deaf-blind member of academic staff at another institution who praised the text transcripts as she could output them on her Braille printer and still feel she was being made welcome.

A side-note on podcasts: a downloadable audio file is not a podcast. The distribution method that

accompanies it and that turns it into a podcast is something called an RSS feed.

What is an RSS feed? It is a bit of XML. What is XML, then? XML is a method of describing data such as images, words and files that describes the structure of the item. To use a librarianship analogy, it is similar to AACR2 cataloguing rules in that you can describe anything using XML. Once your item or data is XML-structured you can then share it across formats. RSS is a dynamic, distribution method based on this XML logic.

People subscribe to your RSS feed using what is known as an aggregator. This can be a free, web-based service such as Bloglines or PageFlakes or a commercial piece of software downloaded to and only accessible from your PC or Mac. Once people have subscribed, whenever you load a new version of a podcast, or an entirely new one, the user receives a short press release about it and a link to it in their aggregator without having to do anything. It is a constant and proactive current-awareness methodology similar to having a journal delivered to your home rather than having to visit the library or newsagents to read it.

Many commercial databases now use RSS to alert researchers to new documents in their area. For example if you carry out a search on the Compendex database via the Ei2 interface you can then save your search as an RSS feed. Now whenever Compendex adds new records it will look through them for ones that match your search strategy and send you a note of them. Another site that uses RSS extensively is the BBC website. However, the information delivered via RSS does not easily translate into EndNote or Reference Manager, a fact we advise our users on when they are saving searches.

By making the tours and other files available as podcasts by using an RSS feed we have a much more dynamic way of reaching our users than before. We integrate ourselves into what is called the users' space, and the library becomes an involved partner and collaborates with the students to ensure they have the information they need readily to hand in an interactive fashion, offering what feels like a more individually personalised service. By using open standards and creative commons we are allowing the materials we have developed to be taken by our users, reconfigured and exploited in a way that suits their individual learning style and lifestyle. We are literally in their back pocket.

The whole ethos behind a lot of Web 2.0 social technology is that it is open, sharing and collaborative, with each person building on others' experience and feeding it back into the system again. Increasingly with the advent of intranets and virtual learning environments (VLEs) we have seen the copyrighting of and restriction of access to library information skills materials so that we all spend more time reinventing the same wheel. One of the ideologies that both library and project staff at Glasgow had in producing these podcasts and the help screens behind them was that this would not be the case with the material we produced. If we had not used the creative commons licence and made our material freely available it would have partially defeated the open, sharing, social ethos of the Web 2.0 technologies.

Once we had produced these materials we were ready to trial them. I have a group of friends in the 17 to 20 year old age range and they agreed to trial the basic, first rough version of the four-minute tour. These were not university-level students but all had studied or were studying at further education level. Words they used when playing the podcast were 'cool', 'interesting', 'helpful', 'supporting us in how we can do something rather than telling us how to do it'. This latter phase, in particular, seemed a sophisticated observation from a 17 year old and it caused me to reflect. Do we support students in what they perceive to be an autocratic way? Do we and our users see the difference between us being authoritative and not authoritarian?

By mid-August 2006 we were ready to trial our products more widely, and we selected a small group of English as a foreign language (EFL) students who would be coming to the university to study as PGs. They were asked whether they would like to take the tour with either a member of library staff or an iPod Nano. Project staff accompanied the Nano-tour students to observe their behaviour, provide help if it was required and gather feedback once the tour was complete. The tour took less time than a librarian-guided one.

Comments that the EFL students were asked to rate were:

- The tour was of a high quality.
- The tour was very useful and informative.
- The library should make more podcasts for students.
- The library should offer multiple languages.
- The library should offer subject specific tours.

- The iPod was fun and simple to use.
- We should offer downloads through the library website.
- We should allow students to podcast about the library.

The boxes to tick were labelled 'Definitely – Yes – Maybe – No'. All the responses fell into the first three, with most being in the first two categories, with the exception that multiple languages were not felt to be necessary. Students commented that the library podcasts were beneficial in helping them adjust to the pace and accent of Scottish English before having to attend formal classes at the university.

During the podcast project it was helpful, and almost unavoidable, to exploit other Web 2.0 technology. One such was the use of a photo-hosting site, Flickr. Searching on Flickr for Glasgow University Library yielded 112 images even before the project loaded any. Many were of high quality, taken by students and containing comments by other students. During the project we took over 600 images of the library building using a staff member's digital camera. The library now has a public bank of images it can incorporate into any other work it does. They have already been used to demonstrate aspects of our building and services, both off-campus when staff attend conferences and on-campus to show students who drop into our offices how to use and where to find various materials and services. Students can't comment on these images at the moment because we haven't resolved the problem of who monitors it, but we hope to resolve this issue later in 2007. We can also use them to produce 'photocasts' of events, procedures or whatever we feel we'd like to be seen in the public domain.

YouTube, utilising Flash technology, is a free online video-streaming service that allows users to view and share videos that have been uploaded by people who have signed up for a free YouTube account. Video quality is poor due to file size and bandwith issues but it is a big hit. Using the video facility on a digital camera it would be easy to do a quick video clip of a procedure (borrowing a book using a self-issue machine, for example) and load this up for students to see. The project staff member converted the short tour to a video and uploaded it. It has been viewed 575 times at the time of writing, despite not being formally indexed or advertised anywhere. Comments on it by YouTube users have included:

- 'Something like that would have been really useful when I was at uni – our library was so huge – yours reminded me of it in parts and a tour like that would have been really beneficial. I liked the tone of the narrator – friendly, clear and the right amount of info too.'
- 'I think it's a great video and I wish that our Uni had something like it!'
- 'It was very clear and looked as though it would be most helpful.'
- 'It was a very clearly enunciated commentary and seemed to be comprehensive.'
- 'Loved the style, didn't watch all the way through cos i don't need to know all the info but got the jist of it, fab idea and a lovely speaking voice.'

NEXT STEPS

The podcasts has been available for six months as of March 2007. Most students appear to access them via iTunes and the law tour was in the top twenty hits of the higher education sector for over eight weeks. Feedback has been positive from both students and library staff and the response has been such that we will be taking the podcasts from project to service during April to August 2007.

It is envisaged that these tours, both the generic and the subject-specific, may take over from many physical tours in September 2007. This will free staff to support students in a more specific and targeted way. The images on the Flickr account have been downloaded and used on library web pages. One of the problems raised by many of these new technologies is the fact that you are using a remote site with potentially different business ethics to those of an educational institution. They will almost definitely sell advertising space, so your users may see adverts for products they may feel are incompatible with higher education and if your users go hunting they may find 'inappropriate' material on these sites. None of the most popular Web 2.0 sites – such as Flickr, YouTube, MySpace – seem to pay much attention to accessibility legislation.

This leaves us with the question of how much we can use these services for our students. Perhaps the only solution is to ask technology-literate staff to assist us in hosting versions of the software on our institutional servers and working on the OSS to facilitate access to the contents by all of our users. This, however, puts us at a virtual distance from our users again, causing a disconnect

between them and us and negating a major reason for our utilising Web 2.0 technology.

In GUL we are currently discussing what else we might make available as a podcast. Suggestions include:

- providing information to our users on changes to services and new services
- hosting interviews with managers of units or our Director of Service
- publicising our special collections book of the month
- having round tables on hot topics such as information literacy, research assessment exercise (REA) support, and
- with some trepidation but much enthusiasm, encouraging students to produce their own library podcasts.

If you are thinking of producing podcasts yourself there are a few challenges to consider first. We had to undergo a handbrake-turn change of perspective – the whole ethos of Library 2.0 is that the technologies are open and collaborative and that they positively encourage personalisation, critique and the embedding of themselves into the daily lives of users. By making use of these technologies we make ourselves more a part of people's daily lives than we have ever been before. We must accelerate our pace of change: many students would consider a Web 2.0 technology that was more than six months of age as being outdated. We need to be making use of these technologies ourselves in order to immerse ourselves in what, to my generation, is a rather foreign and occasionally intimidating world. We will be more open to critique and comment, and must be more willing to receive that and take it on board. My experience during the project has been that I must keep an open mind, a poker face and allow library users to drive the services in a much faster and more dynamic way than has been done previously.

Finally it is important to note that this new technology is a means to an end; it is not the end in itself. Web 2.0 gives us a glimpse of how social interaction and networking take place in certain areas of today's society and also gives us the opportunity to engage and interact with our users in a totally different way than we have done before, neatly solving some staffing, accessibility and availability issues along the way. However, it is important that we maintain the quality level of the end product and ensure that what we are producing is seen as relevant and of use to our user community. The medium grabs their attention, but it is the content that has to hold it.

To explore the whole issue of podcasts, what they are and how you can start making them, a few references are given below.

NOTE

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Greg Schwartz, 'A beginner's guide to podcasting: Part 1 – a consumer's guide', 17 May 2006: http://www.sirsidynixinstitute.com/seminar_page.php?sid=62, and 'Part 2 – a creator's guide', 24 May 2006: http://www.sirsidynixinstitute.com/seminar_page.php?sid=63. The web pages for these audio files contain supplementary material, including PowerPoint slides for you to view while listening to the audio commentary

Michael Stephens, 'Web 2.0 and libraries: best practices for social software', *Library technology reports*, 42 (4), 2006

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Jake Lundington's MediaBlab, 'Recording a podcast': http://www.jakeludington.com/podcasting/20050222_recording_a_podcast.html

Services mentioned in this document are also available online:

Flickr – http://www.flickr.com
YouTube – http://www.youtube.com
Audacity – http://audacity.sourceforge.net/
Inkscape – http://inkscape.org/
PageFlake – http://www.pageflakes.com/

UCD Library – getting out there!

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BACKGROUND

University College Dublin (UCD) is the largest university in Ireland with some 22,000 students, a quarter of these studying at postgraduate level. The university is currently pursuing an ambitious developmental and strategic path, which includes the challenge of re-aligning itself as a research-oriented institution in line with national economic, social and educational policy.

In 2006 the university was re-structured and the numerous discrete departments –including a medical school and the only veterinary and library and information science courses in the Republic – were reorganised into 5 colleges and some 35 schools. All this has naturally impacted upon the library, now pursuing its own rigorous development and re-structuring programme. One of the many strategic development areas concerns integrating the library service into the university research, teaching and management environment.

ELECTRONIC SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS – LITTLE AND LARGE

Naturally there are some major projects under way to contribute to achieving this, such as implementation of an institutional repository to contain UCD research outputs, implementation of a cross-search tool; implementation of an OpenURL solution; converting the website to a CMS managed system as part of a university-wide project; running some eBooks pilots. All these projects have target live dates in 2007.

Highlighted in this brief article are a whole raft of other smaller-scale developments, many initiated in a bottom-up manner by enthusiastic individual librarians at UCD. We now hope to pull them into a managed e-service framework and take them forward. Many, but not all, come under the broad umbrella of Web 2.0 and Library 2.0 developments. None of them, taken individually, is out of the ordinary and they would be found across many university libraries.

Taken together, they reflect a significant shift in the whole ethos and approach emerging in the UCD library service, an increasing desire to be more leading-edge than trailing-edge. They show what can be achieved even when staff are under great work pressure, if there is enough interest and enthusiasm to keep on moving forward and to explore new possibilities for communication and information discovery. These initiatives also raise interesting issues about the changing skills profile and productivity levels required of the professional librarian as we move into the 21st century.

ROADSHOWS

'Getting out there' is not just about embedding the library into the emerging digital campus – there is also the matter of getting out into the teaching and research spaces of the university. The road-show concept emerged as we started to consider what we wanted to do next with our website. We needed user feedback, but previous efforts to recruit to focus groups had struggled. So we decided to set up a small informal usability study over in the student centre and followed that with a second similar event.

As well as providing the feedback, we became aware that these events also contribute to image-building, but our signage and presence were amateur-looking. We have therefore invested in professional display stands as other units in the university have done. Image is not everything – but then again it is something. The shots below show a 'before and after' view of our typical outreach event appearances. We have recently enhanced our equipment further with some additional items – portable leaflet holders and a roll-up banner for the smaller-scale event. This kit is being used increasingly and has proved to be a worthwhile investment, though at £3–4,000 it was certainly expensive.

We make great efforts to take a stand at all open days and similar events, and a monthly programme of roadshows at various campus locations started in 2007, with different services promoted on each occasion. The arrival of laptops, and now full WiFi, across campus has greatly increased the number of potential locations we can use and, despite costs for staff and attractive incentives, we feel these events are worthwhile, bringing both practical and intangible benefits for the service.

EMBEDDING INFORMATION SKILLS INTO THE CURRICULUM – AND GOING ONLINE

We are 'getting out there' in various ways to do with information literacy, following the formation of an Information Skills Steering Group and various small teams to develop teaching and learning support, research support, induction support and online materials, each with its own team leader.

We have had considerable initial success in getting academic units to give space to us in the curriculum. Some courses are mandatory; some are stand-alone library modules and have an assessment element for credit; some are a few lectures within a wider school module – we take what we can get! University policy in this area is being developed at present and is most advanced with regard to PhD students, where transferable skills are becoming a mandatory part of each research student's time at UCD, with a small number of the total credits required devoted to these areas.

Staff have delivered some 400 information skills events of various types over the last six months and we are still only scratching the surface. The big issue for the future is how to shift away from personal delivery of workshops or lectures to an online approach. We have developed an extensive range of web pages devoted to this area. But when it comes to moving beyond that to blended learning we are currently struggling. Progress in getting library information skills materials included in the VLE relies on arrangements being made individually between liaison librarians, and lecturers who own each course in Blackboard, and has been limited. We have produced for the first time the beginnings of an online tutorial in the basics of information use but progress has been slower than we would have hoped and a new strategy is now being followed to re-purpose and adapt existing Open Source tutorials rather than creating new ones from scratch.

We have pushed the boundaries out as to which elements of the information literacy model we feel are part of our remit – we are no longer confining ourselves to a narrow vision of the library remit, seen as being to cover discovery and access to information resources. We are now delivering in the areas of evaluation, storage and re-use of information too – no other support unit within the university is supplying workshops on topics such as citation styles, plagiarism and EndNote and so we have extended our range and taken that on. We offered an extensive and very successful programme of EndNote lunchtime training sessions from September to November 2006 and another programme was to be delivered in March and April 2007, now offering both basic and advanced levels.

The strains on available staff resources that have resulted from all of this extended information skills activity are beginning to tell and discussions are under way (spring 2007) to decide how best and at what level to inject some dedicated support.

CHAT, BLOGS, RSS, MP3, PODCASTS – THE NEW COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

How should the library reach the New Millennials? This is a topical question. We are still using print communications. We make extensive use of individual e-mail and mailing lists and are still initiating new developments in that area – we have recently created a mailing-list of researchers that has been popular with users.

We are also experimenting with the newly available signal ecologies. Reader Services have trialled

an instant messaging reference service and we now have to consider mainstreaming it and the implications of that. We never made any move to implement the elaborate 'Ask a Librarian' systems and we are certainly pleased now that we didn't.

The science librarians began a blog in early 2005; others have followed and there are now at least nine of these either live or planned, providing an informal and very dynamic complement to the website, with RSS or mail feeds available. How to keep track of these blogs, which are after all badged as UCD library services, and to bring even a modest amount of managerial control to bear is the subject of current discussion. Our full range of live blogs at the time of writing can be tried out as follows:

Science @ UCD Library
http://ucdscience.blogspot.com/

Research @ UCD Library
http://ucdlibraryresearch.blogspot.com/

Readers Services @ UCD
http://ucdreaderservices.blogspot.com/

Open Access @ UCD
http://oaucd.blogspot.com/

UCD Library 2 Go
http://virtualstudyspace.wordpress.com/

Electronic Resources News
- Attention all Chemistry users!
- New subscription: SourceOECD
- Access the oldest, continuously-published reference work in the English language!
- Project Muse now on trial
- Latest subscriptions available via IRel
- Academic Search Premier available via IRel
- Knovel Library on trial until November 20

UCD Library News
- Complete our survey on induction and win an Ipod!
- Wireless network access problems in JJL
- Blackrock Library Temporary Closure in January 2007
- Update for users of Earlsfort Terrace and Nursing JJL Libraries
- UCD Library Email notification system available soon
- Extended opening hours in JJL

We have an MP3 library tour available and are considering a regular news podcast as a future development. Finally, we have two RSS news feeds available for general and electronic library news and hope to use RSS more, to deliver new-book listings.

How these fast-emerging emerging technologies can be successfully prioritised and managed within the library is now a key issue to consider.

Alongside the management issue, another, perhaps more important, issue is that these emerging technologies raise very urgent questions about the skills and attitude required of the professional librarian of the future – some colleagues have struggled to cope with basic updating of the website content and now all these new tools need to be grasped. The librarian of the near future needs to have the traditional and academic skills but also to be able to create RSS feeds, blogs and wikis with ease. They most certainly need highly developed multi-tasking skills in order to keep their heads above water.

Every academic library has to decide where to draw the line on the new technologies. We have so far steered clear of a UCD library presence in Flickr or BEBO –certainly not YouTube! We have tended to feel it inappropriate for a scholarly academic library to get involved in environments that deal largely with inconsequential electronic chatter and leisure – but that perspective could well change as we see how these various social-networking options develop. We are aware that other libraries have drawn the line differently and *are* developing content within these environments. Indeed we have been persuaded to take the plunge into one of these social environments. And that is Second Life.

Second Life

We have made an early move to get involved in collaboration with Talis, who maintain 'Cybrary City'. A presentation has been made to library staff as a preliminary, and we now have a plot reserved in the TALIS area and have commenced constructing a test environment, involving members of various library teams. We believe that we are the first university library in Ireland to create anything in Second Life, though other units at Trinity College Dublin are already very active. The university portal
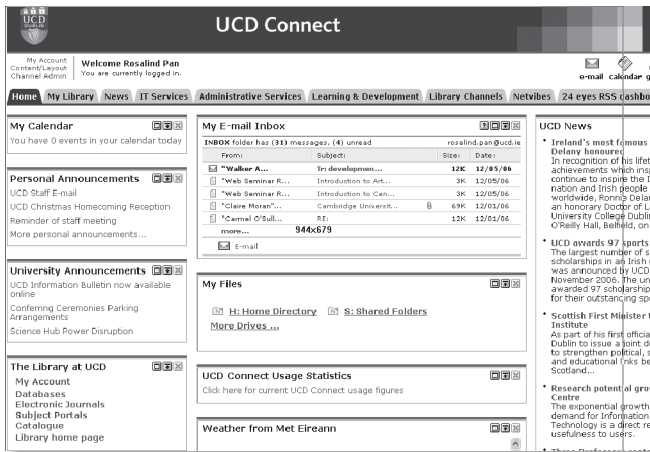
Figure 1

Being slow on the uptake can end up working to your advantage. We have not made great strides with library content in the VLE but the university's focus is now more on the university portal, SCT Luminis, badged locally as UCD Connect, and we are far better positioned there.

The portal is being built up as the entry point to the student online learning environment and our systems team was very successful in getting involved from the start of its evolution in 2005. This has been key and we have achieved a presence on the home page, small but crucial because it is dedicated to links to key online resources, as can be seen in Figure 1.

We also have our own prominent 'Library' tab with a fuller set of content (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

We have more recently developed a suite of optional subject and functional channels that users can subscribe to. These are largely deep links to the website but with some dynamic content which we hope to improve upon over the year.
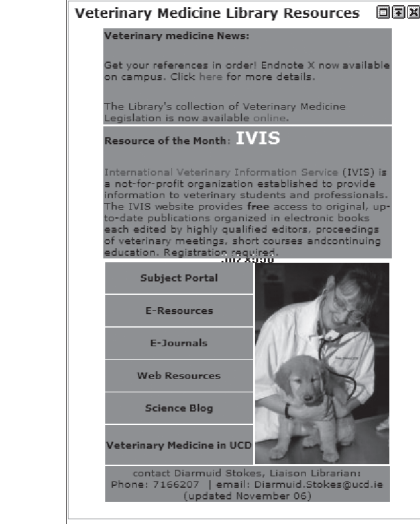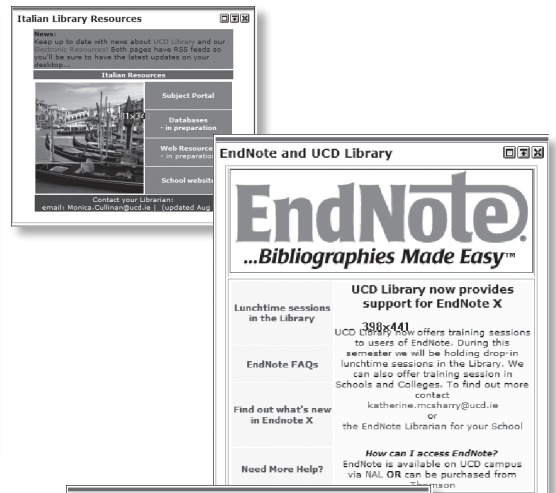
Figure 3

The portal includes 'single sign on' and when logging in users are also logged into Athens and to our library system, TALIS. Data from TALIS about the user account is pulled into the portal environment on login, as can be seen in the screenshot (Figure 3), using the TALIS Keystone product and APIs. Users can, if they wish, automatically follow the link to update their account online. This is the most advanced use of the portal that we have to date and represents the sort of genuine 'mash-up' of content from two systems, based on web services, that we hope to see more of.

The library presence in the portal has been an outstanding success and its look and feel will be completely refreshed for the next academic session. It does, however, raise interesting issues concerning the future relationship between the portal and the library website, which is not currently entirely clear – currently we maintain quite a lot of the content (such as news) in duplicate and most links on the portal are just deep links across to the website.

CONCLUSION

We have only recently discovered, quite by chance, that an e-mail information bulletin is sent to undergraduates every fortnight by the Vice-President for Students and it has been agreed that the library can submit items to this to send out from time to time – though inclusion is not guaranteed.

As this shows, it is still surprisingly challenging for us to become recognised and embedded in the overall curriculum, processes and activities of the university, and everything, at every level, that we can do to improve our position and get where the researchers and students naturally are needs to be pursued. This is something the above paragraphs all illustrate in various practical ways, both physical and digital.

Users do need to visit the physical libraries, and they do need to make the effort to explore the separate silos of library-maintained online content, which we are working to make a more compelling user experience. But we need to meet users halfway and provide linkages and information about these facilities in the physical and online environments where they naturally congregate.

The blended librarian's approach to supporting staff with e-learning

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The 'blended' librarian is a term I first came across as coined by Steve Bell and John Shank in 2004.[1] It echoes the concept of blended learning and describes the shift there has been in the academic librarian's role in the past few years. Bell and Shank's manifesto identifies the trend of the marginalisation of the academic library as we have known it and sees blended librarians as part of the solution. Technology has challenged our traditional practices and at the same time offers many new opportunities. Blended learning aims to realise the potential of developments in technology and pedagogical understanding. This article describes how information services staff in the learning and IT services department at Sheffield Hallam University are engaged in this shift, using the example of the introduction of a pilot project for supporting staff with the development of e-learning.

On bad days we may feel under siege from the dual pincer movement of IT departments and Google. Virtual learning environments are now the gateways to course-related information. Book publishers provide whole-course cartridges full of resources and links. Alongside all this it is clear that our users are changing their information-seeking practices. However, these apparent clouds have silver linings.
We have opportunities for new partnerships, collaborations, and ways of working and we must ensure that we recognise the trends and continue meet our users' needs. To make our electronic collections and services available we need to work with a wide range of staff in new ways, for example IT staff, academic staff,

learning technologists and pedagogy specialists. We also have to develop and maintain new skills in using software and understanding the teaching and learning process. In his keynote speech at the recent Joint Information Systems Committee conference David Eastwood (Chief Executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for England) made the point that information services have often been seen as a second-order support service and that this perspective needs to be reimagined as a 'partnership between teaching staff and information professionals'.[2]

To achieve this goal many of our faculty team information advisers have taken courses in learning and teaching. Information advisers collaborate wherever possible with academic staff to enhance the availability of resources and services to students through their Blackboard courses. Information literacy tutorials have been developed for flexible integration with e-learning and face-to-face teaching.

I took my first tentative steps along this road in 2001 when I was seconded to the new e-learning project at Sheffield Hallam University. The small project team comprised a director, project manager, e-learning advisers, a researcher and me. In those early days it was recognised that information resources and the service that provided them had a significant role to play in the introduction of e-learning. This role was underpinned by our excellent electronic information collection, with very well developed access and authentication to it both on and off-campus. Copyright was recognised as another key area of expertise held within the learning centre and essential to the success of e-learning.

Since that time e-learning has become a mainstream part of life for Sheffield Hallam students and staff and it is essential that those of us working in information services develop our skllls in order to exploit its maximum potential.

24x7 E-LEARNING SUPPORT

Many of the changes experienced by information services staff are also experienced by academic staff and it is part of our job to support them. In the history of the introduction of e-learning there have been various support models tried, tested, refined, developed and sometimes abandoned. As e-learning becomes more widespread so the support needs of the staff become more diverse. Some academic and library staff have been involved with e-learning from the start and

their expertise has grown with it. New staff, or those who inherit existing Blackboard sites, have different support needs. This diversity of need, as well as a demand for out-of-hours help, led the e-learning group at Sheffield Hallam to investigate a new model of support, one that involved a third-party organisation. A company was identified that could offer 24-hour, 365 days a year, online support for Blackboard, our virtual learning environment. A pilot project to trial this support approach was instigated.

The web interface for this support for SHU staff enables those with a problem to look through a knowledge base of FAQs, or send an e-mail, or use a free phone number to call a member of the outside company's staff, all of whom are highly skilled in using Blackboard. Should the enquiry be something only a Sheffield Hallam member of staff can answer or fix, then the enquiry is tagged and referred to the appropriate second level of support and is picked up (in UK office hours) by an appropriate member of SHU staff. This is where we, the librarians in the virtual learning centre team, come in. This small team was recently formed to address the needs of our users who are accessing us online and it includes the distance learner support service. We also support staff in the provision of online materials, for example electronic reading lists, e-books, linking to full-text materials, and video. We work in partnership with other information services staff to advise on the full range of services, including the use of video, digitisation of materials under licence and all resources associated with copyright queries. We are also able to work with academic staff on the integration of information literacy tutorials.

The practicalities of our role in the 24x7 support service are that members of the virtual learning centre team take it in turns to respond to the enquiries. This involves picking up what are known as 'tickets' that are tagged for our team by the 24x7 company we work with. In the first instance we will try to resolve the problem for the member of staff making the enquiry, but we work with our colleagues in other information services teams – either to pass on the problem for them to solve or to involve them in the resolution of the problem. The final piece of the jigsaw is to populate the knowledge base should we feel that the enquiry may be a common problem that others may encounter. This in turn will help the front-line support deal with any similar future questions.

The pilot service is currently proving highly successful. Its benefits are first and foremost that staff get a quick response to their enquiries if they are straightforward ones. SHU staff know to go to a central point if they have any problems and aren't left wondering who to ring or email. All support materials are available in one place. The consistency and the integrity of responses given to staff have been improved as the knowledge base is populated and shared by the various experts in certain areas (eg assessment, communication, resources and so on). The management information derived from the database has enabled us to target training to where it is needed.

Being so fully involved in this initiative clearly benefits staff, students and information services itself. The cooperative approach to sharing information and knowledge that I have always found in the profession really helps when offering this kind of support to academic staff. It is another way of developing the faculty facing support role that is expected of us. It pulls together all the principles of blended librarianship referred to in the Bell and Shanks manifesto: innovation, involvement in teaching and learning, information literacy and collaboration with learning technologists, thereby enhancing our relationship with faculty staff to help them integrate library resources and services into their courses.

NOTES

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Vive la république! The Oxford–Google digitisation project

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When Sir Thomas Bodley established his library in 1602, he hoped this would be the first step in establishing a 'Republic of Letters' – which has been variously interpreted over the intervening centuries but which today we take to mean a 'place of learning open to all'. Whilst Google's founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin probably did not set out with the extensive collections of the Bodleian in mind, their company's mission 'to organize the world's information and make it accessible and useful' seems very much in keeping with the spirit of Bodley's aspiration. Given their respective founding principles, it is perhaps hardly surprising that when these two institutions met, a happy and fruitful marriage was on the cards.

The collections held by Oxford University library Services (OULS) – at whose core lie those of the Bodleian – are renowned throughout the global community of scholars, as a rich source of material for academics, students, researchers and enthusiasts of every kind. Yet however much OULS has striven to make these important collections available to all, we are fundamentally constrained by the combined forces of geography and the physical nature of the books themselves. If a reader wants to consult an item she or he must make the journey to Oxford, register to use the library facilities, find the item in our catalogue and then place an order to have it brought up from the closed stacks into a suitable reading room; all the items held by the Bodleian are for

reference only, and this places further restrictions on the reader.

In light of these physical constraints, it is perhaps not surprising that the libraries at Oxford have been actively engaged in a range of digitisation activities for much of the past two decades. However for the most part such in-house digitisation was, and indeed remains, relatively slow and expensive to do – and there has been an understandable desire to appeal to funding bodies and the more 'serious' end of the scholarly spectrum by selecting rare and significant items from our special collections, rather than digitising the more mundane items which comprise the vast majority of our holdings (see http://www2.odl.ox.ac.uk/gsdl/cgi-bin/library, and http://image.ox.ac.uk/).

Entering into a digitisation partnership with Google offered the prospect of a radically different approach. Instead of concentrating on highly selective (so-called 'boutique') digitisation, Google brought the resources to undertake mass digitisation – analogue-to-digital conversion on a scale that was far beyond anything we could accomplish using OULS's own resources. Whereas we had previously thought in terms of hundreds or perhaps thousands of individual page-images, Google was proposing that we digitise hundreds of thousands of volumes. Moreover, the emphasis would be on providing access to intellectual content – helping readers to identify books that might help them in their research (whatever that might be, and wherever they were based in the world) – rather than attempting to create a digital surrogate that readers would be encouraged to use instead of consulting the analogue source item.

Following extensive negotiations that lasted almost two years, in December 2004 OULS joined five other major research libraries as a founding partner in the Google Book Search Library Project (see http://books.google.com/intl/en/google-books/about.html). Where Oxford differed from some of the other institutions – most notably the University of Michigan – was in our decision to limit the scope of the project to our 19th-century, out-of-copyright materials. Yet the word 'limit' takes on a different meaning in this new era of genuinely mass digitisation, since we could estimate from our catalogue records that in excess of one million items from the Bodleian's collections would fall within the scope of the project, using this simple principle of selection. Of course there were other factors that underpinned our decision. This was effectively the first time that we had ever

allowed an external agency to undertake digitisation on such a large subset of our holdings, and although we had every confidence in the scanning technologies that Google proposed to adopt (handling the material in a sympathetic, non-invasive, non-destructive fashion) it clearly made sense to test the end-to-end processes with material that was likely to be in reasonably good condition, and drawn from parts of our collections where any one item was likely to be of low economic value. Moreover, we needed to be able to guarantee the supply of large numbers of items to achieve the economies of scale that made the project viable for Google – and whilst we were conscious that the catalogue records of our 19th-century collections might not conform to the latest standards, we were reasonably confident that any disparities between our records and actual holdings were just as likely to add to the overall number of items as to reduce that figure.

The final decisions about the selection of material for inclusion in the project rest with OULS. In practice, this has meant that condition is the key factor; in the initial stages of the project OULS's Acting Director, Ronald Milne, proposed the rule-of-thumb that 'If a book is fit to be read, its fit to be scanned' and this has proved a simple but effective measure. No other overarching selection criteria are applied, and so if their physical condition is good enough items are taken for scanning regardless of their language, subject, content or relevance to the teaching priorities of Oxford (contrary to some of the allegations that were levelled at the project when it was first publicly announced). Both Oxford and Google are keen to stay on the right side of UK copyright legislation, and so considerable care is taken when selecting material to try to ensure that only out-of-copyright items are scanned. However, undertaking an endeavour on this scale has also served to highlight the gaps in our knowledge of 19th-century authors, and the urgent need for the relevant authority files to be updated as soon as new information becomes available.

Although our partnership with Google was a long time in gestation, now that the project is under way the transformative possibilities of digitisation on such a scale are starting to become apparent. Whilst the logistics of identifying, picking, assessing, scanning and reshelving items on this massive scale have undoubtedly presented challenges to both parties, we have established extremely effective workflows such that sometimes an item can appear in Google book search (http://books.google.com/) even before we have returned the

physical volume to the shelf. And whereas the book-on-the-shelf can meet the needs of a lone scholar working in Oxford, its digital counterpart is freely available to be used simultaneously by any number of readers with access to the internet.

What does Oxford get out of the partnership? Again, contrary to some of the myths surrounding the project, Google has not bought the right to digitise our holdings, nor does Oxford receive any income from the advertising that Google sells. Our arrangement with Google is entirely non-exclusive, so should someone else wish to digitise the same material, we would consider each proposal on its own merits. First and foremost, what OULS gets is a significant tranche of our 19th-century holdings made more easily findable and searchable by all – which will not only ensure that these items are better known and (perhaps) more widely used, but will also help readers to assess material before they put in a request to have it brought up from the stacks. Moreover, if the digital versions available online prove to be adequate surrogates for most readers' needs, this will give us greater scope in the management of our physical stock (e.g. we shall be able to move items into our soon-to-be-built depository, and release much-needed space in our underground stacks). Lastly, under the terms of our agreement with Google we receive a copy of the digital images derived from our holdings, which we can exploit and repackage for the benefit of readers and researchers in ways that we are only just beginning to explore.

Whilst Sir Thomas Bodley would no doubt be astonished by the current scale and scope of the physical holdings of the library that he founded, I am sure that even he would be quick to acknowledge the benefits to be gained from mass digitisation. I suspect he would have been delighted to see his 'Republic of Letters' casting down the barriers of physical entry in favour of opening up citizenship to all.

Against all the odds: implementing the VTLS system at the National Library of Wales

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THE CONUNDRUM

There is something in the very process of planning for, procuring and implementing an integrated library system that militates against success. The reasons for procuring a new system must be thoroughly documented and user research with both patrons and staff undertaken in order to begin to compile an initial list of requirements. Technical research is vital and financial comparisons and considerations are essential to present funding bodies with clear indications of the one-off costs and the ensuing maintenance and running costs of a new system. There will be meetings, questions, iterations of documentation and then, if you are successful, a promise of funding tied to a timetable.

It is at this stage that you are faced with the inexorable truth that the rate of technological change and attendant possibilities outstrips the rate of bureaucratic processes ... significantly. Something tells you that if you were beginning your planning cycle today not only the answers but the questions would be different.

The only answer that we have come up with to this puzzle is to attempt to future proof your plans as far as possible, to aim for flexibility and hope for the best.

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES – SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

The National Library of Wales is one of the six legal deposit libraries of the UK and Ireland. The National Screen and Sound Archive is housed

in the Library (http://screenandsound.llgc.org.uk/001.htm). We collect a wide array of traditional and digital materials including manuscripts, archives, maps, paintings and photographs. The library is involved in ambitious digitisation projects and Culturenet Cymru (http://www.culturenetcymru.com/en/) operates from within the library's digital development section. At a very early stage in our new system deliberations we decided to opt for a single system to manage and provide access to all our collections.

When Andrew Green became the National Librarian of Wales the library undertook a consultative review to examine how it was perceived and how we could improve services. This review led to a reconfiguration exercise at the library which moved the organisational structure away from a purely format-based one with, for example, a department of printed books and a department of manuscripts and records to a structure based on library functions or activities. The single-system approach mirrors this new structure and responds to many of the users' observations that were expressed via the consultative review.

A number of factors stood out during the process of reaching our single-system conclusion:

- Library patrons wanted a single search to access all our collections. Many also required a facility to allow them to refine their search results by format after carrying out the initial search across *all* formats. *(CONUNDRUM: Broadcast/federated searching across multiple databases in different formats has improved significantly in the period since we made our single-system decision.)*
- The support and maintenance of a single system offered considerable benefits. Technical staff have been supporting two large systems (GEAC for print-based collections and CAIRS for our archival and audio-visual materials), and some twenty legacy databases containing non-standard data
- The library was anxious to improve access to its collections by ensuring online access to all its data. Many of our legacy databases were only available in-house or had no public-facing interfaces
- The library was committed to improving data standards and a single-system approach with one set of indexes and authority files was seen as a cost-effective way of achieving this.

VTLS Inc.

The system procurement followed the Official Journal of the European Union route (http://www.ojec.com/) and it's probably safe to say that the suppliers that we expected to hear from expressed an interest in our project. The companies shortlisted were all international, with proven track records and well-established reputations. The contract was awarded to VTLS Inc., the company which has also been awarded the contract to supply the Oxford University Libraries' new system. Oxford, like ourselves, are (former) GEAC customers.

The VTLS system purchased by the library consists of the following components:

VIRTUA – a fully integrated library management system with Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records functionality

VECTORS (iPORTAL) – a fully customisable portal providing online patron access to the library's collections and external linking

VERIFY – a workflow management system for e-resources

VITAL – an institutional repository management solution which we are using with FEDORA (open source) for digitil asset manangement.

DEVELOPMENTS

Following Welsh Assembly government procurement recommendations, the library's system procurement had set out to deliver 'out of the box' solutions to as many of our requirements as possible. When we held detailed discussions with the shortlisted companies two main areas were acknowledged as requiring some development work – the same two areas in each instance. We were committed to managing and displaying archival hierarchies in an EAD (encoded archival description) or tree-like structure and all of the systems needed further development to assist in the management of the workflow for accessioning, copying, preserving and cataloguing films.

Circulation was also an area that required some development (or at least tweaking) with all the systems that we saw. The average circulation module is inadequate to meet the complex needs of a closed-stack library with collections including a high percentage of rare and unique materials. Oxford, Trinity College Library Dublin and the National Library of Wales as GEAC customers had worked with the suppliers to develop a requesting and circulation module, a stack request

system that met these requirements. Oxford had committed itself to a similar development with VTLS. NLW had sight of the specification and found that it met the majority of our requirements.

PROBLEMS

Yes, there have been problems along the way and we are not quite there yet – and yes, it's all taken a little longer than we thought. The partnership with VTLS is working well in areas where developmental work has had to be undertaken. I think that perhaps the most difficult part of our work has been trying to harmonise the many datasets (some standard but many non-standard) and ensuring that the system indexing can cope with this wide variety of data. Change management for staff and users is always difficult to achieve, particularly when a process takes place over a comparatively long period of time. No one likes a backlog and of course we have one.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

On 29 January 2007 the library's new information management system went online to the public. The system, funded by the National Assembly, is a new and exciting way of accessing Wales's most important library and archival collections and is part of the library's aim to transform itself into a 21st-century digital library. When the project is completed, it will be possible for users to access data on all the library's collections through one search on the catalogue interface on its website. As of spring 2007 it was possible to search for books, maps and graphical materials through the new system, and archive collections were soon to be loaded also, making it a fully integrated system. On 29 March 2007 the new e-resources iPortal was due to be launched. This portal will provide access to all the online resources available at the library and will link to selected external resources of interest to our patrons and to the library and archive communities, particularly in Wales. For the first time Welsh citizens will be able to register as online library members without visiting the physical library and to gain internet access from anywhere in the world to many e-resources subscribed to by the National Library of Wales.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT ALL AGAIN …

The conundrum aside (our answers and questions might indeed be different now), the procurement was a success and we have purchased the right system to meet our requirements. The library is celebrating its centenary this year and in a supplement in the *Western Mail* (a Welsh daily paper) the library has expressed its confidence in its new system:

> '[The] new developments at the National Library not only enhance[s] the services available for those seeking access to information in Wales but also place Wales at the forefront of the use of new technology in library and information systems.'

We have a long way to go to complete our implementation and development work but we've made a good start, and against all the odds we will get there. Welcome to version 1 of our online catalogue at: http://cat.llgc.org.uk/cgi-bin/gw/chameleon?lng=en

Secure Access to On-line Resources

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WHY THE NEED FOR ACCESS MANAGEMENT?

With an increasing amount of online content available to learners and educators, the need for more secure and simplified access to resources has now become imperative. In response to this, the UK Access Management Federation was launched on 30 November 2006 to provide an access management solution to schools, further education, higher education and research organisations.

THE UK ACCESS MANAGEMENT FEDERATION

The UK Access Management Federation allows users to access protected online resources such as journals, books and data collections. It also permits providers of online resources to control access to their services using Shibboleth technology.

THE BENEFITS

Shibboleth allows service providers to recognise authorised users by requesting authentication from the user's home organisation. This gives organisations greater control over personal data and access to resources.

The technology allows for greater security of personal data as there is no need to release an individual's personal details. Instead the system releases a statement along the lines of 'This user is a member of staff' or 'This student is enrolled on a medical course.' This makes it easier for organisations to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Shibboleth software has already been adopted in national federations in Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Switzerland and the United States. It can be used to control access to both local resources (such as e-mail) and external online resources, thus reducing the number of passwords users need to remember. In the longer term, this should reduce the support burden on organisations by reducing the number of authentication systems organisations are required to support.

There are no costs to service providers or identity providers (e.g. colleges and universities) wishing to join the federation and Shibboleth can be used to gain access to controlled resources from any location using a web browser.

DEPLOYING THE TECHNOLOGY

There are two main options for educational organisations wishing to participate in the UK federation:

1 Deploy the Shibboleth software in house, allowing the organisation to retain strategic control and support of access management functions. This can be done using IT resources within the organisation or by making use of external consultants.
2 Outsource the responsibility for your organisation's identity provision, supplying data to the outsource company through a suitable contractual arrangement.

ACCESS TO EXISTING ATHENS PROTECTED RESOURCES

From July 2008, Athens will no longer be funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and will become a chargeable service. Organisations that have deployed Shibboleth and joined the federation will be able to continue to access Athens protected resources, through the federation gateway service, at no cost.

JOINING THE FEDERATION

After four months of operation, the federation had 22 identity providers and 13 service providers, with 18 applications being processed. We continue to receive a steady stream of new applications each month from both service and identity providers.

To find out more about becoming a member, please take a look at the federation's website: www.ukfederation.org.uk

Protecting the UK's research collection: the UK Research Reserve project

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The UK Research Reserve (UKRR) is a collaborative, co-ordinated and sustainable approach to securing the long-term retention, storage and access to low-use printed research journals.

Whilst the need to preserve and provide access to printed research collections is understood, there is also a recognition that lesser-used printed journals are at risk of ad hoc disposal as higher education libraries face space and cost pressures. The UKRR is designed to protect, and make accessible, low-use but still important research material, in the most cost-effective way.

The UKRR is being developed in two phases. Phase 1 of the project to establish the UKRR is funded by the UK Higher Education Funding Councils, following a successful bid by the Consortium of Research Libraries in the British Isles (CURL) and the British Library (BL) and will run for eighteen months, from January 2007 to June 2008.

In Phase 1 the universities of Cardiff, Birmingham, Imperial College London (the lead institution), Liverpool, Southampton and St Andrews are partnering with the British Library to establish the UKRR. The library and research communities are fully represented on an advisory board which is overseeing the development of Phase 1 of the UKRR project and developing a full governance model for Phase 2 and beyond. The advisory board has responsibility for advocacy for the UKRR in Phase 1 to ensure understanding of the objectives and benefits of the UKRR within the research communities. SCONUL is represented on the advisory board and has a key role in commu-nication with higher education libraries and in the arrangements for co-ordinating the retention of research material.

The UKRR will be based on the holdings of UK higher education libraries, and will have the British Library at its core. The BL will store and maintain printed copies of journals and provide a range of services to ensure quick and easy access to the material for researchers and others who wish to consult them. To help to ensure the preservation of and continuing access to the material within the UKRR, at least two copies of each journal will be retained within the higher education library network, in addition to the BL copy.

The UKRR has three goals:

- **safeguarding the long-term future of printed research journals**: the UKRR will protect vulnerable printed research material by establishing a system to manage the co-ordinated retention of an appropriate number of copies of low-use printed research journals, ensuring that 'last copies' of titles are not inadvertently discarded. Journals within the UKRR will be permanently retained both centrally at the British Library and within a distributed holding across the research library sector

- **enabling quick and easy access to research material**: journals within the UKRR will be accessible to all researchers, regardless of location or institutional affiliation. The UKRR will provide fast and convenient access to journals, by developing the existing strengths of the British Library's document supply service. Researchers will have a choice of accessing journals in printed or electronic format, with electronic desk-top delivery being the norm

- **ensuring efficient use of resources**: by co-ordinating the storage and retention of printed journal titles, the higher education library sector will make significant space gains by reducing the amount of duplicate storage of the same low-use journal titles, without endangering the long-term retention of and access to this material. The space reclaimed from journal storage can be re-purposed for new opportunities and higher-priority 'people-focused' uses.

Phase 1 of the project will include developing a prototype UKRR and testing an operational serv-

ice for researchers. To establish the prototype the Phase 1 project is focusing on several key areas of work:

- **selection of printed journals for de-duplication by each higher education library partner**: the higher education libraries will set their own criteria for selecting low-use printed journals that they wish to prioritise for withdrawal. Having made their selection according to these criteria, the libraries will check the journals at the shelf to confirm the holdings, the measurement of each title and the physical condition of the items. The libraries will then carry out their own consultation on the proposed withdrawal with their institution's research community.

  Convincing academics of the case for the UKRR and gaining their support through local advocacy programmes is a key challenge for the higher education library partners.

- **establishing the process, and support systems, for journal holdings information discovery and management**: before withdrawal can take place, the holdings of other higher education libraries must be checked to ensure that at least two copies of each journal title, in addition to the BL copy, are held within the higher education library network. This is an essential part of ensuring the UK's collection of printed research material is protected under the UKRR and that 'last copies' are not discarded.

  The UKRR project faces a strategic challenge in finding an accurate, timely and easy-to-use method of establishing the journal holdings of higher education libraries. Holdings information in library catalogues is quietly recognised as 'patchy'; catalogues do not currently record a library's intention towards a journal – it may be due for withdrawal the week after it has been checked by another library and assumed to be for permanent retention; union serials catalogues are rarely universal in their coverage and vary in the regularity of their updating timetables; there are often multiple records for the same title, which can make navigation and interpretation of the information complex and time-consuming.

  The project will investigate the requirements and options for developing a 'journal hold-ings information management system' to support the UKRR.

- **developing the models and mechanisms to enable the co-ordinated retention of the agreed number of copies of printed journals within the UKRR**: where the number of copies of a particular journal title are found to reach the agreed minimum, the UKRR must provide a mechanism to co-ordinate the retention of these 'last copies'. SCONUL has agreed to act as the co-ordinating body that will investigate the most appropriate library to retain a print copy, and will secure that library's agreement to act as the holder of the title. SCONUL will liaise with institutions to reach agreement on the most appropriate home for 'last copies' and to ensure that the responsibility for retaining reserve copies is shared across the sector. Several factors may be considered: individual collection strengths and the 'fit' of the title; regional distribution; the practicalities and cost of transferring the title; the remit of the library.

  The UKRR project will work with SCONUL to design and test a retention agreement and management process.

- **building on the British Library's existing research infrastructure to develop the storage and access services for the UKRR**: as part of the co-ordinated retention principle, the BL will take in, process and store 'last copies' of journals under the UKRR scheme. Coupled with this, the BL will provide access to material within the UKRR with a fast, easy-to-use delivery service for researchers, to an agreed service level developed in consultation with library and research stakeholders.

  The British Library will develop and test a new pricing model for document supply with the higher education library project partners. Payment for the document supply service will move from a per transaction basis to a banded subscription fee based on the level of use of the document supply service and including a fixed element to reflect the central storage and retention role of the BL within the UKRR. This business model will enable the BL to cover the costs of storing the material required to support the UKRR and to continue the document supply service in a sustainable way.

An external consultant will be appointed to carry out a formal evaluation of Phase 1 of the UKRR. The evaluation will include an assessment of the models, processes and costs of Phase 1; the optimum number of copies of items to be retained across the nation and within disciplines; the potential for widening the scope of the UKRR to include monographs and an investigation of the different challenges that monographs would bring; the impact on users and the level of use; the spatial and monetary savings to the Higher Education sector; the potential scalability to a full UKRR in Phase 2; and benchmarking with other schemes.

Phase 2 of the UKRR project will build on Phase 1 and open the UKRR to all higher education libraries wishing to participate, and will possibly extend the scheme to include monographs. The development of Phase 2 will be informed by the experience and knowledge gained in Phase 1 and will be dependent on receiving additional funding.

The Research Information Network: a very promising start

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The Research Information Network (RIN) is a new organisation, in existence for about two years and with a slender staff – three initially, now five. It was set up by the four UK higher education funding bodies, the eight Research Councils and the three national libraries for an initial period of three years. This followed the recommendation of the Research Support Libraries Group (RSLG) in 2003 that a new body was needed to lead and co-ordinate the provision of research information services, driven by the needs of researchers.

The sponsors set high ambitions for the RIN in providing strategic leadership, influencing and co-ordinating activity, and facilitating engagement with researchers, across the broad range of issues identified by the RSLG, with a mission to 'lead and co-ordinate new developments in the collaborative provision of research information for benefit of researchers in the UK'.

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Based in the British Library, the RIN reports to a Funders' Group, representing the sponsors, and an Advisory Board made up of representatives of the information and research communities. In addition, four consultative groups exist to provide channels for engagement with end-users, and to help develop the RIN's programme of work.

Two other standing groups have been established: a Research Communications Group, which has been successful in establishing collaborative work across the key players in the scholarly communications process, and a Research Councils Liaison Group which is still in the early stages of developing its role.

RIN activities have focused on five main areas:
- search and discovery
- access and use of library services
- collaborative collection management and storage
- research outputs and digital content
- scholarly communications.

We have produced seven reports: (1) on the results of the RSLP access funding scheme; (2) the achievements of the CoFoR collaborative collection management initiative; (3) arrangements for public access to digital content in academic libraries; (4) the operation and costs of scholarly journal publishing in the UK; (5) researchers' use of discovery services; (6) research funders' policies and requirements in the management of research information outputs; and (7) researchers' use of academic library services.

Our next report, on conversion of library catalogues to digital form, will be available in the next few weeks. All these reports have made significant contributions to the evidence base as to current developments in policy and practice, and to researcher behaviour, needs and views.

We have held five well-attended workshops with representatives of the research and information communities to consider and raise awareness of issues including datawebs; the implications of the increasing availability of online information; the management of digital research data; and the findings and implications of our studies on scholarly journal publishing and of researchers' use of discovery services. We have also held two expert seminars which have helped to point the way forward in the development of library catalogues and related discovery tools.

We have produced, in collaboration with key stakeholders, statements of strategic principles and policy on the stewardship of research data and on scholarly communications; a guidance note on the payment of publication fees; and – most recently – a consultation draft on the stewardship of digital research data.

We have worked with organisations including the British Library, CURL, JISC, the OSI and RCUK, as well as SCONUL to help in developing strategy and supporting services in areas including collaborative schemes for access to libraries, enhancement of digital catalogues and the development of the e-infrastructure for research. We have also brokered and facilitated relationships, not least in the area of scholarly communications, where we have begun to establish an agenda of collaborative activity across the major groups of stakeholders.

We have developed good relations with a wide range of bodies in the library, information and publishing communities, though building relationships with members of the research community has been more difficult. We have to work largely through intermediaries such as the research councils and learned societies, as well as through large-scale surveys and detailed case studies. Addressing this communications gap between the research community and the library / information community remains a major challenge.

Effective communication is central to the RIN's role and the impact of its work. We have used a number of communications channels, and our website is now developing as a key mechanism for conversation with the research and information communities. The introduction of a team blog has been especially interesting in this respect: www.rin.ac.uk / team-blog.
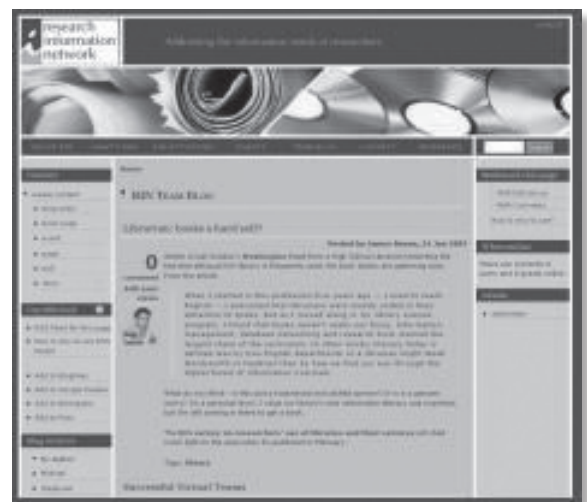
The impact of our work to date has been largely in helping to establish a better base of evidence to underpin the development of policy and information services for the benefit of researchers. Our challenge now is to build on this, to draw out the lessons and implications from our own work and that of others and to present them to key players

to help them develop their policies and services appropriately.

OUR ROLE AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

In the next phase of the RIN's development, we shall focus on two core roles. First, we shall continue to develop our role as an observatory, gathering and analysing evidence on the behaviour, needs and perceptions of researchers as creators and users of information resources. As well as focusing on major issues of importance to researchers, we shall drill down into specific disciplines and subjects in order to gain clearer evidence as to contrasting behaviours and needs, and we shall seek to identify the main constraints in information awareness and practice across disciplines, and how to help researchers using information sources in disciplines other than their own.

Secondly, we shall draw out the lessons and implications from the evidence we gather, and present our findings and conclusions to key audiences. We shall thus develop our role in providing evidence-based advice and guidance, in generating policy and strategic frameworks, in advocacy, and in bringing key stakeholders together to consider how best to achieve desirable developments in policy and practice.

Over the next two-three years, we can thus build on the foundations we have laid. We are confident that we shall be able to show that we have succeeded in delivering a valued programme of work, securing a recognised place in the information and research communities and gaining acceptance as a voice speaking to and for those communities. We shall have:

- played a core role in establishing an evidence base on researchers' behaviour and how it is changing
- provided advice, guidance and strategic frameworks that help to point the way forward in developing library and information provision for researchers, taking account of different subjects, disciplines and institutional settings
- contributed to improving collaboration between libraries in developing their services for researchers
- established with the main groups of players in the scholarly communications process a shared agenda of activity to improve understanding of all that is involved

- fostered the establishment of better channels of communication between researchers and librarians / information specialists, and the development of library / researcher partnerships.

As both research practices and information services develop further in the future, there will be a continuing need for a body with a sharp focus on sustaining a strong base of evidence on the behaviours, needs and perceptions of researchers; and with the experience and expertise to provide high-quality evidence-based advice and guidance to researchers, research institutions and funders, and providers of information services.

Hence our vision is for the RIN to develop and sustain its role as an observatory and a centre of expertise and advice on matters relating to how researchers – in the full range of disciplines, subjects and institutional settings – create and use information. This vision will be developed further in a new plan setting strategic goals for the period from 2008 onwards. The team will remain relatively small, but with the capacity and the capability to undertake work in-house as well as to commission large-scale surveys and similar work from third parties. We shall sustain and develop close relationships with a wide group of representative bodies in the library, information and research communities, and much of its work will be undertaken in partnership with such bodies. We shall also seek to develop closer relationships with research and related bodies beyond the higher education sector.

Such an RIN will produce tangible outcomes in facilitating improvements in the research process, helping researchers in both creating and using information resources more efficiently and effectively. Thus we shall sustain our contribution to the health of the UK research base, helping to ensure that it retains its position as one of the most productive and influential systems of publicly funded research in the world.

The changing research environment: implications for library space

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INTRODUCTION

We think of research libraries as grand cathedral-like spaces, such as the Library of Congress, or the British Museum – hushed spaces, where books are brought to your desk. But most researchers use higher education libraries, often primarily designed for undergraduate use.   This article looks at what researchers need in library space. I will concentrate on the space for researchers in libraries, but there is an important dimension that will not be covered here, which is about space for researchers in their departments, and there may be many similarities – and some differences.

The University of Edinburgh is carrying out a major redevelopment of its main library and we have set ourselves the twin goals of enhancing the student experience in the library while maintaining the concept of a research library and the service we provide to researchers. It is easy to provide such a vision – it is quite another thing to deliver it.

The vision we have for the redevelopment is that the redeveloped library will be:

- an intellectual hub for the university
  - o supporting learning in a research environment
  - o welcoming and inspiring creativity, innovation and scholarship
  - o providing books, e-books, journals, e-journals, manuscripts, images and objects for use in and outside the building
  - o supporting interdisciplinarity
  - o celebrating the past and present achievements of the university

- the focus for a wide range of activities in learning and research
- more open and accessible than it is now
- a place where learners and researchers can engage and converse with each other and with information specialists
- flexible to accommodate changes in the future.

In preparing for this redevelopment, we have found a lot of advice about learning space, but little advice about designing space for researchers.

CHANGES IN RESEARCH AND THE IMPACT OF THESE ON THE LIBRARY

We first need to define what we mean by 'researchers'. I maintain that researchers are not defined by their status, but by what they want to do. First-year students, final-year honours students, postdocs and academics are all researchers, using this definition – they are all somewhere on a spectrum from learning to research.

In Edinburgh, we have had an active debate about whether the services we are planning to introduce in the redeveloped library to make life easier for first- and second-year undergraduates (e.g. a bigger and easier to use collection of course books, choice in learning spaces) is making it *too* easy. Some academics maintain that any first-year student should be treated as a potential researcher and that all first-year students will need research skills whether they become academics or go into any role in life which requires continued lifelong learning.

However, for the purposes of this article, I am primarily thinking about people who are carrying out research in the more traditional sense – people who are pushing at the boundaries of knowledge in their field, in order to improve human society – and people who are normally carrying this out in a university. This includes undergraduates in their later years, postgraduates and postdocs, academic staff and visiting researchers.

There have been a number of changes in research practice and behaviour:

- The RAE and other research management tools put pressures and drivers onto researchers, which leads to the pressure for …
- … more publishing; I am told that in the recent round of academic promotions in Edinburgh it was remarked that whereas some years ago, an output of one or two

papers was the norm, it is now common for people to publish five or ten papers per annum. This is probably allied to …

- … pressures of time and finding resources to carry out research which leads to …
- … different ways of working, particularly team working, and in order to support team working …
- … departments are providing more imaginative spaces for teams of researchers to work in, to inspire and spark off each other – the 'water cooler' effect.

But of course there are huge differences among disciplines, which we must not underestimate – both between the subjects which are 'big science' and those of 'small science' and between the sciences and the humanities.

The other huge impact on research is the digital environment. What researcher does not use Google as their first port of call in information-seeking behaviour? The internet, and e-resources of all sorts make it easy to find information at the desktop, on- and off-campus. Libraries are responding to this in a variety of ways. Many STM disciplines claim they do not need to use libraries at all, not recognising that much of what they do use is purchased for them by their library. In other disciplines, users are convinced they still use libraries more than they actually do – there is a mismatch between practice and rhetoric.

WHAT DO RESEARCHERS WANT FROM LIBRARIES?

1 A place to find books
Books still play an iconic role in libraries. I use 'books' in the generic sense to include all types of materials.

Certainly the rhetoric from certain disciplines is all about browsability, the need to be able to see as many books as possible on open shelves – that is, using the library shelves for resource discovery. But at the same time libraries are developing offsite or onsite compact storage or contemplating discarding material that is duplicated electronically, backed up by ever more efficient digital resource discovery tools.

Despite the growing digital access the linear meterage of books that we have in the library is something which is important within segments of the academic community. We are currently planning to have reduced onsite open collection but this will be supplemented by onsite open-access

compact shelving, onsite closed access and an offsite store.

Of course, we also have to ensure that there is space for the activities associated with book usage: loans and returns and re-shelving.

2 A place for special collections
Special collections form a specialised part of our offerings to certain disciplines, and are likely to play an ever more significant part in what the library does – again for certain researchers as our 'unique selling point'. Of course, we also provide special collections digitally – but this usually increases the demand for them, rather than decreasing it. For many researchers the activities in special collections are the core of the library – discovery, the use of manuscripts and rare books, bringing students to see these, creating new researchers through this function.

We have worked very hard to develop a new model of special collections in our redeveloped library – a centre for research libraries – with the aim of ensuring more use of the collections and closer partnership-working between library staff and researchers. There are adjacencies required between secondary materials and primary materials, with the staff, and at the same time requirements for conservation and security.

3 A place to get help
Of course, researchers can get help from library and other staff through other media, e-mail, phone and so on, but there is still a requirement for researchers to be able to engage with library staff in the library. This is no longer just traditional library staff, but with IT staff also. The model we have in Edinburgh is of a joint helpdesk with referral to the various specialists; we need to design this in such a way that it is suitable for research-type enquiries which may need more detailed help, as well as for undergraduate-type enquiries.

4 A place to work
Many researchers, particularly some postgraduates, still work in a library, particularly if they are working on a subject where books are used, or where their department has poor facilities. This space must be congenial, but if it is, our research tells us that it does not need to be near the front door – researchers are prepared to travel to find congenial space. In our redevelopment we will be providing a great variety of types of spaces to give users choice.

For the 'research-type' space, there seem to be a number of requirements:

- lighting – I think this is so important because task lighting on desks feels special, and it is not now expensive to provide
- bigger desks, with perhaps a lockable drawer
- offices, but only if there is a special reason for them (for those with a disability, or for long-term allocation of space to researchers within the library); in general, offices are not necessary.

I think it is the *sort* of space that is important, rather than the technology in that space – but we have to get the technology right. There must be wireless and wired access to power points, because we should increasingly assume that researchers will bring their own laptops. Sometimes – until we get properly set up – we may need to provide kiosked access to external resources for visiting researchers, and we may need to provide a few fixed computers.

One thing I am very uncertain about is whether we should be providing dedicated space for researchers. It goes very much against egalitarian principles, but I know that many places try it quite successfully. I have actually asked this question to a largish number of groups in Edinburgh and by and large people come up with the egalitarian answer – but then we get complaints when researchers can't find a space in the part of the library they want to work in at exam time.

5 A place from where the digital library is pumped out
For many researchers who do not come to the library, the digital library is what they use, and making the digital library efficient requires a huge amount of work by library and IT staff. This work must happen in an environment that allows the specialist staff to work together, to seek the advice of users, working in teams and virtual teams to negotiate, buy, catalogue and give easy access to resources.

This just doesn't happen if you put staff into second-rate accommodation – it has to be engineered, and it is almost the most important function of the space requirements in the library – but this is sometimes a difficult message for academics who want to see more books and fewer staff in the building. In our redeveloping library, we are planning to put all our library, IT and e-learning teams into open-plan space, using the best office practices we can find, to ensure this seamless way

of working to support research. We hope that the 'water cooler' effect will be omnipresent.

6 A place to celebrate research
Most of us have 'excellence in research' in our university strategy, and the library can be a place to celebrate this – both digitally and physically. Digitally, this is achieved through our institutional repositories. Physically, it can enhanced through providing a space for academic departments to show off their recent research, and we have done this occasionally, with great success.

The library is also in many ways the guardian of the institutional history of the university– we hold the corporate record – and I think we often do not make enough of this, by providing exhibitions about the past. In our redeveloped library, we want to have an exhibition space for displays on the past and present of the university, and also to provide a showcase for our cultural treasures. This is important for researchers – to make them feel a part of tradition of significant research, but it is also important for learners.

We should also have art – lots of art – in our libraries. Art raises the spirit and raises the tone, and can help create the feel of a 'research library' for all.

7 A place to meet
Cafés are sometimes called learning cafés – but I think I would like to have a research café – a café where researchers can meet in a space which is trusted and non-departmental, where cross-disciplinary discussion takes place, where creativity flourishes, where new interdisciplinary research projects are hatched.

Of course in term-time months, the library café is likely to be full of students (although some academics note that they come to the library café just to see their students in an informal setting – and then meet other researchers). But out of term-time, when there are fewer people, we need to work at making the library café the 'research place to be'. This means good coffee, not mediocre coffee, and an appropriate ambience.

The café can also be the place for researchers to meet with the staff who work in the library – librarians, IT and e-learning staff – and so it can also fulfil another conversational need.

So the research library is made up of these elements – a place to find books, a place for special collections, a place to get help, a place to work, a place from where the digital library is pumped out, a place to celebrate research, a place to meet. Of course, all of these have their digital equivalents – well, perhaps all except the café!

We should also note that the elements which make up the research library also make up the library for learners.

But researchers – at whatever level – may think they are different, and perhaps this is the key. Perhaps it is all about market segmentation and choice. Perhaps the lamps, the wider desks, the better help are akin to another great success for market segmentation – the fact that some of us are prepared to pay three times as much to fly first class, for a glass of champagne and a wider seat with a bit more foot-room.

So I wonder if in the end it is all smoke and mirrors – that what we are creating in research space is not something unique for researchers, but something that can be appreciated by all our users, depending on their preferred method of working. Choice and variety of style are the answer, to allow researchers, learners and all users to find the kind of space they want.

This paper is based on talks given at the SCONUL buildings visit, 7–8 December 2006 (http://www.sconul.ac.uk/groups/space_planning/events/06pres.html) and the CURL-SCONUL Research Spaces workshop, 9 June 2006 (http://www.curl.ac.uk/Presentations/ResearchSpaces9June06/ResearchSpaceWorkshop9June.htm).

Investing in a new way of learning

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In today's technologically complex world, the needs of students have never been so diverse. But while laptops, iPods and the wireless revolution have transformed how students communicate and obtain information, the way they learn has also evolved.

The University of Birmingham is committed to nurturing independent learners, able to think critically, show initiative and work collaboratively. Inevitably, this requires significant changes to the areas in which learning is delivered or supported.

Information services at Birmingham is now managing Higher Education Funding Council money allocated for just this purpose.

In the last two years some £4.5 million has been spent on several major projects aimed at developing and improving learning spaces on campus. This investment is part of the university's learning spaces strategy, a plan that will be shaping current and future development of learning space throughout the institution.

The availability of funding provides an ideal opportunity to create innovative, sustainable and manageable facilities to enhance teaching and learning, in line with the strategy.

To date three major projects have been completed: the Nuffield learning centre, the Garner learning suite and the Strathcona building, at a cost of £4m. Each space is unique in its design, with its own identity, but builds on the success of the others.

The Nuffield learning centre is a modern learning centre providing flexible learning space for student-centred open access learning. It comprises a learning suite, two flat-floored lecture theatres, two seminar rooms with a boardroom layout and five small-group teaching/study rooms. The larger rooms provide the opportunity for staff and students to change the layout to suit their teaching needs and styles. All rooms are equipped with a full range of audio and visual equipment. Included are social seating areas, vending machines and plasma screens showing rolling news throughout the day. A new innovation is the use of computer workstations known as huddles. A huddle consists of a circular group of tables accommodating five PCs. The workstation incorporates a 'housing' where the computer monitors, keyboards and mouse can be put away, giving a clear desk area. The centre of the building has no natural light, so in order to create a gentle and comfortable place to work, a lighting and painting scheme was incorporated in the design.

The centre is a radical transformation of a derelict building, consisting of old workshops and stores, where the development of the 'cavity magnetron' was carried out by researchers at the University of Birmingham. This device was initially developed at Birmingham and was then sent to the USA for volume production and further development. It is widely regarded as one of the most important pieces of technology developed in the Second World War because it allowed very small objects, for example U-boat periscopes, to be detected, and this was vital in winning the battle of the Atlantic.

The Garner learning suite is situated in what was an oak-lined traditional library. The new suite has been carefully designed to provide a modern working space whilst retaining some of the old features. Different zones have been created by clever use of furniture to accommodate a wide range of activities, including social, independent and group learning. Facilities include a meeting

pod with whiteboards fitted to internal walls; two group-study areas with PCs; a presentation room that can be booked via a new web-based computer booking system; 30 PCs and a social/café area with a plasma screen showing News 24. A new lighting system includes a colour change feature around the periphery of the room.
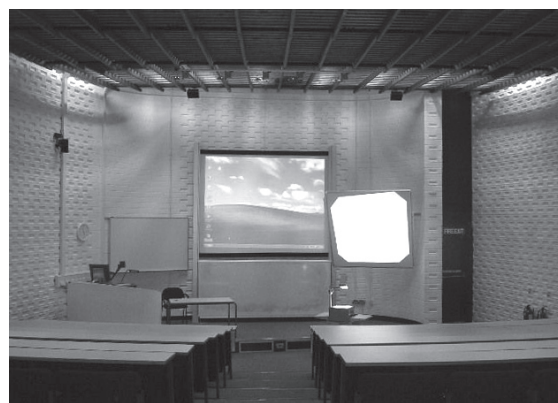
he Strathcona building was already home to a large number of learning and teaching spaces. However, several rooms became vacant, presenting the opportunity to increase the amount and range of learning and teaching spaces. The building now has seven large lecture theatres with fixed seating, thirteen seminar rooms with a range of furniture and layouts and three computer clusters with a total of 120 high specification PCs. A small new wireless café with vending facilities was also installed and upgrading of all power, data and telecommunications was undertaken.

The university will continue to provide a range of innovative learning facilities that ensure a high-quality student experience now and for the foreseeable future. Planning for the next round of refurbishment and upgrades to learning and teaching spaces has already started.

If you are interested in visiting the learning spaces, please contact Toni Kelly at the telephone and e-mail numbers above.

A big change = a big publicity campaign:

introducing access control to the University Library at Lincoln – a case study in promoting a service change

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BACKGROUND

The University Library at Lincoln, Brayford Pool campus, is housed in a converted warehouse and opened its doors in September 2004. Since then we have welcomed visitors, as well as staff and students, to use our resources and services. However, our open access policy did have disadvantages in terms of trying to ensure security for our users, and it has also been difficult to monitor usage and maintain statistics to the standard we require. Our solution was to introduce an access control system, of a type which is commonly used throughout the sector but which represents a significant change for our users. We were keen that our users should view this change positively, and therefore we decided that a big publicity campaign was needed, to make sure that everyone who used the library knew it was happening and appreciated the benefits it would bring.

PLANNING

We set up a group to oversee the whole project, and individuals were assigned responsibilities. For the publicity campaign, we felt that the main impetus was to target as many people as possible, via as many channels as possible, for a sustained period of time.

PUBLICITY IDEAS

These included:

- posters
- leaflets/flyers
- e-mail
- the portal (university intranet system)
- virtual campus/message of the day (university virtual learning environment (VLE))
- induction presentations (given by academic subject librarians)
- plasma screens (situated around the library to transmit information)
- notices on turnstiles
- a large banner on the building
- a newsletter for staff and students
- departmental/subject committee meetings (attended by academic subject librarians)
- leaflets in books posted out to distance learners
- a cardboard cutout (+ photo for the themed campaign).

STAKEHOLDERS

We identified the following stakeholders:

- academic staff
- students
- university departments
- external interested parties (public library, local colleges, borrower-scheme members, general public).

A THEMED CAMPAIGN

We needed a design theme to distinguish this publicity campaign from other posters and flyers that we use within the library's branded template. Our idea was that we use a real student, displaying the student ID card, to show that all students would need to carry their cards with them to be able to access the library. We used the slogan 'You need this to get in', and variations of words around this image, in the lead-up and during and after implementation. This theme was also used on posters, flyers and other media, including the in-house plasma screens.

The campaign targeted:

- academic staff – with these main publicity methods:
  - emails using the intranet message list
  - departmental meetings attended by academic subject librarians
  - the virtual learning environment (noticeboards and message of the day)
  - the portal – university intranet (message to all users)
  - leaflets/flyers
  - notices on turnstiles
- students – using these main publicity methods:
  - posters
  - leaflets/flyers
  - the portal – university intranet
  - the virtual learning environment (noticeboards and message of the day)
  - induction presentations (early warning for new students)
  - plasma screens
  - notices on turnstiles
  - staff and student newsletters
- university departments – main publicity methods (same as academic staff).

We used the expertise of an academic and of a photography learning adviser within the media and humanities faculty to produce the image of the student. They also found a volunteer student who was perfect for the campaign. The result was a crisp, friendly image that was attractive and professional. The image was used in all our publicity materials (both in-house and externally produced).

The publicity climax

Initially, we did consider producing a full-size cardboard cutout of the student but, after researching the possibilities, we decided that the best option would be a pop-up banner. This type

of banner is easy to move around and can be rolled back into its case when not needed. It was displayed in the library foyer from the first day of access control implementation. At the same time, a large (10ft by 20ft) banner was designed to hang on the outside of the library, and to be put in place a week before implementation, so that it would have maximum impact. This banner displayed the start date of our new system. Both banners were produced by the same company and were professional and eye-catching.

External Users

We were concerned that introducing access control would create a barrier that might prevent potential external users from visiting us. We have therefore planned the second stage as a promotional campaign, the focus of which will be a brochure promoting our resources to external users. The plan is to distribute this publication to all interested parties, including the public library, local colleges, borrower-scheme members and the general public.

We have also ordered appropriate signage for the foyer, to make it explicit that we welcome visitors to our library.

Costs

- The posters and flyers were produced in-house using the library template, with the image of the student used to set the campaign apart from other publicity.
- Publicity using intranet, VLE and plasma screens was free.
- The biggest cost to date was the two banners, which came to about £500.
- We are also planning to produce a leaflet promoting our services to external users.

Photographs by Colin Reiners; student image by Mike Downing

PUBLICITY IMPLEMENTATION

During induction week, the campaign was initiated by the academic subject librarians, who publicised the system to new and returning students. Once induction was over, and the campaign image was produced, posters and flyers using the image were displayed on two noticeboards, prominently placed within the library. Flyers were also placed on the library desks and were placed in books posted to distance learners, who might otherwise have missed our campaign.

In addition to two main messages on the virtual learning environment and the intranet, we sent targeted e-mails to staff and students in a countdown format over a few weeks.

We used the plasma screens located on all floors of the library to display a PowerPoint presentation that included the student's image on each slide. Posters were placed in the majority of buildings around the campus during one afternoon two weeks before access control was implemented.

Unfortunately, we were unable to position the outside banner as we originally planned, due to high winds and problems with attaching it to the building. A compromise was reached: it was placed at a lower level on another side of the building – this was still highly visible to all.

After the system had been in operation for a week, we changed the messages on the display and plasma screens to one which thanked our users for their support, and also described some of the benefits of the system.

REVIEW

The access control implementation project will be reviewed at the end of the 2007–8 academic year, and the publicity campaign will be reviewed as part of this process. First thoughts on what we might have done differently? The outside banner was vandalised – given more time, we might have been able to locate it in its originally planned position, which would have been out of reach for all but the most determined.

Promoting London's academic libraries: the London Higher Factsheet

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Within the M25 Consortium of academic libraries, the M25 Collaboration and Partnership Working Group (http://www.m25lib.ac.uk/collaboration_and_partnership_working_group/2.html) is responsible for managing collaborative activities on behalf of the consortium's 55 member institutions. The group maintains links with a number of regional, national and government bodies, including London Higher. The idea of producing an online factsheet on London's academic libraries was the result of the close working relationship that has been established over the past three years.

London Higher (http://www.londonhigher.ac.uk) exists to promote and develop London's higher education sector. With a steering committee drawn from vice- chancellors selected from among its 40 member universities and higher education colleges, it fulfils a promotion and advocacy role which is supported by the London Development Agency and works in partnership with the Mayor of London and London First. Its series of key factsheets is designed to give an overview of the strength and diversity of London's higher education community and its contribution to and economic impact on London as a region. Having produced factsheets on the international student market and on higher education staff, it then discussed with the M25 Collaboration and Partnership Working Group plans for a third factsheet in the series which would cover academic libraries. Evidence Base, the research and evaluation unit within UCE Birmingham's Library Services, was commissioned to do the detailed work by the chair of the M25 Collaboration and Partnership Working Group on behalf of the M25 Steering Group.

The M25 Consortium extends beyond the boundaries of London itself into the M25 region and beyond. The first step was therefore to identify those institutions within the consortium who were also members of London Higher. Using the SCONUL statistics for 2004–5,[1] basic information was then collected on such key facts as numbers of books, numbers of annual visits, issues and so on. Information of the number of external users of London's libraries was obtained from UK Libraries Plus and SCONUL Research Extra.

Part of the diversity of London's higher education is the number of specialist art, music and drama colleges within the capital. Several of these do not currently contribute to the SCONUL annual statistics. Individual approaches were made to 15 specialist colleges asking for basic statistics and descriptions of their library collections and a good response was received, so that we were able to include all the institutions in the factsheet.

Some impressive statistics emerged. There are 154 libraries within London Higher's 40 institutions, including 23% of all higher education libraries in the UK, between them offering 33,000 study places and 21 million books. Statistics do not tell the whole story, so the next stage was to identify some key themes and to provide links to individual libraries as examples or case studies. The themes selected were:

- Regional, national and global impact
- The changing face of academic libraries
- Strengths in the creative arts, health, business and science
- Specialist collections of books, manuscripts and archives
- Other world class libraries in London.

Searching university websites in relation to the themes outlined above immediately struck two obstacles:

1 Where is the library?

From the home page of a university's outward-facing web-site, it was often difficult to track down the library directly. Intuitive searching of inner pages or the A-Z search facility was needed to get results.

2 What does the library offer?

While academic departments were marketing their wares to potential students, the library link generally led directly into the pages devised for current students and staff. It was often difficult to locate information on the library's special features and strengths, and information about any services to external users tended to be couched in a 'what you can and cannot do' language rather than 'Welcome to the library.'

The primary aim of a library website is naturally to explain its services to its key market of staff and student users and to provide a clear path through to the resources it provides. It would, of course, be foolish to assume that a student's main interest in selecting a university is the strength of its library and information resources. However, there may be other users of the external web pages for whom this information is of value. If libraries are serious about opening up their collections then perhaps they should be looking at their websites from an outsider's point of view to see if they always provide the type of information that is useful to visitors.

Information that could be gleaned from university websites was supplemented by searches of services such as MASC25 (http://www.masc25.ac.uk/), which maps special collections in the London region, and AIM25 (http://www.aim25.ac.uk/) which provides information on archives in London and the M25 area. Much information also came through personal contact, especially from the M25 Collaboration and Partnership Working Group, who provided help and advice throughout the project. The M25 Advocacy Working Group also provided valuable input. This variety of approach provided a good and varied selection of anecdotal evidence to flesh out the statistics with which the project had begun.

While a representative group of libraries has been included in this first edition, it was not possible to include all libraries that had special collections or were doing innovative work. For this reason, the second edition planned for November 2007, will not only update the statistics in line with the SCONUL 2005–6 returns, but will also change some of the examples quoted, with London Higher libraries being invited to make suggestions for inclusion.

The key factsheet on London's academic libraries can be viewed online at http://www.london-higher.ac.uk/docs/Libraries_Keyfacts06.pdf. Favourable comments have been received from vice-chancellors and library managers. A further worksheet covering IT resources in London Higher institutions is now under discussion.

REFERENCE

1 SCONUL annual library statistics 2004–2005, SCONUL, 2006; available at http://www.sconul.ac.uk/statistics/ [Accessed …?]

Advertising and information services – a partnership success story

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Youth Media will already be a familiar name among many within the academic community. Now in its eighth year, the company has come a long way since starting out as a glint in the eye of a young academic called Justin Smith. Having established Youth Media with the support of the Princes' Scottish Youth Business Trust, Justin started approaching academic libraries in 1998 shortly after completing his studies in MSc Entrepreneurship at Glasgow Caledonian University.

It took a while to establish a few key partnerships with universities that were willing to try out his suggestions, but by the end of the academic year 2006–2007 Justin and the rest of the team will be celebrating as the company reaches the milestone of £1 million of income generated for educational partners. This income has been achieved from a completely new type of commercial and educational partnership benefiting institutions across the UK, and all of it has been made possible by positive and effective working relationships. Youth Media is a corporate member of SCONUL.

Delivering information on behalf of public and private organisations into academic libraries might seem like a strange concept to some, and indeed it was at first –from all parts of the spectrum. Advertisers are unaware just how far and how fast libraries had developed and were unsure of this new, uncharted environment. Many had also been left unsatisfied with previous student marketing experiences but, although sceptical, were willing to give it a try. Librarians, on the other hand, had reservations about introducing advertising into their buildings and many a debate was generated on the subject. Indeed, there have been many challenges along the road in efforts to accommodate library concerns and deliver results for clients. However, in time it was realised that the medium was not only popular, but could be harnessed in order to carry academic messages, and also to provide useful tools to the libraries themselves.

'We have worked with Youth Media for a number of years at Imperial and have appreciated the synergy between their clients and our own promotional needs.' – Angus Brown, Imperial College London

Poster panels placed in an area of high footfall

The original concept comprised the now perennially popular poster panels being located in high footfall areas. When these are empty, they display aesthetically appealing art prints. This was also beneficial to the libraries as budgets didn't often stretch to cover such 'frivolities' and they are now frequently used to display library and university notices. For advertisers, it meant that for the very first time – their brand, service or opportunity could reach the heart of the student market in a more serious academic arena – away from the hustle, bustle and clutter of messages found in the traditional student 'social' areas. It was a tantalizing service that had never before been found in the student market.

The company started off by developing partnerships with universities on a regional basis from its Glasgow office, initially just providing poster

panels but all the time receiving suggestions for new media and services as relationships developed with universities and the concept was proven. From these suggestions, the digital communication system was developed and the team started to develop further partnerships, moving slowly southwards as the business grew.

Fast forward to 2007 and there are now over 150 higher and further education partners with 1,000 Youth poster panels in libraries all over the UK, as well as a digital communication system on over 30,000 PCs. The company has provided over 3 million bookmarks, 175,000 carrier bags and 12,000 mouse mats, not only generating income but also helping to reduce partners' expenditure by providing sponsored materials for free.

Oxford University Library Services (OULS) has been working with Youth Media for the past two years and, based on experiences to date, is looking to explore ways in which a range of activities may be increased. Steve Rose, head of OULS reader services, says: 'Although Oxford University may maintain a sense of traditionalism and conservatism, compared to some other partners, this has not precluded working with Youth Media, and reaping the benefits. We have been involved in poster displays for graduate recruitment and used the opportunity to distribute sponsored bookmarks to disseminate a number of messages – for example promoting databases, advertising changes in opening hours and launching user education services.'

Mouse mats with advertiser and university messages next to PCs

Revenue is now just one of the elements of the service, with expenditure reduction, communication and relationships with reputable companies also of importance. Although many institutions are reluctant to have advertising in their areas of study, the firm assurances offered on the nature of the advertisers has demonstrated that a happy medium can be reached. From the outset, librarians asked for a right of veto over the information and designs and this is still very much at the heart of the partnership.

'I've been manager of Aberdeen University Library's contract with Youth Media since 2004. It's great fun working with them. The contract is for the display of their clients' advertisements on poster panels within the Library and computer-screen displays across the entire campus. Youth always submit advertising in advance for approval, and I've very rarely had to quibble about an advert's suitability.' – Martin Sommer, University of Aberdeen

The goals of the company have remained largely unchanged; to combine communication assistance for our academic partners, to generate revenue, to give excellent service and to pioneer new and effective routes of communication to the student body.

'When developing and delivering campus marketing campaigns for our clients, engaging students at the right place at the right time is our key objective. The established relationships that Youth Media has with campus libraries helps towards satisfying this objective.' – EURO Riley RSCG agency

Youth Media's partners can generate anything from a few hundred pounds to several thousand pounds per academic year, depending on the size and popularity of the university and the amount of opportunity available.

'The concept of corporate sponsorship isn't new to university libraries but often arranging local deals can be time-consuming and fraught with ethical and legal issues. Youth Media has offered us a straight-forward, if modest, means of financial self-reward by providing advertising posters, bookmarks and even (sometimes) plastic bags on behalf of generally acceptable clients. Although the revenue isn't huge, the goods themselves are useful (even as hold shelf slips).'
– Martin Myhill, University of Exeter

Carrier bags distributed from library issue desks

The sponsors come from a number of different sectors, all appropriate to the academic setting and environment in which their messages are conveyed.
These include highly regarded publications, graduate recruiters, government agencies, communications, travel and welfare companies, as well as a number of finance and leisure organisations.

'We needed to find a way to reach students that was more targeted … it is much better for us to advertise in an area where students are in a more serious state of mind. This links into our objectives since we can build awareness in a targeted way.' – Jane Robinson, Ernst & Young (to view Jane's video testimonial, visit http://redirect. youthmedia.co.uk/ernst&young)

'Youth Media have an excellent understanding of the student market and have provided a unique environment in which to reach this group of young people.' – Burton

Youth Media has also played a vital part in changing perceptions, by showing companies just how far academic libraries have evolved in recent years and how vital to modern student life they have become. Through the use of video footage and site visits, it has become possible to show just what a hub of academic and, indeed, social life the library now is. There is still considerable work to do on this and it remains a priority for the business to present the evolving face of information services, in all their many forms.

In order to secure business, the team deal with either advertising agencies (ranging from digital and outdoor specialists, media and full service [media and creative] agencies) or with the clients direct.

Poster panels in a learning resource centre PC suite

Once they are convinced that Youth Media is the company to work with, each client then makes a selection of the universities and colleges they want to include in their activity, making the decision on several factors, including geography, student population, media availability, academic standing and performance, often in particular subject areas. Once this has all been decided, the team then get to work on implementing and reporting on the activity.

Results from campaigns back up the theory that the library is the ideal environment in which to stand out. Advertisers return to use the service time and time again and, as many of you will know, some have been stalwarts since those early days.

'We have worked with Youth Media for the last three years on the promotion of our gradate recruitment fairs. Their media allow us to reach our target audience without wastage, maximizing our return on investment.' – Venture Marketing Group

Digital clients regularly benefit from a far higher than normal response rate to promotions, job vacancies and welfare messages than other media options available on campus and the fact that their activity is easily measurable provides a return on investment that is difficult to beat.
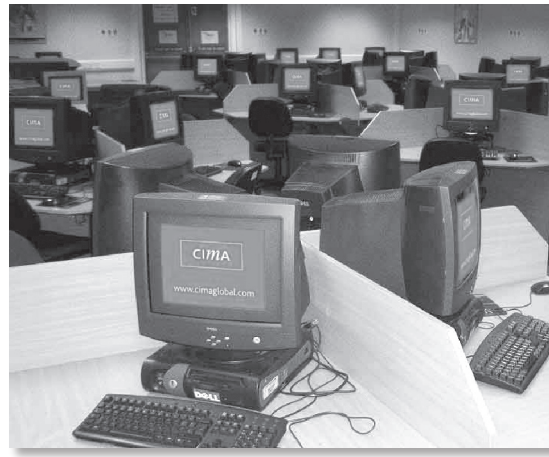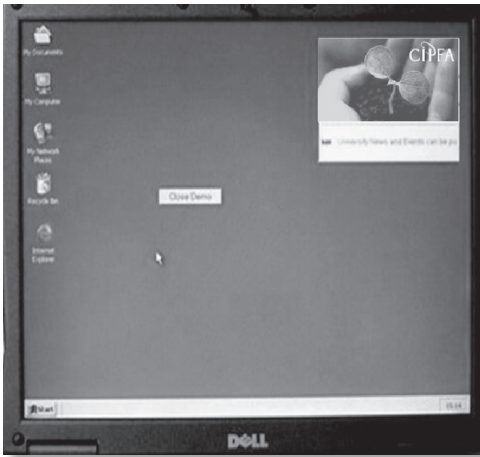
The interactive panel and screensavers on PC desktops – the digital communication system

Libraries have also become increasingly keen to provide student information and communications and, with assistance, a number of them have used the media in order to develop and deliver their own 'branding' and strong identity to their customers – the students! The company frequently assists partners with updating their messages and designs to keep communication fresh and interesting.

'The University of Manchester has been working with Youth for many years. We have always found them friendly and approachable and always willing to help. Youth has provided us with the ability to advertise local events alongside their national campaigns and their latest mouse mat offering came just at the right time.' – James Woodward, University of Manchester

As you will have gathered, Youth Media would not be here without the continuing support, help and suggestions of our partners within the academic institutions.
Director Jonathan Jones said, 'An enormous thank you is definitely required as we reach the £1 million mark. Over the years, the higher and further education markets have undergone a transformation and the advertising market, particularly in the digital arena, has also undergone a lot of change. We have tried to keep ahead of, or at least keep up with, these changes!'

Looking to the future, Jonathan continued, 'We still have a lot to do and need to think one step ahead and, in particular, at how the digitisation of library services will present new challenges and opportunities for what we do. As before, we will be guided by our partners on what we can and cannot do and would really like your contribution to the development of the business and its services. Self-issue, SMS notices, LCD screens, virtual learning environments and 24-hour opening are

all becoming more common place – how can we work with you on these developments to aid your communication and generate income?

'The more we understand about your needs, the better we can assist you.
Please get in touch and let us know your thoughts on how we can improve and expand our working partnerships and we will strive, as always, to meet your needs and get better at what we do.'

You can find out more about Youth Media's work by visiting our website, http://redirect.youthme-dia.co.uk/sconul or by emailing justin@youthme-dia.co.uk or jonathan@youthmedia.co.uk.

Introduction to a snapshot overview of library induction methods

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For a task so seemingly simple – telling people how we can help them – the delivery of library inductions to new cohorts of students continues to tax academic librarians. Many will be all too familiar with the problems of reconciling the need to impart information – on a range of services that may well be completely alien to incoming students – with the knowledge that the new session's competing academic, administrative and social activities make it likely that little they're told in their first week will remain with those students as they progress into the term.

The following short articles outline some of the varied approaches universities use to introduce students to our services. Most of these methods – the use of quizzes or 'treasure hunts', the 'Cephalonian method', virtual tours – will already be familiar to readers of SCONUL Focus. What is most noticeable in these pieces is our desire to make use of a wide mix of media in the delivery of library induction – for example, University of Sussex library combining the Cephalonian method with a more straightforward presentation and a video recording, or University of Salford's information services division combining videos, VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) modules and quiz sheets – rather than trying to find 'the one' method of induction.

Also noticeable is the push towards greater interactivity in introductory sessions, both to improve students' retention of the information given and, perhaps more importantly, to emphasise the friendly, approachable image we would like students to have of our services. Allied to this is a desire to make inductions less of a chore,

and even rewarding: more than one contributor describes the use of prizes and other incentives to encourage student participation and feedback.

There are contributions from large and small institutions, with the contributors from Durham University demonstrating clearly that approaches to induction must take local institutional contexts into consideration. They note that services should not seek simply to implement 'flavour of the month' induction methods, but to explore different methods until they find the most effective for their own circumstances. This willingness to explore new methods and media is what marks out the induction approaches described.

There is little discussion of the actual content of library inductions in the majority of pieces – perhaps a topic for another series of contributions? – but for those wanting to think again about the *how* of library inductions, the following may provide some useful pointers.

Large-group induction at the University of Sussex Library: adapting the Cephalonian method

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In 2005 we became a smaller team of staff dealing with the challenge of induction for new undergraduate and postgraduate students. The immediate implication of this was that fewer induction sessions were now necessary, meaning our new group size could be up to 500 students!

'SHEER TERROR'

This was the typical staff reaction to the prospect of so many attendees. To make matters worse, they were to be delivered in the Gardner Arts Centre theatre in front of rows and rows of eyes … how would we cope!?

We had begun to change the format of our teaching sessions within the library, which mostly covered electronic resources. Keen to change from

'show and tell' methods, we had been introducing a clear structure to the sessions, setting learning objectives and ensuring the emphasis was on interactivity. It therefore made sense for us to rethink our induction sessions, so that they could echo our in-house teaching.

Why Cephalonian?

We discovered the Cephalonian method[1] (which gets students to 'drive' the session by asking predetermined questions from cards) and threw it into our melting pot of new ideas. It immediately seemed to be a great way of meeting our induction needs … we could have interactivity, but in a controlled way, the informality that we like and could also mix up our format using a tried-and-tested method that seemed to guarantee good results.

Adapting it

As our audiences were to be so large, we thought that the Cephalonian method would work best applied to one segment of the session. We decided to also include a straightforward PowerPoint presentation and a library video. The students couldn't possibly get bored with such a mix of styles and we thought that the formats would cater for differing learning styles, especially important with such big groups.

It seemed sensible within the timeframe to get students to ask just four questions in total, each reflecting a different aspect of using the library, with fuller responses. These areas would be facilities, borrowing, rules and help. A humorous question would start us off ('Can I have a picnic at my desk?') and there would then be a corresponding PP slide with information about the topic, for our benefit, as well as the audience.

To encourage the students to ask a question in the session, we would offer the cards as they filed in, with the carrot of a £5 book token!

Doing it

We started our one-hour session by bargaining with the students over the book tokens (one chap said he would do it for £2.50!). The PP presentation covering library basics came first, then our 'how to find a book and issue it' film and finally the Cephalonian style Q+ A session to keep them on their toes and end with a flourish. The results were brilliant. We took feedback from every ses-

sion and had a resoundingly positive assessment with a typical comment being:

'interesting, engaging & good mix of media'.

Staff enjoyed the buzz of a new format that worked and we were all rather crestfallen upon returning to the office for 'normal' work! We will certainly be sticking with the content for the foreseeable future and it feels good to have created something that everyone can enjoy.

Reference

1 For a full description of this method, see N. Morgan and L. Davies, 'Innovative library induction – introducing the "Cephalonian Method"', *SCONUL Focus*, 32, 2004, pp.4-8

Getting the message across: library induction at Richmond: the American International University in London (RAIUL)

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For several years the induction of new students at RAIUL had taken the form of a joint PowerPoint presentation offered by the IT department and members of the library staff, although in reality the onus had generally fallen on one member of library staff. Over time it was felt that the PP presentation was not the best means of reaching out to the students. The session, at one hour's duration, was too long for new students to be able to take in everything that was being verbally communicated to them by both the IT department and the library. Instead library staff came up with the idea of offering induction in the form of a 'treasure hunt' (albeit without a wonderful prize, except perhaps the honour of joining the library!). This is the format that has now been in place for the last four years and library staff believe it works well.

Students now have a half-hour session with the IT department, which takes place in the library com-

puter room. Since all students attend this – as they are keen on gaining their network log-in details – the library has a captive audience for its own induction. So, at the end of the IT presentation, library staff introduce themselves to the students, offer them a registration form and a hand-out on library services and then get them all to complete a 'quiz'. This is a two-sided A4-sheet comprising half a dozen questions, designed to get the students walking around the library to discover its services, amenities and hidden treasures. One question will get the students logging on to the library catalogue; another introduces them to the library's website; yet another steers them in the direction of the video/DVD or reference collections.

Why does this work?

Although we have not gathered any data on how successful this type of induction is compared with the former PP presentation, anecdotal evidence suggests that the 'treasure hunt' is much more successful.

Students are encouraged to help each other find the answers, so offering the chance for new students to get to know each other. In this way the library contributes to a social element of the orientation experience.

All library staff can be involved in this induction, so the onus does not fall on just one person. It needn't even be just the librarians who present this: all ancillary staff can take part as and when needed.

The quiz is not designed to be a test, but rather a means of orientating the students to this particular library, so staff are on hand throughout to enable students to get the right answers to the questions. This is a means by which students come into contact, in a friendly and non-intimidating manner, with their library staff at a very early stage, and so has the positive benefit of proving library staff to be very approachable people. This pays dividends later in the semester.

We are fortunate in being a small university so that the numbers of new students each semester is very manageable and allows us the luxury of being able to offer this type of induction, with the added personal contact which we believe to be so important.

The Durham difference: considering our context

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This article reflects on the experience of Durham University Library staff in promoting services as part of undergraduate induction. It challenges the perception that all methods of marketing are equally valuable to all institutions and explores some alternatives.

Setting the scene

We began working at Durham in August 2005 as part of a restructured academic support team. One of our tasks is to prepare and deliver library induction to freshers. From the start we wanted to combine formal and informal outreach methods. Manchester Metropolitan University's (MMU's) 'big blue' project[1] demonstrated that information skills training is most effective in engaging users when it is embedded in the curriculum, and we have had considerable success integrating this into first-year courses. Whilst we continue to pursue this route with face-to-face and online delivery, we have also explored ways of marketing generic training to new students.

Initial contact

In October 2006 all new undergraduates and postgraduates received a welcome e-mail from the library encouraging them to explore our online materials and attend induction events. This communication had a measurable impact on the library website usage statistics, with hits on the freshers' and generic online training pages showing a six-fold increase. Other marketing routes

included generic and subject-specific guides, e-mails to departmental library representatives, posters and advertising on the 'University Events' web page.

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

In October 2005 we had attended Freshers' Fair at the Students' Union and found this to be a stimulating experience. Similar findings were reported by MMU in a recent issue of *SCONUL Focus*.[2] However, for 2006 we reviewed our attendance as we had doubts about its effectiveness. Clearly the fair was dominated by student societies and we felt the impact of the library's presence was lost in the hunt for freebies.

In recognising the potential of informal methods of outreach we rejected Freshers' Fair in favour of a promotional event mid-term, believing students might have a greater need for library assistance once they had received their first assignments. We chose the Students' Union as the fair had given the impression that the building was a hub of activity. We distributed promotional literature and offered individual support, but students we spoke to expressed surprise as to why we were there and, despite booking what we thought would be a busy lunchtime slot, the Union was virtually empty.

THE DURHAM EXPERIENCE

Durham is a collegiate university and this may be a contributory factor to the absence of students in the Union at lunchtime. In reviewing Induction 2006 we ran focus groups that alerted us to the fact that some students feel intimidated by the library, suggesting that therefore informal outreach remains a valuable approach.

We are now exploring the colleges as a possible avenue for promotion and have contributed to a CD-ROM sent to students before their arrival. The colleges run study skills sessions as part of their tutorial system and we are pursuing opportunities to integrate with these.

THE WAY FORWARD

These experiences have given us the confidence to recognise when popular methods of promoting induction are not appropriate for our particular institutional context. We are continuing to explore the most effective marketing methods to communicate with students in Durham, including social networking tools. We have already investigated

the use of *Flickr* for virtual tours and are excited about the opportunities presented by other Web 2.0 technologies.

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Developing induction – the University of Salford experience

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CONTEXT

Information services division (ISD) provides integrated library and computing services at the University of Salford. ISD inductions are delivered to around 5,000 students across multiple sites each year. These are planned and organised by a designated induction team, drawn from across the division, who meet throughout the year.

REDESIGN

Over the past three years, induction has moved from an information-heavy PowerPoint presentation to an interactive training session. This is delivered in three sections: a welcome video (filmed by media students under the guidance of the team); an online guide housed within Blackboard (the virtual learning environment), which provides information and interactive tutorials and into which all new students are automatically enrolled; and a task sheet for a practical introduction to key services during the session. Inductions are delivered by a team of presenters from across ISD, supported by tour guides.

A key element of the development was our focus on feedback and evaluation. At the start of the project, a focus group with first-year students showed our PowerPoint approach was not getting the message across and did not empower new users with the skills needed to engage with our services.

The most recent round of focus groups gave a very different impression. Overall, students reported induction 'gives a vibe of you can ask anything'. They felt the video 'was something different – it makes you pay more attention', and that the move to a training session had worked because 'having the hands on made you know what you were doing more – you had to apply it straight away and that makes you remember it'.

 After each session participants complete an evaluation, which appears as a desktop icon. In 2006/07 97% found the session helpful. Students now have more interaction with presenters, which led to a huge number of positive comments describing them as 'supportive', 'dedicated', 'enthusiastic', 'welcoming', 'approachable'.

As the sessions have changed so significantly, we also evaluated the impact on presenters and received their feedback via questionnaires and focus groups. Presenters have responded enthusiastically to the changes, and have equally valued the increased interaction with students: 'I like the idea that we try to be welcoming, interesting as well as informative'; 'Students reacted really well to the video and got involved with the tasks'; 'I think you've hit upon a winning format.'

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In November 2006 we conducted an impact assessment using an online questionnaire to gauge the longer-term effects of the induction on students' use of our services. The assessment received 329 responses, and provided a clear indication of which ISD services were being used by students and, more significantly, which of those they felt the ISD induction had helped them to learn. Overall the results were very positive, the highest scores being for services the induction sessions had focused on (77% said induction helped them use student webmail, 68% the library catalogue, 67% e-library, 83% Blackboard). The assessment demonstrated that induction does now get the message across, and in such a way

that it develops in participants the key skills they need to use our services in the long term.

THE FUTURE

The induction team continues to work on new developments, focusing next on ways of increasing future attendance by examining reasons for non-attendance, on delivering content via emerging technologies and on how best to meet the needs of different groups within our student population.

Innovative methods of delivering induction at Aston

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Historically at Aston University library & information services student feedback had suggested that its induction sessions were too long and that the library was trying to provide too much information and at the wrong time of the academic year.   It was also apparent that the main questions being asked at the library enquiry point were based around how to find reading list material. Over the last three academic years the library has used a virtual tour as the main method of delivering the induction programme.

INDUCTION SESSIONS

Each induction session is assigned two members of staff: an information specialist leading the session and an information assistant helping. The sessions are timetabled at 30-minute intervals and are the same for postgraduate and undergraduate inductions.

Part of the library ground floor becomes a meeting area for students who are arriving for their induction. We have an A0 poster display promoting our chosen services or resources on the walls. This year our aim was to promote our self service facilities and the library subject web pages. Chairs are grouped together to form informal chat zones to encourage student interaction while they are waiting for the rest of their peers to arrive.

Both staff members hand out induction packs on arrival and greet students to make them feel welcome. The leader then takes the students to our seminar room where the chairs are arranged

in a semi-circle. Each chair has an evaluation form, produced in colour and that promotes a prize draw.

The students then receive a ten-minute virtual tour of the library and a ten-minute catalogue demonstration. The demonstration highlights how to find items off a reading list and how students can access their borrower record so that they can manage their own renewals and reservations. There is usually five minutes for the students to complete a three-question evaluation form and pop it in the collection box.

Over the last two years the prizes for the prize draw have been a £10 photocopying and printing card, an IPOD Shuffle and a one-month VIP pass for two people to a cinema.

INDUCTION PACK

The induction pack is very simple. We have cloth bags printed with the wording 'Aston Library & Information Services' and the library web address. Inside the cloth bag the students receive four pieces of literature: a library brochure, a fact sheet, floor plans and a referencing guide. In addition to our standard library literature we produce some additional 'fun' items. We also have close links with the university bookshop, which has provided wall calendars and leaflets, and with the learning and skills centre, which has supplied a promotional leaflet and a workshop timetable for the induction pack.

EVALUATION

The students' comments have been very favourable towards the use of a virtual tour. They like the use of multimedia to show them round the library, the fact that the whole session lasts thirty minutes and the freebies in the induction pack. Of the students who attended the induction over the last two years 4% requested that a physical tour 'might be nice' but no one attended our sign-up sessions. However, last year we introduced a 'happy to help' slot in the day where staff were timetabled for thirty minutes over the busier times of the day to help students use the catalogue and help with printing and photocopying. This ran for the first two weeks of term and we even received comments from returning students that the library was a much friendlier and welcoming environment as a result.

i-Spy: an information skills framework for the University of Hertfordshire

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This article describes how learning and information services (LIS) consultants at the University of Hertfordshire set about developing and implementing an information skills (i-skills) framework for the university. Our aim was to promote and support the development of student information skills for the modern knowledge society within a coherent structured framework and to enhance the contribution of LIS consultants to student i-skills development.

BACKGROUND

'People use the internet and new technologies every day – for finding information, communicating, and seeking entertainment, goods and services. Learners are bringing new expectations of the power of technology into higher education … Our goal is to help the sector use new technology as effectively as they can, so that it becomes a "normal" or embedded part of their activities.'[1]

At the University of Hertfordshire we decided that it was time to review and revise our i-skills support arrangements to meet future student needs and expectations in the light of a number of factors:

- the impact of our 24x7 and self-help culture
- the success of our managed learning environment (StudyNet)
- the establishment of the digital study environment as the norm
- the introduction of the university's personal development planning arrangements for students
- the adoption of a more robust quality assurance and enhancement regime.

A project team was established, with an LIS consultant taking a lead role in managing the project, aided by two other LIS consultants.

Project aims

These were:

- to promote and support the development of student information skills (i-skills) for the modern knowledge society within a coherent, structured framework.
- to enhance the contribution of LIS consultants to student i-skills development.

Project bid

Hertfordshire's blended learning unit is a CETL (centre for excellence in teaching and learning) and has funds available for blended learning projects. A successful bid by LIS funded the assistance of external consultants with the project. David Streatfield (Information Management Associates (IMA)) and Sharon Markless (IMA and King's College, London) were commissioned to survey staff and students about their information needs and to conduct research to develop a framework for i-skills.

Consultation

Consultation with students showed that the skills that were felt to be most important were:

- choosing the right information
- taking good notes in lectures
- judging information quality
- organising the information found
- finding information in books

- combining information from more than one source
- finding out how reliable information is.

The areas where students most wanted help were:

- seeking/finding information
- presenting information
- all information skills
- learning resources centre resources
- self-organization
- evaluating information
- referencing.

i-Spy framework

IMA reviewed the most recent literature on information literacy along with existing i-skills frameworks, such as the Sconul 7 Pillars model[2] and the Big Blue Project.[3] They then produced a framework adapted from two earlier models developed by Foster[4] and Todd.[5] The new i-Spy framework is non-linear and based on new understanding of students' information-seeking behaviour, reflecting how learners move back and forth between different processes when working with information. The non-sequential framework is designed to encourage use by students by focusing on learning rather than teaching. It is iterative and is based on three main categories, all of which are underpinned by reflection:

- Connecting with information
- Interacting with information
- Making use of information.

i-Spy Framework : full diagram
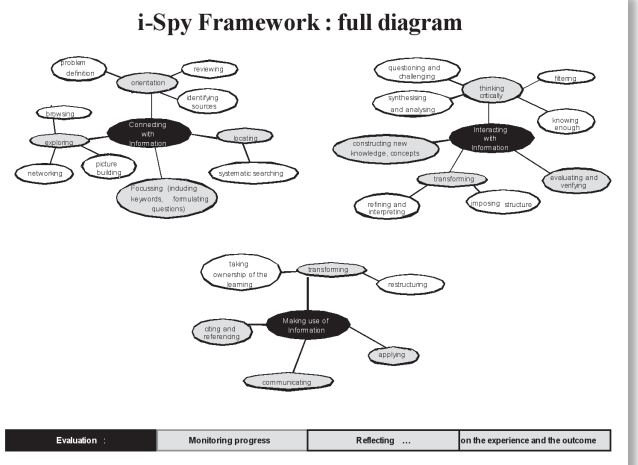
A checklist of criteria for good practice in designing i-skills materials was also produced. The checklist encourages developers to consider the amount of interactivity and active learning offered by the materials, and whether they address different learning styles and create real-life contexts for learning.

Aims and learning outcomes

We needed a coherent set of aims and learning outcomes for each of the main areas in the framework. In order to do this we mapped the overarching principles of the Australian and New Zealand information literacy framework[6] to the top-level aims for each of the three main categories of the i-Spy framework: connecting with information, interacting with information and making use of information. A fourth aim, under the heading of 'evaluation, monitoring and reflecting', was introduced to represent the iterative and reflective nature of working with information.

The Association of College and Research Libraries information literacy competency standards for higher education[7] were used to map learning outcomes to the twelve key areas of the framework. We also mapped levels of ability to the learning outcomes, based on different levels of thinking skills. This was cross-referenced with the vocabulary of Bloom's Taxonomy[8] and the Southern England Consortium (SEEC) for Credit Accumulation and Transfer Credit Level Descriptors for Further and Higher Education,[9] to make the levels of the tutorials clear.

Quality assurance and enhancement

Further work developed a quality assurance and enhancement strategy, with transparent and rigorous procedures. This is in line with the university's academic quality and enhancement strategy for systematic monitoring and evaluation and to sustain the future value of i-Spy for supporting student i-skills development. We set up a 'buddy' scheme with each of the three project team members responsible for one of the main categories in the framework. Each new tutorial is peer-reviewed against the checklist of criteria for good practice and the comments of the reviewer and student feedback are logged before the tutorial can be signed off and made live. This procedure will also be followed for subsequent revision of the tutorials so that the whole life-cycle of each tutorial is documented and logged.

Implementation

Our next task was to start populating the framework with i-skills content in 'bite-size chunks' relating to the skills levels and learning outcomes, with a key emphasis on ease of use by students.

We worked together with all our LIS consultant colleagues in multi-disciplinary teams to produce

the first four tutorials, chosen as a result of the priorities identified in the student consultation exercise.

The first four tutorials we created were:

- Identifying sources
- Systematic searching
- Citing and referencing
- Evaluating and verifying.

One of our learning technology development consultants created StudyNet web pages to introduce the i-Spy framework and concepts, and to support navigation of the tutorials. These pages are available on StudyNet from our learning and information services pages and there are also links in the skills section of the students' personal development planning area on StudyNet.
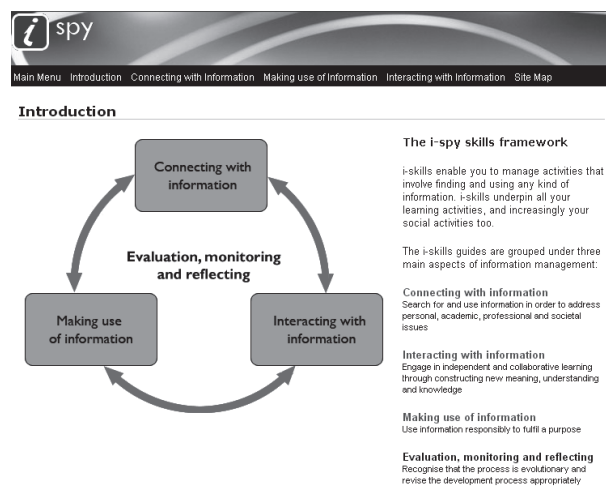
We have since developed a further two tutorials, this time also working with members of academic staff:

- Essay and report writing
- Thinking critically.

Evaluation

We asked for student volunteers to test the tutorials for us and they gave us useful feedback. In general the students appreciated the materials and echoed a number of the points made in the checklist of criteria for good practice about effective e-learning materials; they welcomed choice in their pace and level of learning and enjoyed the high levels of interaction with the materials provided.

Together with IMA we will be running further workshops to obtain students' views on the existing tutorials and this, along with an online evaluation form and informal evaluation from

users and colleagues, will inform enhancements to existing tutorials and the development of future ones.

CASE STUDIES

i-Spy is designed for use by students both in conjunction with timetabled skills sessions and their academic programmes, and also to support independent study.
Our LIS colleagues have started to embed i-Spy tutorials into their skills materials. The following case studies provide examples of how i-Spy tutorials are being used.

Case study 1: Common foundation programme for pre-registration nurses
The systematic searching tutorial is being used to replace what can amount to 13 identical face-to-face skills sessions across a cohort of over 600 nursing students.
The LIS consultant for health introduces a StudyNet online tutorial for health and human sciences (HHS) to the whole cohort at the start of their course and explains that they are requested to spend time on it because their assignments will be marked with this in mind.

The LIS consultant has made the generic 'systematic searching' tutorial relevant for health students by designing an additional subject-specific introduction and online workbooks for key health databases. Students can then practise principles introduced in the i-Spy tutorial using familiar resources. An online feedback form has been added and students are required to complete this once they have worked through the tutorial, allowing the consultant to monitor student engagement with the online tutorial.

The academic staff involved have been happy with the progress of students using the module. After initial discussions they came on board because it was felt that an online tutorial could provide a more 'blended learning' approach to their module delivery and students could repeat it if necessary when it came to researching their assignments. Originally staff felt that there might be a need for a face-to-face workshop for students who struggled with the online tutorial but this has not been necessary. As a result, one of the core modules, which all nursing students are required to take, has been rewritten so that the assessment more overtly relates to the online tutorial's content. It is hoped that this will encourage increased participation in information skills training in comparison to attendance at face-to-face sessions.

It is planned that another tutorial on 'Focusing' will be written and this can be used as a foundation for a more advanced online tutorial for health. This will cover thesaurus searching and controlled vocabulary, for example using medical subject headings (MESH) to search Pubmed Medline.

Case study 2: Level 3 advertising students
In this case study one of the LIS consultants supporting business worked with the advertising lecturer to identify the information skills students would require to complete an assignment, which could also be submitted to an external competition.

Due to the huge amount of information available, especially in digital format, the tutor wanted the students to be able to identify good-quality and reliable information in preparation for their research. Students were instructed to complete the i-Spy tutorial on evaluating and verifying information sources, and then complete a follow-up quiz devised by the LIS consultant. This quiz asked students to evaluate sources of information relevant to their assignment.

Feedback from students indicated that they found the tutorial useful. The lecturer was pleased with the standard of work for this specific assignment, and felt that the i-Spy tutorial helped reduce student panic in equipping them to produce a short business document from a wealth of industry-specific data. It was also an attempt to stop students limiting their research solely to a Google search.

The i-Spy tutorial provided a good introduction to evaluating information sources, and these skills were then extended and put into practice with a subsequent face-to-face session with the LIS consultant. During this the students completed a workbook which guided them in using secondary sources of information helpful for research for their assignment.

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT

From the point of view of managing the project, the main project coordinator has spent a considerable amount of time maintaining the many project documents and progressing and disseminating the framework.

In terms of skills, we have all learnt a tremendous amount from our involvement with the project, from designing web-based skills materials, producing posters, finding out more about how our

students learn and working with colleagues from other areas of the university.

BENEFITS OF I-SPY

The tutorials will contribute to students' academic achievement through the development of i-skills, and will also contribute to the enhancement of graduate employability skills through links with the university's personal development planning system.

The generic nature of the materials means that tutorials can be applicable in a wide variety of contexts where development of student i-skills is important. The framework and materials also contribute a key element in fulfilling the LIS strategy of self-help provision and flexible learning support.

NEXT STEPS

We plan to carry on populating the framework with new tutorials and to further embed these into our skills materials. Academic staff have been invited to join the development teams for future tutorials and such collaborative partnerships with LIS consultants will be extended to ensure the continuing relevance to academic study priorities in the university.

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Driving our helpdesks with Dashboard

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In common with many universities, at Kingston students will ask about anything at our learning resource centre helpdesks; we are a first port of call for IT help, timetable and module queries, room and equipment bookings, replacement ID cards, careers information, maths support, binding and photocopying and much more, as well as being busy with traditional borrower management and catalogue and specialist subject enquiries.

The variety of enquiries has expanded significantly at our Penrhyn Road site since the introduction of self-service. Replacing the signs above the counter that said 'Issue/Return' with simply 'Helpdesk' appears to have opened the floodgates; students now expect that LRC staff can answer anything and everything. With self-service rolling out to all our LRCs during the 2006/2007 academic year, we needed to take action to ensure our staff could cope.

Further increasing the range of enquiries has been our pursuit of an integrated student support (ISS) model at our helpdesks. Staff from other areas of the university are coming to work alongside library staff, for example, colleagues who work in careers, student finance and accommodation. LRC staff are already able to take appointment bookings on behalf of these services, and future development of ISS could mean a big change in our definition of helpdesk staff.

So, it is clear that LRC staff need quick and easy access to a vast assortment of sources located in a variety of places, including student and staff intranets, external web sites, the catalogue, the library management system and many internal files, spreadsheets and databases. Staff who work on helpdesks have always had to develop their own methods for navigating to these sources, each creating their own list of bookmarks or links, leading to duplication of effort, frustration and information simply not being found.

To improve and standardise the helpdesk service across our four LRCs, we wanted helpdesk staff to have the answers at their fingertips. The idea of a dashboard was conceived: one managed web page pointing to the sources of all the information we need, from bookings to bus timetables, dyslexia support to duty managers, passwords to printers, security to subject librarians.
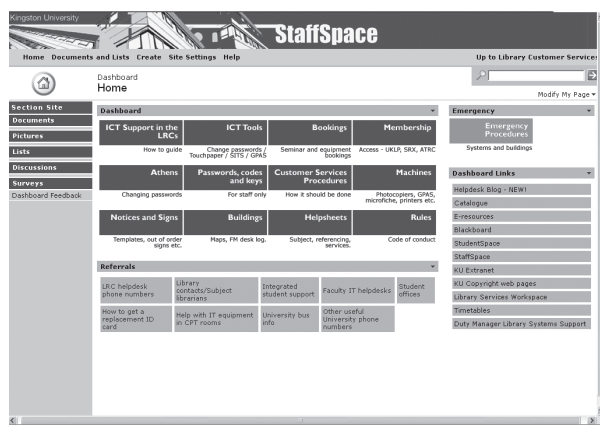
The Dashboard home page

We decided to create the page in the new environment of Microsoft SharePoint portal and intranet software, which had recently been implemented across the university and was being promoted to staff. The library was one of the first departments to be trained in SharePoint and to begin using it actively as an intranet. One of the main attractions of SharePoint for the dashboard was that it was a secure area that could be restricted to library staff only; however, a big drawback turned out to be its limitations in terms of design, compared to a standard web site. Although we had staff with excellent Dreamweaver skills, the skills needed to work in SharePoint were quite different. All ideas of dashboard dials and flashing lights had to go, but the concept was still the same, so Dashboard it became.

A small project team was convened, all of whom regularly work on helpdesks. The four main tasks were: (1) create the structure; (2) design the site; (3) locate the key resources; (4) create the links. All of these presented challenges in different ways.

The initial discussions and ideas for Dashboard were recorded and organised using Inspiration software. This revealed just how complex the situation was. It quickly became apparent that we would not be able to point to everything from one page: sources began to fall into natural groupings such as machines (photocopiers, printers, microfilm), buildings (maps, campus addresses, facili-

ties management) or special membership schemes (UK Libraries Plus, Sconul Research Extra, partner institutions) suggesting the need for subsidiary pages of links.
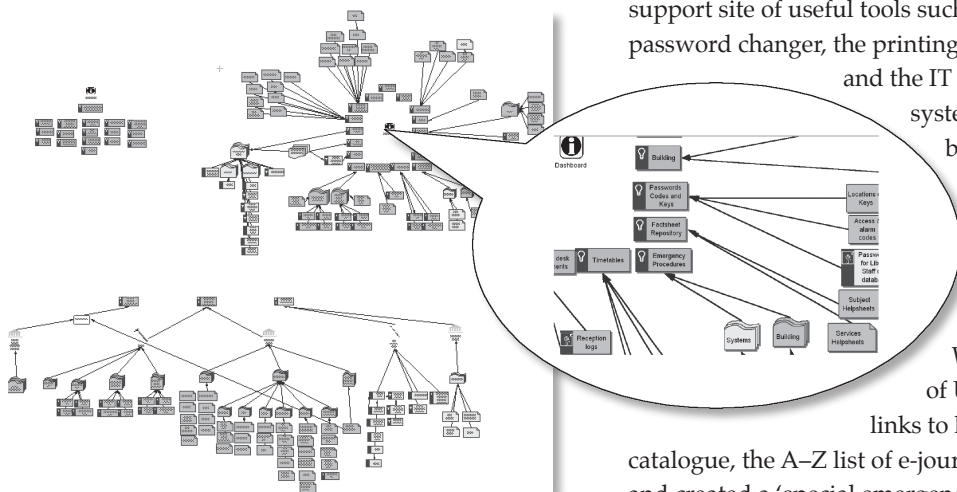
The Inspiration diagram

This meant, however, that it was vital to name the groupings in a meaningful way if helpdesk staff were to understand what they would include, and this proved a difficult task as people's minds work in different ways. In fact, after the launch, a certain amount of tweaking of the main buttons had to be done (by adding explanatory sub-text) to achieve this.

The most time-consuming part of the project was getting the content right. Once the structure was in place and the design underway, we had to find out where the information was that we wanted to link to.

Much of our in-house information (such as customer services procedures, subject factsheets, template notices and signs and so on) had to be updated, and then moved into the SharePoint environment, normally into team sites so that we could always point to the most recent version. An immediate problem here was that we were using various databases created in Microsoft Access (for example passwords, room keypad entry codes, photocopier fault log) which is incompatible with SharePoint despite the fact that they are both Microsoft products! Fortunately, the data from these databases could be exported into Share-Point 'lists' but without maintaining the link back to Access; we had to do this at the last moment before the launch. This tidying up of our own information was a very useful exercise in itself, and revealed some areas where documentation was completely lacking.

Finding other university information was easier, much of it being located in the student and staff portals respectively. A lot of work had previously been done in the area of ICT help, including a support site of useful tools such as the student password changer, the printing credit manager and the IT fault logging system created for us by our ICT col-leagues, so again this area was fairly straightfor-ward.

We drew up a list of URLs for quick links to key resources (the catalogue, the A–Z list of e-journals, Blackboard), and created a 'special emergency procedures' section for content such as the list of first aiders, security staff contact numbers, incident report forms and so on.

Creating the subsidiary pages and all the links was not technically difficult – just a huge exercise in logistics!
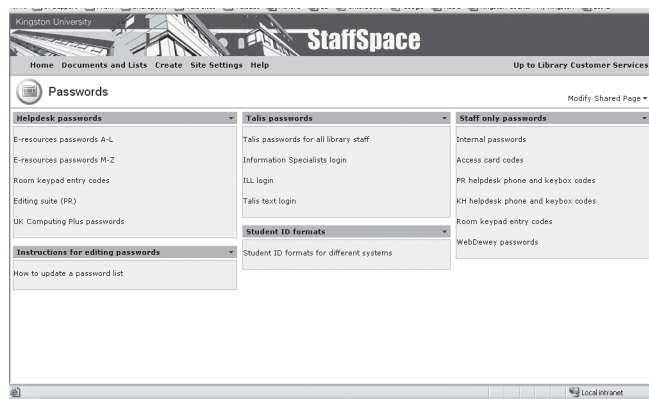
A subsidiary page for password information

A feedback survey was included to encourage helpdesk staff to suggest more links and allow the site to develop according to need. One of the early suggestions was that the site could include some sort of announcements area to share information about, say, a group of students coming in with a particular enquiry; or a system problem help-desk staff need to be alerted to; or perhaps a new development that everyone should know about. We responded to this by creating a helpdesk blog and linking to it from the front page of Dashboard. The blog complements the idea of Dashboard per-fectly, allowing important but transient informa-tion to appear alongside more permanent sources. Dashboard was officially launched on 1 Novem-ber 2006. It opens automatically on all helpdesk

PCs at all four LRCs for everyone who logs in; once in Dashboard, each source selected opens in a new window so the Dashboard home page is never lost.

Already it has become an essential helpdesk tool. Staff have received it very positively; this is typical of the reaction from existing staff:

> 'Dashboard is brilliant! Congratulations to all concerned. Just used it for the first time on the 3rd floor help desk and can't find any extra links that might be required. It was very easy to use and much quicker than my usual method of trawling through my (randomly organised) favourites!' *Wendy Morris, senior information advisor*

New staff have also been impressed. Training staff for helpdesk work is now far easier with Dashboard as the basis, since it provides a clear outline of the information they will be expected to access; and it has taken some of the fear out of that first stint on a helpdesk all alone …

> 'As a new member of staff, Dashboard has been an essential tool in allowing me to tackle enquiries that require information I have not yet got ingrained into my consciousness! I may not yet be a fully fledged expert in all matters 'LRC' but it acts as a gateway to all the relevant tools / sites / files, a signpost to the appropriate procedures and it's so easy to navigate that I can both learn as I go and continue to provide the level of service that the students expect from the LRCs.' *Rowan Williamson, LRC manager (Knights Park Campus)*

How many books should we be loaning to our academic staff, researchers and students???

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I must say that in the 16 years I have worked as a librarian this is not really a question I had ever asked myself.

I do, however, go out and visit my academic colleagues quite a lot in order to try and see if there is any way I can make their lives easier in the pressurised world of higher education they face these days. I also attend meetings with students whenever I get the opportunity.

In both sets of contacts with my core customers I am always looking to see if there is any way we can improve the services or resources that the learning resources centre (LRC) makes available. This often requires me to look at the library bureaucracies that have built up over time and to ask myself why they are there, and if they could in fact be altered in order to make our customers' lives easier.

Over the years I have had the odd comment from students, especially final-year students, that they would like to be able to borrow more books than our current 10 standard plus 2 short-loan items limit (which has been the policy here since I arrived in 1990). I do not know who made this policy originally or on what it was based; like many of our systems, once it was put in place we just accepted it, worked to it and have defended it but without asking why.

On the same basis our academic staff members have been able to borrow up to 15 items on standard and one-week loan plus 2 short-loan items.

It came as something of a surprise to me that the issue of the total number of loans to staff came up several times early in 2006. This issue was not identified by my visits and chats with staff, however, but from some cross-departmental research I was doing for a University, College and Research Group (Wales) (C&R (Wales)) talk entitled 'Building an individual library service for each user'. (See http://www.swan.ac.uk/lis/ucrwales/eng/pastevents.htm for my PowerPoint presentation.)

In putting this talk together I e-mailed several of our academic staff members, across different faculties and with different lengths of service and at different levels of their profession, and asked them if they would draw up a list of the top ten problems they faced in their jobs, and especially in their interaction with the LRC and its services, resources and staff. I promised them anonymity and asked them to be as blunt as they could be.

I found the issues that arose from these lists to be fascinating, and of extreme interest to me. They shed a totally different light on the experiences of my academic colleagues and raised several issues that I thought I should definitely look into further once I had delivered my talk. (Some items from the lists can be found on the slides from my talk on the website above.)

One item that came up several times, and that was quite unexpected by me, was the matter of the total number of loans that members of staff were allowed. This was especially important in connection with preparation for the teaching of new courses.

In order to find out what other higher education institutions across Wales and the UK did, in March 2006 I put out a request on lis-link for colleagues in other higher education libraries to tell me how many items they allowed on loan to academic staff members, researchers and students.

Much to my surprise I had over fifty replies (by the far the most I have ever had to a query on any list). Colleagues included not only the total numbers of loans allowed but quite a lot of other details as well. LRC staff here at Glamorgan then kindly tabulated all the information and put it on an Excel spreadsheet. (This is still available; if anyone would like a copy please e-mail me at the address above and I will send you one.)

The general results were as follows.

- Limits on staff loans ranged from 8 to 50/unlimited. More important, as far as I was concerned, was that two-thirds of the libraries loaned up to 20 items or more, and that was five items more than we did.

- Undergraduate limits ranged from 4 items to 30, with by far the majority being between 10 and 12 items. Here we were bang on the average.

- Limits for researchers ranged from 8 to 50 items. There was a much bigger spread in loan numbers here, so it was hard to say what the average was. This issue is more difficult for us at Glamorgan because we have more than one type of researcher. There are paid research staff, who are members of university staff and so have the same entitlement as other academic staff. Therefore any changes we made to academic staff total loans would also benefit them. However, PhD researchers, especially those on taught courses, are considered to be students and would therefore be limited to the normal student loan totals.

Having got this information, what was I to do with it to try and change our policy and bring us more into line with other higher education institutions?

I forwarded the information to information librarian colleagues at Glamorgan by e-mail and it was put as a discussion item on our information services meeting agenda. Once again to my surprise, there was not whole-hearted support for a change. Several colleagues felt that we had not had any widespread feedback from academic staff that a change was needed, and so they felt there was no need for one. Others felt that to increase loans to staff would have a negative effect on loans to students, especially because standard loan items are lent to staff for a whole term and not just for a month as for students. To be fair, different colleagues representing different subject areas had different approaches, based on their individual experiences, book budgets and the pressure on their loan stock.

In the end we decided to find out, if we could, what percentage of staff actually took out their full limit of 15 items at any one time. If we found that the majority of academic staff members always had out their full entitlement then we could expect staff loans to go up substantially,

since logically if they were allowed to borrow another 5 items and they were all mostly at their maximum limit already then the chances of their borrowing up to the new limit would be quite high. If, on the other hand, only a few staff were currently borrowing their full allocation then there was no reason to expect that pattern to change drastically.

Our technical services department did this research for us, using business objects software to interrogate our library system and extract the loans information.

What they found was that:

In 2005:

- 922 staff members borrowed 12,095 items (an average of 13.11 items per borrower for the year).

- The range of borrowing was between 1 and 118 items in the 12 months.

- Only 36 staff borrowed in excess of 50 items in the 12 months.

- The majority of staff – 886 individuals – borrowed between 1 and 50 items in the 12 months.

In 2004:

- 928 staff members borrowed 12,827 items (an average of 13.82 items per borrower for the year).

- The range of borrowing was between 1 and 153 items in the 12 months.

- Only 41 staff borrowed in excess of 50 items in the 12 months.

- The majority of staff – 887 individuals – borrowed between 1 and 50 items in the 12 months.

From this information it appeared unlikely that we would be swamped with a whole mass of extra staff borrowing, depriving students of loan items. When this information was fed back to colleagues there was a majority in favour of a proposal to increase the maximum number of loans for all university staff, including academics and staff researchers, to 20 items of standard and one-week loans, plus 2 short-loan items. The head

of information services then took this proposal to the senior management team, and from there it eventually went forward to the learning resources planning group.

I was pleased that the proposal was accepted and that the new loan limits for staff were adopted for the academic year 2006–2007.

I did try to increase the loan limits for student researchers and final-year undergraduates at the same time but this was more controversial, and it was felt that to combine the staff application with the student/ researcher one might doom both to failure. I hope to return to the issue of loans to student researchers and final-year students later in 2007 to see if we can effect a positive change in the total number of loans to these groups as well.

I have learnt a lot from this exercise:

a) We should always listen to our customers, and asking them to describe the biggest problems they face in their jobs – especially where this involves the LRC – can be a good way of getting insights into how our systems, services and bureaucracies impinge on their lives.

b) When we discover things that are a problem for our customers we should ask ourselves 'Can our systems be changed or made more flexible in order to accommodate our customers?', even it is a minority of them who need the change. Sometimes the systems cannot be changed for technical or other good operational reasons, but my feeling is that this is often not the case and that we just do not ask the question.

c) Having discovered a problem we should try and see if we can resolve it.

d) Altering things that we have always done for years is not an easy process.

e) Research using information from other institutions and from in-house systems can provide valuable information that can lead to getting a consensus for change.

f) In the end you need the support of your senior management team if change is to be effected.

g) Do not try to do too much in one go. Break down the problem into manageable change-chunks and try to get the changes brought in bit by bit over time.

What do publisher usage statistics tell us? The Analysing Publisher Deal project from Evidence Base

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past year, fourteen higher education libraries have been taking part in a self-funded project run by Evidence Base at UCE Birmingham with the support of SCONUL's Working Group on Performance Improvement (WGPI). The aim of the project is to assist libraries in the collection and analysis of e-journal usage statistics available through NESLi2 (the UK national e-journals initiative for further and higher education) or similar publisher deals.

Evidence Base Research and Evaluation, a research unit within UCE Birmingham Library and Learning Resources, had worked previously with the WGPI on the e-measures project[1] which had helped in deciding which new questions on e-resources should be added to the SCONUL questionnaire. It has also worked with the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) on a study and analysis of usage statistics for a selection of NESLi2 deals.[2] Both projects involved working with a wide range of higher education libraries. Having built up a good deal of experience of the issues involved and developed a methodology for analysing usage statistics, we were keen to see how we could provide libraries with some practical help and guidance in analysing and presenting their own data. We also wanted to give opportunities for sharing experience and benchmarking.

Anyone responsible for the collection of e-journal usage statistics will be aware of the pitfalls it can present. Without the COUNTER code of practice,[3] a project such as this would not have been possible. One essential stipulation for the selection of publishers to be analysed was that they should provide COUNTER-compliant statistics so that we could be sure of a level of consistency across the deals analysed. While recognising the importance of an accurate basis for the presentation of statistics, our aim was to point out the issues but then move on to examine the way usage data could be used by management for collection development, budgeting and demonstrating value for money.

SETTING UP THE PROJECT

Fifteen libraries were initially recruited to the project, to start in early 2006 as a result of a call on lis-SCONUL. The project was designed to be self-funding, with libraries paying a small fee to take part. By the end of the project, those taking part would have:

- reports on their usage of up to six publisher deals over a two-year period (2004–5)
- ideas on how usage statistics could be analysed and presented with their own institutions in future
- the opportunity to share methods and ideas with other libraries and to benchmark results.

At the start of the project, participants were invited to submit a list of their publisher deals in priority order, the only stipulation being that the publisher must be COUNTER-compliant so that statistics were comparable. (COUNTER is Counting Online Usage of NeTworked Electronic Resources.) From this, a list of six publishers was drawn up. Benefits that participants hoped to gain from the project included:

- increased knowledge of what outputs can be used for
- assessment of the benefits of publisher deals
- analysis of usage against cost, value for money
- making evidence-based decisions
- the informing of purchasing decisions
- learning from others / contributing their own experience
- sharing best practice – and frustrations
- benchmarking results with comparable institutions.

It was clear that, in addition to the above benefits of participation, some libraries saw the project as an opportunity to develop staff and build staff skills and capacity.

Initial workshops were held in London and Birmingham early in 2006, with participants being introduced to the methodology adopted for the project and working through some examples using Excel and Access. The experience of working with these groups helped in the design of the manuals to be used for the project, as it emphasised the need for clear instructions that could be followed whatever the level of initial knowledge. E-mail and phone support was available to all participants throughout the project.

TEMPLATES AND MANUALS

All analysis was based on the COUNTER JR1 (Journal Report 1) report 'Number of successful full-text article requests by month and journal'. Further contextual information was provided by the library or by the SCONUL annual library statistics relating to the total cost of the deal, the size of the library serials budget and the number of FTE (Full Time Equivalent) students and teaching staff. For each publisher selected for the study, participants were given access to the following tools provided by Evidence Base on a secure shared-file area:

1. An Excel spreadsheet template: this listed all titles included in the deal for 2004 and 2005 and was set up so that the library's own usage data could be added in and analysed by usage range (nil, low, medium and high use), by broad subject area (humanities and social sciences (HSS) or science, technology and medicine (STM)) and by price band (unpriced, low, medium or high cost). Libraries also added details of their subscribed titles.

2. A Word report template: once the statistics had been set up in the spreadsheet and a set of tables produced from them, these tables could be transferred to a Word report which also gave suggestions of key points to look out for in presenting the analysis. Tables produced included:
   • monthly usage over the two-year period, showing trends and percentage changes
   • average, median and maximum number of requests per title

• costs per request, including costs of subscribed and unsubscribed titles, yield benefit of subscribing to the deal
• number of titles and requests in each usage range, analysed by subscribed and unsubscribed titles, price band and broad subject category
• details of titles with high use, nil or low use.

This template formed the basis of the report on two years' usage which was the final product of the analysis and which could be used both internally as a report to management and externally for benchmarking results with other members of the project.

3. Manuals: a set of manuals was produced, with step-by-step instructions on how to enter usage data, how to compile the tables and how to complete the report.

WHY HAVE A TEMPLATE?

The most straightforward approach to usage statistics is just to download the titles as they appear on the publisher's website, identify high, low and nil use titles and compare total requests with total costs to get the basic 'cost per request' which acts as a common yardstick of use.

While some usage measures can be derived in this way, a lot of opportunities for further analysis will be missed:

• Grouping titles by usage range: once the usage statistics are entered in the template, a formula is used to add up the monthly columns and group annual totals for each title into a series of ranges marking nil and low use (under 10 successful requests per title), medium (under 100 requests) and high use (100 requests and over). Further subdivisions can be used, for example to track very high-use titles (over 1,000 requests). This approach has the advantage of making it easy to see at a glance what percentage of titles have high, medium or low use. As described below, it can also form the basis of further analysis by price band or subject category.

• Matching prices to titles: for the spreadsheet template, publishers' price lists were downloaded and matched with titles in the deal. Prices were then sorted by price range, covering low price (under £200), medium (£200–399), high (£400–999) and very high

(£1,000 and over). The value of a deal can then be assessed in terms of the number of high-value titles it contains and a correlation can be sought between usage and price range. Are the high-priced titles the most used? Are titles with nil and low use mainly those which are low-priced?

- Identifying nil-use titles: a cursory glance at a set of publisher usage statistics will generally show a high proportion of titles with nil use recorded against them. This may lead to the view 'This deal is no good for us, half the titles are never used.' However, there are two vital questions to be asked before this conclusion can be proven:

Do I have access to all these nil-use titles? Whatever version of the deal a library has, the usage statistics downloaded from the publisher will generally contain all titles available within all versions of its deal, with nil usage recorded against those not accessible. They will also include titles from any separately purchased backfile collection. The library has first to identify which titles are available within the deal purchased, and to separate out titles from the backfile collection.

Do all these nil-use titles actually exist? Having eliminated all titles not available in the particular deal and all backfile collection titles, there may still be a large residue of titles with nil use recorded. By matching up titles in the usage statistics with those in the price list, it is possible to identify a number of titles that have no price recorded against them. These 'unpriced' titles may have notes against them in the price list marking them as 'ceased', 'transferred' 'title changed' or 'new acquisition'. They may simply not appear in the price list at all. By using the template to mark these 'unpriced' titles it is possible to get a more realistic view of which titles are genuinely unused and which are simply not available.

- Matching titles to subject categories: most publisher price lists contain an indication of a title's subject field. Sometimes this is a broad category such as 'HSS' or 'STM'; sometimes it is much narrower. For the project, both the broad and the narrow subject categories were given against each title. This enabled separate analysis of usage of HSS and STM titles, to see whether different patterns were apparent. It also allowed those libraries that

wished to do so to match up narrow subjects to their own faculty or school structure and do more detailed usage analysis by subject.

- Matching titles to subscriptions: in the current pricing models, the cost of maintaining existing subscriptions (whether print or online) is generally a significant factor in the total cost of the deal. Libraries were asked to mark up their subscribed titles on the template so that usage could be analysed by subscribed title and by 'unsubscribed' (those additional titles acquired as part of the deal). Looking separately at usage of subscribed and unsubscribed titles has the advantage of showing how well subscribed titles are being used, indicating a good choice of titles in a way that was never possible in the days of print journals. It also shows how much or how little the unsubscribed titles are being used, indicating the value of subscribing to the whole deal rather than having individual subscribed titles.

Under the deals negotiated for NESLi2 (National Electronic Site Licensing Initiative 2), the additional element for 'e-access' to all other titles in the deal is generally a much smaller sum than the cost of maintaining existing subscriptions. This is logical, as libraries could argue that these are the titles in which they have less interest. By relating the cost of subscriptions to the total requests for subscribed titles and the cost of e-access to the total requests for unsubscribed titles, it is possible to break down the average cost per request figure and show average costs per subscribed and unsubscribed titles separately. This latter figure will probably be much lower, depending on both the terms of the deal and the volume of use of unsubscribed titles and, if this is the case, it is a useful way of demonstrating the value of the deal.

A further measure developed for the NESLi2 project was the 'yield per £'. This makes use of the list prices added to the template to calculate the list price of all 'unsubscribed' titles in the deal. By dividing this sum by the e-access fee, the result or yield shows how many pounds' worth of titles can be bought for each pound of the e-access fee.

WHAT WERE THE PROBLEMS?

Having demonstrated the value of using the template, there were still some obstacles for libraries to overcome before they could start work on the actual analysis. The issues described here will be

familiar to anyone who has worked with usage statistics.

The titles don't match

As we had found with the NESLi2 study, a group of libraries will not necessarily have exactly the same number of titles in their usage statistics even when they all have the same deal. This was due mainly to the presence of 'unpriced' titles (see above) which appeared in a greater or lesser number in usage statistics. Providing a 'one size fits all' template was not therefore possible, and for libraries taking part the first hurdle was matching up their list of titles with those in the template. This proved either a cumbersome manual exercise or, for several, a first attempt at using Access or, if all else failed, a plea for help to the project leader.

What to do with the aggregators?

One of the mysteries of usage statistics is when to add statistics from gateways and aggregators such as Swetswise or Ingenta. The answer is 'It depends', but it is important to know when to add, as this could have a significant effect on total usage. Libraries using these gateways will also want to know what percentage of requests they are handling. For the project, libraries were advised when to add these additional statistics, using the table provided for the SCONUL statistical return.

What about backfiles?

As described above, titles from the backfile collection are generally included in the main list of titles for the usage statistics, although some publishers now also present them separately. If the library has not purchased the collection, the titles will show up as nil use; if it has, the usage is likely to be at a lower level than current titles and will distort the figures. Using the template, libraries could separate out backfiles and, where appropriate, analyse their usage separately in the report.

What are the subscribed titles?

Libraries themselves entered details of their subscribed titles on the template. This was often a more difficult job than it seemed. As we had found with the NESLI2 project, this information was not always readily available. The library would generally use a subscription agent and the costs of print subscriptions and online access to a deal would often span different departments.

Writing up the reports

Having presented above some of the issues involved in setting up the project, it is important not to lose sight of its main aim, which related to both the collection and the analysis of usage statistics. This involved getting beyond the actual analysis and asking the question 'What does it all mean?'. However tantalising a set of statistics may be in their own right, if they are to be used by management they need to go through a process of distillation. Library managers are unlikely to be impressed by a host of spreadsheets and explanations of why one set of figures is incompatible with another, however important accuracy and consistency may be in the actual compilation of those statistics. They will be looking for some key pointers that they can use in budget discussions with senior management. Subject librarians will want to know how certain titles are being used within their area, where they may need to focus training and how they can demonstrate value for money to academic staff.

The report template was therefore designed to provide an opportunity for project members to analyse statistics and look for meanings and explanations in the results, and also to select key points that could be presented to management and lists of titles that could be used by subject librarians.

How did it go?

Now that I have described in some detail all the difficulties involved in setting up the templates and writing the reports, it is a measure of the success of the project that, in spite of staff changes affecting several libraries during the year, all but one of the original fifteen libraries have stayed with the project, one backing out through pressure of work. To date, 40 publisher reports have been produced, covering five of the six publishers in the original list. Two libraries have done further work with Evidence Base, building on the usage data to look at evidence of impact.

One of the advantages of the project has been the opportunity offered for benchmarking results with other participants. Publisher and library confidentiality currently prevent individual results being shared more widely, but the agreement of both libraries and publishers for the sharing of information within the project itself has been an important factor. These publisher reports are all available to project members in a secure file area, where they can be viewed or downloaded for benchmarking. One publisher report with summary tables showing key indicators for all participating libraries has been completed and others are being prepared. Libraries are still actively work-

ing to finish their sets of reports and are being encouraged also to produce their own summary tables showing key results across all the deals.

Evaluations received to date have been encouraging. Participants report:

> 'We have found the project interesting and have enjoyed participating. It has certainly provided us with some new techniques to employ when conducting our own value for money analysis.'

> 'A much better understanding of the complexities of compiling accurate usage data.'

> 'Better understanding of the ratio between cost and usage of our subscribed and unsubscribed titles.'

> ' An awareness of how to analyse the deals by looking at more than usage figures.'

> 'A very worthwhile project.'

> 'A good methodological starting point.'

> 'A framework and timescale to work to and get us started on doing something we knew was needed.'

> 'I have found the exercise useful and it has given me insights into how our collections are used.'

The challenges of manipulating the data using advanced features of Excel and, in particular, learning Access were mentioned by several participants. Finding time to set aside for the work was inevitably a constraint.

Some libraries have already presented completed reports to various groups and received good feedback:

> 'The completed reports have been very useful for the detailed light they shed on particular agreements.'

> 'Displayed to management to show how much value for money or otherwise we were getting or deals – very positive feedback of possible usefulness.'

> 'Electronic resources steering group have found these useful in considering "value for money" in bundled deals.'

All plan to continue with the process of analysing deals, either on their own using the methodology developed for the project or by becoming part of a future group in this project.

FUTURE PLANS

Following the successful completion of this first round, Evidence Base are looking to offer this project again for a further period, assisting libraries to analyse their usage for 2006 and, where appropriate, to track trends over the previous two years covered by this project (2004–5).

It is hoped that some of the existing libraries will stay on for a further year and be joined by a new group. As well as sharing the expertise that libraries have built up, this approach will enable us to build up the benchmarking with more libraries. We hope to expand the number of publishers and to move to other formats such as e-books.

While libraries have gained in knowledge of how to analyse and present usage statistics, it is recognised that this is a time-intensive process and that some libraries may prefer to outsource the work. For this reason, Evidence Base will also be offering to produce the reports for any libraries that prefer this approach. Costs and details are currently available on request.

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Anyone interested in finding out more about the Analysing Publisher Deals project can contact Angela Conyers at Evidence Base (angela.conyers@uce.ac.uk).

Developing integrated information services in the bio- and environmental sciences

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Oxford's collections in the biological and environmental sciences are amongst the finest in the world, and have developed within disparate libraries over nearly four hundred years. Until recently, management, access, catalogues and collection development were dispersed over many different bodies, but since 2000 they have been integrated at a policy level within the new Oxford University Library Services (OULS).[1] This has allowed many new developments to be pursued; much remains to be done, but the first fruits are already being enjoyed by both users and library staff.

The earliest host to the collections was the university's Botanic Garden,[2] dating from 1621. Not always housed in ideal conditions – close encounters with coal sheds and compost heaps are recorded – most of these early books and manuscripts from the botany school have in fact survived in remarkably good condition. A department of zoology was founded in the mid-19th century, based at the newly built University Museum, followed in 1899 by the development of a school of geography. In the early 20th century forestry came to Oxford, bringing the collections of the Royal Indian Engineering College at Windsor (see *SCONUL Focus*, Summer / Autumn 2004, *32*, p. 34–39). At the same time

rural economy was 'hived off' from botany as a separate discipline, taking the agricultural literature with it, and in 1938 the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology was set up with a specialist library. Changes of name and subject focus affected most of these departments during the 20th century, bringing the collections back together again and leaving us today with departments of plant sciences[3] (incorporating agriculture, botany and forestry), zoology[4] (incorporating ecology and ornithology) and the Oxford University Centre for the Environment,[5] incorporating geography, environmental change and transport studies.

The libraries serving these subjects, originally managed by the departments from their own resources with very little 'central' support, were transferred to Oxford university library services (OULS) between 2000 and 2004, and are now fully supported, along with the museums, by the university's academic services and university collections division. A process of integration of small 'satellite' libraries into large subject 'hubs' is under way, and the Geography and the environment library will be incorporated in the central Radcliffe science library (RSL)[6] from October 2007. The RSL, currently reference-only, will become a lending library from that date. Although there are many advantages in combining collections, a disadvantage is the loss of separate identity; to compensate for this, specialist information services are being established to allow retention of subject-based names, so that users outside Oxford are aware that we have a continuing interest in those subjects. This is important as we receive much material by donation, and the loss of the name for a collection may be interpreted by donors as a loss of interest in the topic. The services are grouped under the umbrella title 'Information services in bio- and environmental sciences' (ISBES),[7] with the libraries and services staffed by a single team, known as the bio- and environmental sciences team, or BEST librarians!

Multi-site working is challenging at first and places new demands on staff; it requires careful planning and frequent review. Although the libraries concerned are located close to each other, the departments in which they sit have substantially different 'cultures' and

attitudes towards their collections, sometimes welcoming users outside the department, sometimes preferring to restrict their use to departmental members. Moving to a centrally organized service that is open to all members of the university and to others by request has required sensitive negotiation and individual agreements with each department to formalize the new arrangements. Although these provided for review and possible cancellation over the first few years of 'integration', in practice our users have noted only improvements in service and no one has suggested reverting to departmental control. Library committees, meeting termly, were set up in each department to succeed the former departmental library committees, with representatives from each category of university user: undergraduates, taught-course postgraduates, research students, contract research staff and academic staff. These committees now meet together as one group, and are likely to merge into a single committee for the bio- and environmental sciences in future, with oversight of the provision in this subject area across the university.

The major danger to collections in this kind of reorganisation is loss of specialist knowledge: although the materials may be safely housed, well catalogued and accessible, staff may be less familiar with their content because they have responsibilities across a wider subject area. Within ISBES we have two part-time special collections librarians for ornithology and taxonomy respectively; since the day-to-day running of those collections is the responsibility of other staff, they are able to concentrate on developing subject knowledge and exploitation of the stock, with increasing emphasis on 'outreach' activities such as exhibitions, course support, conference participation, liaison with other collections in the subject area outside Oxford, publishing and so on. I retain a similar responsibility for forestry (having originally been appointed as forestry librarian in Oxford), alongside overall management of the subject area. This involves co-ordination of all library operations in the constituent libraries and the Radcliffe science library, with the aim of harmonising and simplifying procedures so that staff and users find things done the same way in all the libraries, instead of the wide variations that obtained before integration. Indeed, there was no commonality at all between libraries, with minor or sometimes major differences in virtually every procedure, great or small; this was inevitable in collections that had grown alongside each other but with very little interaction over centuries.

Readers are of course generally oblivious to library management structures, with very little appreciation of how the services are managed or by whom. New students all receive induction sessions in which the new 'unitary authority' is explained, though reaching new staff is more difficult due to the lack of a common induction programme. For many scientists, of course, online resources provide almost everything they need, and many have no occasion to visit a library at all. Raising awareness that the online services are managed by library staff, who are there to assist in their effective use, sort out problems and receive requests for new resources, is now a major challenge. It is thus essential for library staff to be visible in departments, as members of teaching committees, providers of timetabled information skills sessions, developers of virtual learning and virtual research environments, troubleshooters for e-resource problems, advisors on appropriate resources in different subject areas and so on. This is easier said than done and, due to the different departmental cultures, it is not amenable to a 'one size fits all' solution. Gaining recognition as 'the right person to ask' in appropriate areas takes time and requires patience, but once won it can be very fruitful. Often the key action that opens a door can be quite trivial – advising an academic on how to set up remote access to a database from home, for example, or sorting out an e-journal printing problem – but this can lead on to more in-depth discussion of collection-development issues and perhaps academic support for a digitisation project or other funding applications.

As well as ensuring on-going academic support it is of course essential to work closely with other relevant units within the university, so the taxonomic collections, for example, work closely with the University Botanic Garden[8] and the Herbaria.[9] The Herbaria are located in the same building as the collections

and this has proved essential, as many of the historic works refer to specimens in the herbaria collections, and they need to be used alongside each other. In the 1950s they had in fact been removed for safe-keeping to the central Bodleian library,[10] but this proved impractical as the books could not be removed from the Bodleian nor the specimens from the Herbaria, and the value of both to scholars was accordingly diminished. In the mid-1980s the books were returned to the plant sciences department, where the storage accommodation has been upgraded to incorporate improved shelving and full air-conditioning. In

future (after 2012) the New Bodleian library will be reconstructed as a special collections library; although this will have greatly improved reader facilities and would provide a better home for all our special collections, the issue of side-by-side use with the herbaria specimens may require us to maintain a separate library in the long term.

Before work on the New Bodleian can begin, the new university library depository[11] will need to be in operation; this is hoped to be available in spring 2009. With accommodation for over 8 million volumes, it should finally put an end (well, for a few decades!) to our acute space problems. It will be possible, for example, to transfer hard copies of journals now available electronically to store, releasing space in the ISBES libraries and in the central Radcliffe science library, to which the 'non-special' parts of the plant sciences and zoology libraries are scheduled to transfer. Delivery from the fully automated store to central library sites is expected to be possible within two hours of a request being placed via the online catalogue (Oxford traffic permitting); this is important as most non-university users of our collections are day visitors and need same-day access to all materials. Generally they will want to use both historic and modern materials together; separating them, while helpful for conservation, is unhelpful for use, so effective inter-site delivery services (not currently available) will be essential.

Indeed, the 'specialness' of special collections in the bio- and environmental sciences lies not so much in the condition or age of their contents but in their depth. They include much 'grey' literature, which has traditionally been the preferred form of publication for specialist material such as species distribution records, management plans, field notes and the like, which are of core importance for research but will never attract a wide readership. Cataloguing such material is demanding, often requiring the creation of original records and invoking complex patterns of relationship: floras are a notorious example, publishing according to a finite scheme but stretching often over many decades, at highly irregular intervals with complex numbering and varying institutional publishers. Collaboration with interested partners is highly desirable, and the Oxford forest information service[12] has benefited greatly from

its 69-year collaboration with CABI[13] (formerly Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux), which abstracts all forestry literature received at Oxford and which deposits, subject

to publisher's agreement, forestry material it receives that we otherwise would not hold. The resulting database, a subset of CAB Abstracts now known as the Forest Science Database[14](formerly TREECD), forms in effect a catalogue of the Oxford forestry collections, and includes library shelfmarks. This has over the years raised international awareness of our stock, though it has correspondingly reduced awareness within Oxford as much older material is included in the Forest Science Database but not in the university library catalogue. Although our aim is to rectify this, it will require retrospective conversion of some 120,000 records, which, if done in our 'spare' time, will take at least 20 years! Unfortunately conversion of CABI's records is not an option since they are not to MARC standards (for example, they only include authors' initials rather than the full names our catalogue requires).

The forestry card catalogues created prior to the relationship with CABI from 1939 were microfilmed in our own microfilming facility, which was created in 1964 and continued in operation until the mid 1990s, covering its costs from sales of films, mainly to other libraries. Rising costs and declining demand led to its closure and replacement with a digitisation programme, the Oxford digital library for forestry,[15] which is now coming on stream with digital versions of all Oxford Forestry Institute publications and back files of the *Commonwealth Forestry Review*. In-house facilities are available for scanning microfilms, so that pdf's of microfilmed articles can be easily provided (subject to copyright of course), but digitization of the entire 4000-reel microfilm collection would be extremely costly, though undoubtedly valuable. The increasing availability of electronic journal backfiles has decreased the demand for document delivery, but this service continues to be provided where required, as many of the more specialist titles are still not available electronically.

Another major issue arising from the move to electronic publication is the increasing trend to publish 'grey' literature only on the web. Should we download and print out such items to ensure their long-term availability, particularly where they continue a series we have otherwise complete in print? We generally do not do this, but have little expectation that the online versions will survive indefinitely. Because of their low-audience, highly specialist nature it seems unlikely that national archiving systems, where they come into being, will pick them up. A more likely solution is the growing movement

for institutional repositories, and our own Oxford research archive[16] will provide a home for our newly digitised Oxford Forestry Institute publications. However, world-wide dispersal of forestry research literature across such depositories will be manageable only with careful attention to metadata to make it easily retrievable on a subject basis, and to match like with like when different issues from a series, for example, reside in different repositories according to author affiliation. These issues are being addressed by the Global Forest Information Service,[17] a UN-based initiative managed by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO),[18] which aims to provide a metadata clearing house and search engine as a finding aid for all types of forestry information, including, eventually, 'deep web' access to database content. Associated with this are many issues of terminology, ontology, tagging and so on to which Oxford and CABI have contributed over many years; the Oxford Decimal Classification for Forestry, developed in the early 1950s and widely adopted, has recently been revised as the Global Decimal Classification for Forestry,[19] by a IUFRO research group called the Information Services and Knowledge Organization,[20] which Oxford currently leads and with which we have been associated, in many different guises, since the early 1900s.

Participation in international groups is particularly important in our subject area, where researchers are used to the need to travel globally to access collections of local taxonomic, silvicultural or ornithological interest. There are many areas for mutual collaboration with other collections and opportunities for publicising our own collections and maximising their use. A very successful development in the past decade has been the group European Botanical and Horticultural Libraries (EBHL),[21] which has an active list-server used for tracking down difficult-to-find materials and an annual meeting in a different country each year. This allows the development of the personal contacts and friendships that are the basis of successful collaboration. The trend towards merging libraries brings many newcomers to our subject area, and sources of professional support and opportunities to ask questions as well as share knowledge become increasingly important.

Within the UK we are developing a new group called Focus on Information in the Bio- and Environmental Sciences (FIBS)[22] because, although there are opportunities for practitioners in sections of this broad subject area to meet, there is currently no single forum which covers the whole spectrum from taxonomy to bioinformatics, although science itself is increasing crossing traditional boundaries, and technology is also generally applicable across the board. FIBS is being developed as a UK/Ireland 'chapter' of the International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists (IAALD),[23] which provides international links and an established organisational structure, important in saving time – which few in our subject area have to spare, in Oxford or anywhere else.

It is increasingly apposite for librarians to take part in scientific conferences, where we can talk to our users rather than ourselves and discuss how our traditional areas of expertise in information retrieval can be applied in the wholly online world. Through groups such as EBHL, IUFRO and IAALD, ISBES has participated in information-oriented sessions at major congresses including the International Botanical Congress in Vienna, World Forestry Congress in Quebec and IUFRO World Congress in Brisbane, as well as more specialist groups such as the European Society for Environmental History in Florence (the attractive locations often chosen for such gatherings are of course an added bonus!). All have contributed to increased usage of and support for our collections.

Another essential area of outreach is in exhibition work. In recent years we have arranged major exhibitions in Oxford at the Bodleian Library ('The *Flora Graeca* story') and the Ashmolean Museum ('A new flowering: 1000 years of botanical art'[24]), as well as numerous small exhibits for visiting groups ranging from botanists and gardeners to botanical artists and historians. Although these small one-day exhibitions involve a lot of preparatory work, they pay dividends in increasing our knowledge of the collections and in developing good will towards the library service, the university and science in general. Associated with this work is the research we are called upon to do for various publications, which have the additional benefit of 'fixing' knowledge of our collections somewhere other than in our staff's heads! A volume published in spring 2007 is *The magnificent*

Flora Graeca: how the Mediterranean came to the English garden,[25] richly illustrated to accompany the launch of our digitized version of the *Flora Graeca*[26].

Oxford is a partner in the Google Books mass digitisation programme,[27] covering 18th- and 19th-century out-of-copyright materials in Oxford collections; ISBES collections are currently being surveyed for this project and, with the exception of fragile or large-format items, all our materials within the time frame should be online by the end of 2007. This will be probably the biggest single step in making our collections accessible we have ever taken, and it is one that would have seemed impossible just a few years ago.

Where will the future take us? Integration of collections in Oxford will continue over the next decade, making the resources of the whole university available to all. Many more 'views' of that integrated collection will become possible, in varying degrees of granularity, drawing seamlessly on the digital and other collections of other institutions in the UK and globally. Specialist information services will develop co-operatively on regional, national or international levels to make the best use of expertise, shaped by actual usage patterns and marketed by local champions based in both the information and scientific communities. Boundaries between hard data, analysis, publication and archiving will increasingly blur, as will professional divisions. Opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration will increase, and the librarian's role in connecting people with information will also enable people to connect with each other in serendipitous ways. Will we still be called librarians? It doesn't greatly matter, but I hope so; I have yet to encounter a better word than 'library' for the encapsulation of human knowledge for the purpose of sharing it. The bio- and environmental sciences are primarily about exploring and preserving life; our 'library' is the world itself, indeed the universe itself: the greatest integrated system of all. So integrating our fragmented information services is really a no-brainer!

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2   http://www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk/
3   http://www.plants.ox.ac.uk
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Old libraries, new job, new challenges: provision for disabled students in Oxford University Library Services (OULS)

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Perhaps it's just me, but everywhere I go I'm aware of the impact that new disability legislation has had. I notice ramps outside buildings, signs in Braille, leaflets telling me I can have alternative formats if I want (I'm tempted one of these days to ask for large-print, audio *and* Braille!). 'Hazard of the job', you may say, being so acutely aware of these developments with my job title, but the disability equality scheme which we had to publish by 4 December 2006 highlighted disability issues once more. Higher education is again faced with new challenges that all departments, including library services, need to be aware of. It's our duty, after all, to our readers.

I won't bore you with details of Oxford University and its library system other than to say that libraries can be situated in the strangest of buildings. This not only makes it fascinating for staff and students, but also makes it very inconvenient for those with disabilities, in particular those with mobility impairments.

Disability offices is the first port of call for disabled students arriving in Oxford and I work closely with them as libraries become more and more aware of needing to provide services for all their readers. So how do we provide for disabled students and readers? A quick snapshot will give you an overview of what's been happening over the past couple of years.

First of all there is my post, that of disability librarian, which is currently just under two years old. It's been quite a challenge over a very short period of time, especially with all the legislation and the increasing reliance of disabled library users on software and hardware. I'm not alone since there are also disability contacts in each OULS library (Oxford University Library Services – a consortium of the 40 main research and lending libraries within the university, including the Bodleian), whom I liaise with if I know of any student who may be using one of their libraries regularly.

Part of my remit is managing the accessible resources, acquisition and creation unit (usually known as ARACU or 'accessible resources' for ease in telephone conversations). There are four members of staff in the department, including myself; our administrator, who organises the material for students, sorts out our finances and coordinates the volunteers (we currently have 40 who help with the audio recordings and also sometimes scanning and proofreading); and a resource coordinator who converts the material into the alternative formats (we are both learning Grade 2 Braille). Last but not least, we have a part-time resource and administrative assistant to help with the scanning and proofreading.

ARACU provides students with audio recordings (DAISY only), electronic files (both text and image), Braille and tactile diagrams. Braille is our newest service, as we only took it over last September from another department (we had the skills to develop it) and demand has been heavy. This is not too surprising since reading Braille is preferred by many blind readers to audio and other formats – you can read as fast as a sighted person and there's no electronic voice, although the bulk of a Braille publication can be off putting. We currently have seven students on our books, which might not sound a lot when you have hundreds taking a course, but with three heavy users, weekly reading lists of around ten items per student and accuracy being vital, organisation takes up a great deal of our time. Ordering from libraries, converting and sending to students can take from as little as one week to up to six (and longer depending on the size of a book and what we are converting it into). Having correct reading lists at least a term in advance is our idea of heaven!

With the increase in reliance on computer software and hardware, ARACU has begun to purchase equipment and software for libraries through grant funding we were lucky enough to receive. There are extra lighting, magnifiers and acetate overlays (used by dyslexic students) in all OULS libraries. Larger libraries have height-adjustable tables and ergonomic chairs and some assistive software such as JAWS (job access with speech – a screen reader for the visually impaired) and areas where students can use their own equipment and software. We recently purchased the latest auto-reader technology in the form of a myReader from Humanware,[1] and they used its historic location in the Bodleian as part of their advertising campaign. At ARACU we have a separate area for students to come and try out software before it is purchased - textHELP GOLD, JAWS and Kurzweil 3000 are some of the programmes available.

In the wider library context, outside ARACU and its services, electronic journals are a definite bonus to disabled readers and Oxford has excellent resources in this area. There's no need to be tied down to a physical building, or have material moved from one area to another to make it more accessible. Text can be enlarged on the screen or downloaded in several formats, including the original TIFF files which can be converted by assistive software into speech. I know of several visually impaired students who make use of this technology here in Oxford and use it with their assistive software.

So much for the virtual world; what about the physical? There are, as anyone who has visited the 'dreaming spires' will know, an awful lot of listed historic buildings in Oxford. Making them accessible, particularly to readers with mobility difficulties, can be hard. In some buildings you may never be able to put in a lift that can accommodate a wheelchair. But things are not impossible and the recent award-winning ramp outside the New Bodleian Library can attest to this.[2] If this isn't possible, you think about other options. After all, if the reader can't get to the books, can the books get to the reader? Material in reference collections, such as the Bodleian, can be transferred to more accessible reading rooms and I am grateful to the staff who help with this. Awareness of the need to think differently in order to provide a service is necessary and we run disability-awareness sessions through the year. Fear of being sued for doing something wrong or of saying the wrong thing can often come into the provision of services for disabled readers. Knowing what's

available for disabled readers, that they also need the same level of service and that they can find people to talk to in difficult situations – all helps.

With new buildings in the planning process at the moment, disability awareness is also vital. Thinking about the readers (including disabled readers) who may be using the new libraries *before* they are built impacts on the design, and considering their needs at the start is imperative. It's easier to change plans than rebuild (and a lot less expensive!). When asked I usually tell interested parties that BS8300:2001 is the standard to consult when thinking about building works.

This is just a rundown of what we're trying to achieve in OULS – more awareness, better services and increased access to a wonderful collection are high on our agenda. We may not be quite there yet, but we're heading in the right direction.

And Braille? If you want a copy, let me know.

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Redefining services to distance learners: what's in a name?

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the term 'distance learner' specified the distinct category of students who studied at a distance from the university or college at which they were registered. Enrolled on designated distance learning courses, and identified as distance learners on the student records system, they were entitled to specialist services such as postal loans.

Today, however, the student learning experience is changing. Remote access to information and communication across geographical boundaries enables institutions of higher education to offer flexible modes of study by means of online and independent learning. Thus they are able to include in their increasing and diverse student population many non-traditional learners of different backgrounds and personal circumstances, including part-timers, mature entrants, international students and learners 'studying at a distance'.

For a variety of reasons, whether family obligations, work commitments, time constraints or geographical location, many of our learners may rarely be present on campus. They may have little or no in-person contact with staff and may never attend formal classes, or visit the library, making the concept of the traditional 'campus-based student' less relevant to higher education institutions.

As the proportion of students not physically present on campuses increases, the balance between 'off-' and 'on-campus' students also changes. Consequently, it becomes necessary to redefine what we mean by the term 'distance learner', so that library services, and the manner in which we provide them, offer the same benefits to all learners. These services must meet – and exceed –the information needs of **all** our learners, whether they are on- or off-campus.

REDEFINING THE TERM 'DISTANCE LEARNER'

St Martin's offers a number of part-time and vocational courses, and in addition many courses have long periods of practice placements; in fact more than 50% of our 10,000 students fall into this category. This is likely to increase after St Martin's becomes the University of Cumbria from August 2007 and plays a full part in the new distributed learning network in the region.

To support our students more fully, we decided we needed to understand better what the term 'distance learner' means today, and how we might adapt our services accordingly.

What is a distance learner? To find answers to our question, we decided to investigate the following issues:

1   What criteria do other academic libraries use to determine what a distance learner is?

2   Is there a prescribed and uniform view of the term 'distance learner'? What does it mean in practice?

3   What services and support do other libraries provide for 'distance learners', over and above those they offer to non-distance learners?

A small-scale survey was conducted from October to December, to learn from others what they are doing to address the varied needs of a diverse student body. After making initial contact by telephone, a brief questionnaire was emailed to staff responsible for overseeing services and support to distance learners at 20 academic libraries.

The response rate to our e-mail questionnaire was 45%. For a fuller view of academic library policy and practice in regard to service provision and support for distance learners, the websites of a total of 27 academic libraries were visited.

Literature pertinent to the investigation was also consulted.

1 Diverse criteria determine distance learner status

A SCONUL report of 2001 identifies distance learners as 'those who are separated by distance or by available time from the institution at which they are registered on a course of study'.[1] Distance learners might, therefore, be seen as:

a) students who live so far away from campus that it is difficult or impossible for them to gain the same benefits from existing 'non-specialist' services as other students, and/or
b) students whose personal commitments and/or work schedules prohibit their presence on campus at times when they might benefit from these services.

It was found that the majority of the academic institutions consulted apply various criteria to determine distance learner status, and resultant eligibility for specialist services. Furthermore, the regulations governing distance learner status vary from one institution to another; at some institutions more than one criterion applies.

Criteria determining distance learner status might include, for example:
- registration on courses where attendance on campus is either not required or infrequently required
- registration on a designated distance education/learning course
- participation in programmes incorporating work placement. Full-time students, for instance, are effectively 'distance learners' for defined periods while on mandatory work placement during their course of study
- personal circumstances or work schedules that prevent attendance, or make it difficult
- geographical distance from campus; Cardiff University information services, for example, states that a student located more than 50 miles, or one hour's travel, away from a Cardiff University library is entitled to specialist services.

Thus, it appears that criteria establishing distance learner status are no longer limited to studying at a distance, or to enrolment on a designated distance learning course. Additional criteria seem to exist that allow eligibility to distance learner status for a greater number of students than formerly.

Additionally, most of the libraries surveyed have a specific borrower status for distance learners on the library management system, enabling library staff easily to identify students who are eligible for specialist services, and to facilitate access to resources and services for these students. Indication of borrower status on Talis Alto enables library services at the University of Central England, for instance, to stop items being recalled from distance learners.

2 Diverse, non-prescriptive views of the term 'distance learner'

In applying diverse criteria to determine distance learner status and eligibility for specialist services, it follows that libraries use various terms other than 'distance learner' to describe students with flexible access needs. Descriptive terms identified in the literature and by respondents include:
- part-timers
- off-campus students
- students on placement
- students with occasional or irregular attendance
- lifelong learners
- students with disabilities
- students with special individual circumstances that may prevent attendance.

The range of terms institutions use in reference to these learners suggests that students who were traditionally distinguished as a discrete category of distance learners are today part of a larger, increasingly heterogeneous group. This expanding group embraces diverse students who engage in varying and mixed modes of learning in a manner and at a time and location that matches their particular needs and circumstances.

3 Specialist services for learners with flexible access needs

Learners with flexible access needs require – and, as tuition fees soar, they increasingly expect – timely access to a range of relevant information resources and supportive services.

In response to this demand, St Martin's learning and information services provides a range of specialist services to facilitate access to resources. Academic libraries we surveyed tend to offer a similar range of specialist services, described on

their dedicated distance learner web pages, for students with flexible access needs.

The services most commonly provided are postal book loans, postal photocopying and access to other libraries' resources through the UK Libraries Plus scheme. Some libraries (30%) also offer UK Computing Plus, giving eligible students access to a limited range of computing facilities. Other specialist services offered include:

- postal interlibrary loans
- literature searching
- dedicated distance learning collection
- book fetching
- frequently asked questions
- newsletters
- information skills training
- out-of-hours support.

Postal photocopies and postal book loans
All the libraries we surveyed offer postal photocopies of book chapters and journal articles, and nearly all (89%) provide a postal loans service.

Whereas postal photocopies are offered to all distance learners regardless of residence, few of the libraries surveyed (7%) extend their postal book loans service to overseas students.

Service charges for postal photocopying and book loans differ from one library to the next. For example, fees for photocopying might be charged per page, per article or per number of articles requested, ranging from 5p to 10p per A4 page, from 50p to £3.00 per article, item or book chapter, or £1.50 for 1–5 articles. Photocopying fees charged to overseas students are higher, as they include the costs of overseas postage.

Over half of the libraries surveyed pay the cost of postage on outgoing postal loans; learners are required to pay return postage. In circumstances where learners must pay postage both ways, fees range from £3.40 to £4.50 per item posted to an address within the UK. In the few cases where a postal loans service is offered to learners outside the UK and Northern Ireland, postage costs per item are considerable. library services of the university of the West of England, for example, quote a service charge of £14.00 per book to users outside the UK and Europe.

Postal loans and photocopies offer an invaluable service for many students absent from campus. Yet, at the majority of the libraries surveyed, circulation policies governing postage fees, fines on overdue books and recall on loans (despite

extended loan periods and provision for remote renewal) might make this means of access a costly option for students studying at a distance.

Overseas students are undeniably at a disadvantage in regard to access and costs. Access to full-text electronic information, however, helps in some measure to offset this drawback.

Postal interlibrary loans
A small minority of the libraries surveyed (7%) offer postal interlibrary loans to borrowers within the UK. This specialist service is not an option for most students with flexible access needs, therefore.

Literature searching
Literature searching, offered by four (15%) of the libraries surveyed, appears to be regarded as a service principally for learners who lack internet access, and to help bridge the gap in the provision of access to electronic databases for on- and off-campus students, allowing the latter group access to the same range of electronic resources as on-campus students. At one respondent library, however, this service has not been requested in the last five years. Possible reasons for lack of use of this service might be (a) that it is fee-based, possibly unaffordable, and/or (b) that students are unaware of this service.

Distance learning collection, book fetching
Only one respondent library indicated that it houses a dedicated distance learning collection of core texts. Four (15%) of the libraries surveyed operate a 'book fetching service': books are set aside at the student's request, for collection within a specified number of days.

Information literacy training
In addition to access to resources, students who are 'off-campus' require access to effective training to acquire information literacy skills so that they may make effective use of resources and develop independent life-long learning skills.

All the libraries surveyed have links on their dedicated distance learner web pages to freely available online tutorials such as Tonic, and many provide links to the newly launched Intute training suite, which offers subject-specific internet tutorials. Leeds also offers an online 'Watch the library video', and Sunderland provides a library induction through a PowerPoint presentation.

Specialist distance learning units, out-of-hours support
Adequate support is also essential for effective access to, and use of, resources. Remote support

for students with flexible access needs varies among libraries. It ranges from providing one staff member with particular responsibility for delivery of specialist services to a specialist unit comprising a dedicated team offering specialist services, help and guidance. Swansea's DALLAS team (distance and lifelong learners at Swansea), Napier University's NULIS distance learning service and the off-campus support team at Edgehill College in North Devon are examples of the latter.

Just over half (59%) of the libraries surveyed publish designated contact details on web pages for distance learners. Where this information is provided, making contact is simplified; learners are likely to receive faster, more personalised service than where only general contact details are published.

Few of the libraries surveyed (11%) mentioned provision of 'out-of-hours' support. Yet many learners who juggle family obligations, part- or full-time work schedules and study cannot always seek urgently needed support or guidance during daytime working hours. Of note is Edgehill, which offers dedicated telephone support to students with flexible access needs to 9 pm from Monday to Friday, and from 11 am to 6 pm on Sundays.

Frequently asked questions, newsletters
Six institutions (22%) publish 'frequently asked questions' on dedicated web pages especially for distance and part-time learners. Two of the libraries consulted, Edgehill learning services and the University of Surrey Roehampton information services, produce newsletters to keep students informed of new developments.

Services and support for other students rarely present on campus
45% of respondents reported that no special arrangements were made for other students who spend little time on campus. All the other respondents observed that services such as off-campus renewals, online document request, postal photocopying services and help-desk enquiry, all designed with off-campus students in mind, are also accessible to a wider group of students.

It is interesting to note that students who are not officially designated 'distance learners' but who spend little time on campus also take advantage of services such as those mentioned above, which were initially designed specifically for 'distance learners'. This suggests that the distinction between different categories of students and the services they require is not always clear-cut: precise distinctions between separate, traditional categories of students are disappearing. 'Distance learners' are part of a diverse and expanding group, with varied information and support needs.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS

A frequently cited rationale for specialist service provision is to enable students who are unable to (or find it difficult to) access library services, to gain comparable benefit from service provision as traditional on-campus students. As Fulcher observes, 'The central issue in library support for distance learning is one of equity.'[2]

Yet it appears that not all learners might gain adequate access to resources and services to which they are entitled:

- Some library and information services' policies governing the provision of services – for example, circulation policies, associated fines and charges – weigh against some of these learners.

- Some specialist services – such as postal loans – are denied by most libraries to some learners with flexible access needs, such as overseas students.

- Other services that are crucial to effective location and use of resources – such as information skills training – are not always targeted to meet the information skills needs of learners with flexible access needs.

- Essential services – such as out-of- hours support – are not provided by many libraries at times convenient to learners with flexible access needs.

- Learners may not be fully aware of the specialist services for which they are eligible, and so they do not take advantage of them.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR POLICIES AND SERVICES

The survey underlines the realisation that the term 'distance learner' is becoming anachronistic in today's flexible learning environment. Libraries need to move away from rigidly categorising students by type of course of study to a fuller understanding of students' individual needs, and

to be more flexible in regard to student entitlements. This requires an institution-wide approach and excellent communication between all parts of the organisation.

How is St Martin's responding to this challenge? Our strategy is to concentrate on a joined-up approach, to more fully identify, understand, and provide for the diverse information and support needs of *all* our students by:

- implementing an information fluency framework that is embedded in courses and programmes

- building a closer working relationship between library, academic and support services staff to understand and support students' diverse circumstances and needs

- extending our portfolio of services to those who need it, irrespective of their course of study, for example our multi-site book request scheme and expansion of the postal loans service to embrace all part-timers and full-time students on placement; this service was formerly available only to learners registered on designated distance learning courses

- investigation of licenses for electronic resources to include non-UK learners

- adequate staff to facilitate access (physical and intellectual) to appropriate resources for all learners with flexible access needs

- provision of opportunities for appropriate ongoing training and development to staff directly involved in provision of services to learners with flexible access needs
- targeted marketing so that all learners are aware of services and support available to them.

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A vital lifeline – UK Libraries Plus 1999–2006

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INTRODUCTION

It seems perhaps incredible now that only eight years ago there was no national scheme for student access and borrowing at higher education libraries. Yet the need was clear. With ever-increasing numbers of part-time students, often studying at a distance from the university or college they had signed up to, libraries were constantly dealing with the complaint that students could not get easy access to the reading materials they were expected to use for the course. Placement students, often spending many weeks away from their home institution yet expected to do course-work, were also experiencing the same problems.

In some regions, schemes such as London Plus (which had started in 1988) went some way to meeting this need, but you only needed to cross a regional boundary and customers had nothing. Worse, many libraries, even those with extensive provision for part-timers of their own, made sure the barriers were in place to prevent much-feared swamping by those oiks from the university next door. As the then Site Librarian at South Bank University I remember having to maintain a long list of who we let in and who we didn't, depending on the access agreement with each particular institution. What a waste of time and energy it now seems!

What was needed was someone to cut the Gordian knot and just do something. In 1999 our doughty champion was found in Philip Payne, then at Leeds Metropolitan University and now, very appropriately, Librarian at Birkbeck, University of London.

FORMATION

On 18 February 1999 Philip emailed university librarians on behalf of the Coalition of Modern Universities asking for expressions of interest in a national access and borrowing scheme for part-time and distance learning students. Roy Williams (University of North London) forwarded the e-mail to me and I responded, as the then convenor of the regional London Plus scheme, to offer help and support. Looking back on my initial e-mail exchange with Philip, it is perhaps not surprising to see that the fear of swamping was a key concern for potential member libraries right from the beginning.

London Plus, an Inner London Polytechnics (INPOL) idea from 1988, was by 1999 up to having 23 member libraries, which gave us a good core membership for a national scheme (and also part of its name!). Meetings at Derby in June 1999 and at London Guildhall University on 5 July 1999 moved plans on rapidly. The pilot UK Libraries Plus (UKLP) scheme was launched in September 2000, with 60 libraries in membership. In 2006, at the time of transfer to SCONUL, 146 libraries out of a possible 166 were in membership, 87% of UK higher education libraries.

CONSTITUTION

The initial steering group was made up simply of people showing an interest in running the scheme. During the first year we agreed that a more representative structure was needed for the long term, so we wrote and agreed with the heads of services a constitution – which required voting to be changed – and a set of operating principles to deal with day-to-day practicalities, which the Steering Group (UKLPSG) could amend for itself.

The constitution covered several issues of concern to potential members. Perhaps the two most important issues it contained were:

o reciprocity, there being an agreement in principle to a transfer of funding if monitoring revealed a significant imbalance in the use of the scheme by member institutions; this was anti-swamping clause and was never used

o only publicly funded higher education institutions to be members: over the years there were a number of requests from private colleges to join, who clearly had little library provision, and also from the further education sector, for whom we had much more

sympathy. However, the key aim was to get as many higher education libraries in and we knew that opening the scheme up to the FE sector would make this aim impossible to achieve.

With the operating principles, the UKLPSG deliberately had more room for manoeuvre. Of all the principles, number 2 was the one I referred people to time and time again. It states:

'UK Libraries Plus is open to the libraries of all institutions of higher education, funded by one of the UK HE funding bodies, subject to acceptance by the UK Libraries Plus Steering Group. The funding bodies currently recognised are:

• Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
  • Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
  • Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC)
  • Scottish Executive
  • Department for Employment and Learning (Northern Ireland)
  • Teacher Training Agency (TTA).

It is not open to privately funded higher education institutions or to further education colleges offering higher education programmes. The scheme is open to HE students on courses or programmes operated in or by partner institutions (whether HE or FE), in those cases where such students enjoy full access and borrowing rights at the home (qualification awarding) higher education institution's library.'

The need to ensure that the correct things were in the constitution or the operating principles was illustrated when we discovered that the Scottish Agricultural College was funded by the Scottish Executive not SHEFC and so, although it was a bona fide HE college, it couldn't join! Much work ensued, getting votes by email and at the AGM, but it was worth it because we realised that a name change by say HEFCE (which was written into the Constitution) would have meant having to do this anyway. SAC was of course most impressed to see all of UKLP evolve to suit them!

The other part of principle 2 is the issue of the partner libraries, a clause originally added at the request of Gordon Brewer of the University of Derby to ensure that its partner colleges, whose

students were full university students but were studying at a local further education college, could be included. This has been by far the most asked-about principle, the issue so often coming down to the legal agreement between a university and a partner college as to levels of service offered.

THE STEERING GROUP

A key feature of the constitution was that the membership of the UKLPSG would be by election, with the convenor (me) as an appointee, to allow for any future use of paid staff (which neatly foresaw the way SCONUL Research Extra operates) and also giving the group a person whose non-elected status meant he (or she) could run the very popular elections.

We also allowed for co-option from other groups, which led to the long-standing and valuable co-option of Toby Bainton (SCONUL) and Caroline House (UCISA). Toby's keen eye for the wording of principles and Caroline's very fruitful advice on getting money from JISC for the customer survey and for Computing Plus made their co-option fully justified.

It is a tribute the popularity of UKLP that every single election to the SG was contested, with on one occasion eleven candidates standing for the three vacant places on the group. It is also good to see that this principle has continued into the new SCONUL Access group which will have four places for elected representatives. Indeed, this continued enthusiasm to stand for election has been frequently commented on, since it is in stark contrast to the many professional bodies who struggle to find committee members.

What also strikes me about the many people who have been part of the UKLP Steering Group is the positive way in which developments were debated and agreed, with a pragmatic view always to the fore. We always kept in mind our reality check in the form of a library assistant, part-time, who only works the Sunday shift. If we made any particular change, how would it impact on this person? I think it shows great maturity for a group to debate a new idea thoroughly and enthusiastically but then agree that, good idea that it was, it would not work on the front line and therefore should be dropped. A key principle here was that, as far as possible, the scheme should be nationally uniform to make the rules simple, which was followed for the core service, if not for full-time postgraduates or the Open University.

Of course key to our success was chairing by Philip Payne and then Sara Marsh, who both made sure that debate was thorough and that all voices were heard.

The representatives

The UKLPSG could not have made the scheme work without the representatives in each library, many of whom were candidates for membership of the SG. Indeed, I believe the idea that any rep could stand for election if they wished was a powerful motivator because it gave reps a real sense of ownership of the scheme. These were the real heroines and heroes of the scheme, without whom it simply could not have worked.

Effective communication with this group was key and demonstrated the power of email as without the JISCmail list, I'm not sure how we could have managed. It was certainly better than the carbon-copied typed letters used by London Plus back in 1988!

Some reps went further than merely local administration, which led for example to Brighton taking on the manufacture and distribution of the membership cards and latterly Roehampton looking after the web site[1]. In all cases, the additional workload was simply absorbed by the libraries concerned, allowing the cards to be supplied at cost, thus keeping the scheme affordable for member libraries.

WHAT DID THE CUSTOMERS THINK OF THE SCHEME?

UKLP did two surveys of its users, the first very much a home brew paper exercise which relied on date input by some GCSE level school placement students working for me at Central School of Speech and Drama and funded by SCONUL as part of the work of the working group on Distance Learning. It was followed by a much more professional survey run by LISU and funded thanks to JISC.

The surveys gave us a useful picture of the typical user, who is a 38-year-old postgraduate student studying an MSc in social sciences or an MBA who values the service for easy access from their home and book loans. They regard the scheme as vital for their studies. They would like to be able to borrow more books than current quotas allow. Comments on the survey forms were typically like this one from a MA History and Culture of Sport student living in Street, Somerset, using University of the West of England and registered to study at De Montfort:

'… it is a vital lifeline, and only one hour from home rather than four.'

DEVELOPING THE SCHEME

Both surveys gave us ideas and inspiration on where to take the scheme next.

A key finding from the first survey was the need to do something about **access to IT facilities** in libraries and from this was born the UK Computing Plus scheme, led by Sara Marsh. Pilot projects were established in a few member libraries to increase access to IT, ranging from a PC for visitors to more extensive access to e-resources. This led to a toolkit of advice for other libraries to draw on, available on the website.

However, perhaps the most nationally significant achievement for Sara and her group was lobbying JISC and Eduserv to get the licenses for e-resources changed so as to allow use by **walk-in library users**, and thus UKLP and SCONUL Research Extra (SRX) members. In my view this was probably as significant an achievement as the establishment of the scheme itself, since it solved the long-term problem that, as more resources – journals in particular – went electronic, access, far from improving, was gradually being taken away from UKLP users.

As I write, the HAERVI (Higher education Access to Electronic Resources in Visited Institutions) project is looking at how libraries and, perhaps more importantly, IT services, can take full advantage of the walk in user clause. That JISC is funding this with £50,000 shows great confidence in the ideas and the people involved.

We also kept pushing libraries to join. It is sad that by the end of the scheme we still had no member libraries in Northern Ireland and there remained a hard core of older universities not willing to join. A particular problem we faced was with the **Open University**, who as the UKs biggest provider of part-time higher education courses ought naturally to be in the scheme but whose student population really did threaten a major swamping problem. At the time the OU had some 160,000 students, virtually all part-time, spread across the UK. In each of the 13 regions, there was a large student population, up to 30,000 in some cases, effectively 13 universities of the size of Manchester Met. When canvassed for views, a number of heads of service pointed out that the OU, with its single library at Milton Keynes, was in no position to reciprocate giving access for, say,

its Scottish resident students. As reciprocity was a key constitutional principle, this was a major issue for us to deal with.

The answer was a membership quota. I recall spending a train journey to an SG meeting playing around with what felt at the time like a pretty spurious set of calculations to come up with a workable formula. Based on the numbers of students using the OU library, this would allow the OU a small number of cards to issue which would get an equal number into the scheme, but at the same time reassure member libraries that all 160,000 students were not going to strip their shelves bare. With each year, growth in the use of the library at the OU by external users and confidence in the system has allowed the quota to grow and for the 2006–2007 academic year it has stood at some 4,500 borrower cards. As a further safeguard, libraries were allowed to opt out of lending to OU students. It was pleasing to note that only six did, nearly all of whom have now changed their view.

The final big idea was expanding the scheme to allow borrowing by **full-time taught postgraduate** students, following on the start of SRX which was open to research students. Debate on whether just to include M-level or to throw the net wide to encompass PG Certs and PG Dips was settled by concern that our hypothetical Sunday assistant needed simple rule to follow. Postgraduates of any flavour it was. The scheme was launched as a pilot in 2005, with again an opt-out clause. This was taken up by a few libraries, most notably the London School of Economics, because of already high levels of use as noted below.

How well did we do?

In order to keep the scheme simple, we only ever measured borrowing use. In part this was because it meant the reference cards could be kept simpler, but mainly because it was the fear of swamping by borrowers that we needed evidence to counter. In the 2005–2006 academic year, 17,885 borrowing cards were taken of which 7850 were used to obtain actual membership. To give some idea of relative size, Roehampton University has a total student population of 7,800.

The statistics showed that swamping never happened. The closest we got to any one library suffering from overuse was with the London School of Economics. LSE had a net 581 extra borrowers thanks to UKLP (583 incomers and only 2 outgoing LSE users). This added something like 6.25%

to the number of customers at the LSE, which was quite significant. It is not surprising that the LSE has not signed up for the full-time postgraduate pilot.

As the scheme grew it attracted comments in the subject and institutional reviews of the Quality Assurance Agency, for example:

> 'The UK Libraries Plus scheme, allowing access to country-wide academic libraries, is a valuable facility for postgraduate students, most of whom are part-time distance learners.'[2]

The QAA, in summing up the period 2002–2004, noted that

> 'There is good student access to learning centres, which is further enhanced in cases where there is membership of UK Libraries Plus.'[3]

The future with SCONUL

Towards the end of his time as UKLP chair, Philip Payne floated the possibility of a merger with SCONUL. Quite rightly he was concerned at what might happen once the scheme ceased to grow and became steady-state. Who would be prepared to keep things going? Was there a risk of a moribund SG allowing the scheme to drift? There was also concern about the financial future. The scheme always had a healthy bank balance, because many conferences ran with free use of rooms thanks to the organising libraries. But what might happen in a few years' time?

What made the move to SCONUL easier was that by now SRX had been set up, with, in most libraries, the same rep looking after both schemes. To the people on the ground, having two schemes increasingly made no sense. SCONUL was also more confident that it could take the scheme on since SRX was a success and had attracted sufficient funding to enable it to run without being a drain on the limited resources of the three-person Secretariat. With the backing of the heads of service and the UKLPSG, the SCONUL Task and Finish Group worked to bring the schemes together.

UKLP ceased to be an independent organisation from 31 July 2006 and I took the opportunity of this change to step down after seven years as convenor. Appropriately for a part-time-centred group, the final UKLP AGM took place at the Open University Library.

The new SCONUL Access group has on its agenda decisions on current brands (UKLP and SRX) and what to do with them. At the time of writing a single-brand scheme is set to launch in summer 2007. It also has a SCONUL, funded project working on a new website with the prospect of online registration, a contentious issue for some reps for whom the UKLP card is almost now a sacred object. The new chair – John Hall from Durham University, the founding chair of SRX – has been fostering potential international links with both the Australian CAUL scheme and with LIBER, who are developing a European libraries passport. Perhaps an International Libraries Plus is not far off?

CONCLUSIONS

UK Libraries Plus was, I believe, a stunning success. With a mix of pragmatic ideas and radical thinking, we set up a scheme few believed was possible. This could not have been achieved without the hard work and determination of Philip and Sara; the SG; the reps (particularly those who took on jobs like printing the cards and editing the website); and all those front-line library staff who promoted the scheme and issued the cards. Without this huge team effort, it would not have happened. It has been a joy and an honour to serve with such dedicated people.

UKLP has had a durable impact on UK higher education libraries. Students can now, for the most part, study and borrow from the library most convenient to them. As students are increasingly time-poor, many could not cope with out the access UKLP gives them. The UK Computing Plus breakthrough on licenses cracked another major problem, without which access to libraries would have become increasingly useless.

UKLP has been first and foremost about students so, to end, here is my favourite quote from its surveys, from a BSc Coventry University student aged 49:

> 'While I was studying for my BSc Counselling I was living at home in Radlett, Herts and going up to Coventry once a week in term time for lectures/tutorials. This involved travelling four hours each time! I can honestly say I could not have completed my degree without being able to use Univ. of Herts library. It was invaluable.'

REFERENCES

1   www.uklibrariesplus.ac.uk

2   University of Keele Philosophy subject review, Q135/2001, January 2001: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/revreps/subjrev/all/q135%5F01.pdf

3   QAA, 'Academic review of subjects in HEIs – 2002–04: summary report', November 2004: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/academicreview/summaryreport04/report.asp

Update from the SCONUL Chair

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It's good to say that there's a lot going on in terms of the SCONUL agenda at the moment.

The hard work of the last few years – when we reviewed SCONUL's priorities, structures, working practices and financial strategy – is really beginning to pay dividends.

One outcome is that SCONUL is now developing its role as a commissioning body, sometimes working independently and sometimes working collaboratively with others. This commissioning of projects is enabling us to increase SCONUL's capacity to support members through targeted interventions.

Current projects include:-

VAMP (Value and Impact Measurement Project)

This project work continues and it is on course to be launched at the SCONUL residential conference in Birmingham, 20-22 June 2007. The project's objectives are to support library directors to demonstrate the value and contribution made by academic libraries by providing a toolkit of data, measurement techniques and instruments. Stephen Town, the Project Manager, gives a useful update on the project elsewhere in this issue.

In addition to the content that will be delivered following completion of the project, Stephen's team are experimenting with Web 2.0 technologies to extend the usefulness of the website being developed to support members.

The project has already attracted considerable interest from a number of international bodies and there could be potential for the website to be developed over time as a worldwide Community of Practice in library performance measurement.

HAERVI (HE Access to E-Resources in Visited Institutions)

Restrictions on access to institutional networks exist to support network security and to comply with any content licensing access restrictions. However, this frequently means that *bona fide* academic visitors who wish to access digital resources at a visited institution are not able to do so. The HAERVI project, which is due to end in May 2007, is a joint project with UCISA (Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association) and is funded by the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee). The project seeks to effect progress in this complex area by focusing on a range of administrative, legal and technical issues to deliver the project's objectives which are:-

- to clarify the circumstances under which Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can lawfully allow visiting staff and students from other HEIs to access electronic information resources;
- to raise awareness among Higher Education (HE) librarians and IT managers of their rights and responsibilities in this area;
- to encourage HE librarians and IT managers to work together to allow an appropriate level of visitor access to appropriately-licensed e-resources, especially now that many publishers have signed up to the "walk-in user" clause incorporated within the JISC and Eduserve Chest model licenses;
- to work with JISC and Eduserve Chest to create, promote and maintain an easily-accessible master list of resources licensed for walk-in use;
- to increase the number of HE libraries in which staff and students visiting from other HEIs may have access to appropriately licensed resources.

The project will present a good starting point for library and information systems team staff who have hitherto been unsure where to begin with this issue, let alone solve the problems. A project public consultation event was held in March. This brought together a wide range of stakeholders including JISC, UCISA and UKERNA (United Kingdom Education and Research Networking Association) as well as SCONUL members. Discussion there made clear that there has not previously been a common understanding of (a) the issues and barriers to access which the project is seeking to address nor (b) the challenges of identity management.

SCONUL WEBSITE PROJECT

The new look SCONUL website was launched last October and is ready to be developed as a source of news and updates for members. Work is currently proceeding to launch a new integrated database of members. A third web project will improve the presentation of the various SCONUL schemes for access to libraries, and the potential to manage the whole range of schemes via the web is also being explored.

WHAT ELSE IS ON THE HORIZON?

Another outcome of the review work undertaken over the last couple of years is that Executive Board members are also focusing on new areas of SCONUL's work. Two current examples include:-

INTERNATIONAL AGENDA

Michael Breaks has been working recently to help the Executive Board develop SCONUL's international strategy. The intention is to embed an international perspective into all aspects of SCONUL's work, wherever appropriate. A group from CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries), for example, are visiting in December 2007 to coincide with the SCONUL Autumn Conference, thereby providing a ready opportunity for SCONUL members to find out more about developments in Canada.

A future issue of *Focus* will include an article by Michael to give a fuller sense of how this agenda will be developed over time.

LEARNING AND TEACHING AGENDA

A meeting of various interested parties was convened at the end of January to assist SCONUL identify how it might develop a more strategic focus to support members in relation to their institutional learning and teaching agenda. Feedback from the meeting has been presented to SCONUL Executive Board which has agreed to the establishment of a Task and Finish group, led by Vanessa Crane, to determine how best to take this agenda forward on behalf of members. The agenda for the group is to:-

- develop an authoritative SCONUL vision for the role of libraries in supporting learning and teaching;
- propose means by which SCONUL might extend its horizon scanning activity in learning and teaching in HE;
- propose means by which SCONUL might extend its strategic advocacy role in learning and teaching in HE;
- develop thinking on how SCONUL can encourage future practitioner work e.g. through partnership working with other relevant groups;
- develop key strategic objectives for SCONUL in this area.

The above hopefully gives a sense of some of the key issues that that Executive Board is focusing on at present. Feedback and proposals for future consideration are always welcome and should be addressed either to the Chair (anne.bell@warwick.ac.uk) or the SCONUL Secretary (toby.bainton@sconul.ac.uk).

News from SCONUL's recent e-bulletins

100 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES

On 19 March the National Library of Walers celebrated its one hundredth birthday. On 19 March 1907 King Edward VII signed the Royal Charter establishing the Library in Aberystwyth. Since then it has grown into one of the world's great libraries, home to the historic treasures of Wales and to recorded knowledge of all kinds in almost all media.

NEW DIRECTOR FOR LISU

Following the retirement of Dr J Eric Davies at the end of January 2007, LISU is pleased to announce the appointment of its new Director. Claire Creaser is a Chartered Statistician, who has worked at LISU for 13 years, and was previously the Deputy Director. http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/dis/lisu

JISC PUBLISHES NEW STRATEGY

JISC's updated strategy, published on 8 March, reaffirms its commitment to the support of institutions in realising their goals in the digital age while broadening its focus to include for the first time the support of institutions' activities to engage with business and the community. Introducing the Strategy [2007-09], JISC Chairman, Professor Sir Ron Cooke, writes that it represents a natural progression of the approach and vision identified three years ago. 'But,' he continues, 'the new strategy also equips us with the means of identifying new opportunities and meeting fresh challenges, something of vital important in our rapidly changing education and research environment.' See: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/strategy0709

JISC AND RESEARCH COUNCILS SIGN PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

On 21 March, information services for the UK's research community received a significant boost with the signing of a new agreement between JISC and the Research Councils. It will strengthen cooperation and ensure that the research community has access to improved services, such as increased network bandwidth. The move will also ensure that thousands of scientists in Research Council Institutes will have the same access to JISC services as their university-based counterparts. For further information, please contact: Philip Pothen (JISC) at p.pothen@jisc.ac.uk or Matt Goode (RCUK) at matt.goode@rcuk.ac.uk

THESES UNBOUND: TOWARDS A NATIONAL E-THESES SERVICE FOR THE UK

A fully integrated national electronic theses service moved a step closer with the announcement on 8 March of a two-year project - EThOSnet - to establish a live service run by the British Library in two years' time. JISC and CURL (Consortium of Research Libraries), with the support of participating libraries, are funding the project to widen access to what is a rich and vast but up to now almost invisible and untapped resource for researchers. By contrast EThOS, the service that will be established by the project, will make UK theses openly available for global use, providing an international showcase for some of the best of UK research. The project builds on earlier exploratory work, also funded by JISC and CURL, which between 2004 and 2006 developed a prototype for the service. EThOSnet builds on these firm foundations and through collaboration with the British Library and higher education will transform access to theses in the UK by providing the full text of theses through a single point of entry. In addition, in tandem with the emerging network of institutional repositories in the UK, it promises to become a central element of the national infrastructure for research. Further information: EThOSnet

FROM SCANDAL TO EMPIRE: THE 18TH CENTURY UNCOVERED

The 18th Century Parliamentary Papers project, funded by JISC and led by the University of Southampton, makes openly available for the first time a complete run of all the parliamentary papers, bills and journals of a momentous century of achievement, upheaval and empire. It constitutes the latest stage in the BOPCRIS (British Official Publications Collaborative Reader Information Service) project to digitise British Official Publications over the period 1688-1995. It has seen the first use in the UK of a one-tonne robotic scanner, capable of working its way through over 500 pages of historical materials in an hour. Pages are turned with vacuum technology, their edges pinpointed by lasers. This output rate has freed up staff time to devote to the indexing and

classification of the digitised resource, leading to unprecedented search functionality across the more than 14,000 documents and one million pages made available in the collection. It was launched in the Houses of Parliament on 23 March, the 200th anniversary of the passage of the bill to abolish the slave trade. See http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/programme_digitisation/project_british_official_publications.aspx

JISC National Mirror Service to close

A JISC-funded Mirror Service has existed in the UK since 1999, providing free local access to copies of mostly high-demand resources held on other, remote sites. The service has delivered enormous savings to UK education: time and money saved, greater efficiency and reliability and better performance (though these benefits have not always been apparent to end users). The mirror service was established when international network links were primitive and expensive. But no longer is there such a need to reduce demand on transatlantic links, and educational institutions have taken up mirroring in such a way that a national service is now more difficult to justify. The service will close on 31 July.
Further information on future arrangements: www.mirror.ac.uk

International corner - New negotiator for Italian 'big deal' - some familiar names

The negotiator for the renewal of the national contract for access to Elsevier scientific publications on behalf of universities and the largest research bodies in Italy has just been appointed by the CARE group (Coordination Group for the purchase of Electronic Resources). The winning candidate was a negotiating team made up of two directors of Content Complete, Paul Harwood and Albert Prior, together with Luca Burioni of E.S. Burioni Ricerche Bibliografiche.

SCONUL's role in the UK Research Reserve

At the invitation of the project's organisers, SCONUL has agreed to support the UK Research Reserve (http://www.curl.ac.uk/projects/CollaborativeStorage/Home.htm) by taking on a monitoring and brokering role. In future cases where very few copies remain in the UK for the purposes of the Reserve, SCONUL will negotiate with institutions to assure the retention of a minimum number. The working assumption is

that at least three 'last copies' will be available to researchers.

Westminster parliament reports on Bologna

The House of Commons Education and Skills Committee publishes its report on the Bologna Process on Monday 30 April. (Fourth Report from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2006–07, HC 205). All Committee publications and press releases are available on their website: http://www.parliament.uk/edskills/

'Depot' for research publications

Put it in the Depot... a simple message, part of the JISC Repositories and Preservation programme in support of the deposit of research publications under terms of Open Access. The general strategy being adopted in the UK is that every university should develop and establish its own institutional repository (IR). Many researchers can already make use of the IRs set up in their institution, but that is not (yet) the case for all. A key purpose for The Depot is to bridge that gap, providing a deposit facility to enable all UK researchers to expose their publications to readers under terms of Open Access. The Depot will also have a re-direct function linking researchers to the appropriate home pages of their own institutional repositories. The end result should be more content in repositories, making it easier for researchers and policy makers to have peer-reviewed research results exposed to wider readership under Open Access.

The principal focus for The Depot is the deposit of post-prints, digital versions of published journal articles and similar items. There are plans to include links to places for depositing other digital materials, such as research datasets and learning materials. The Depot is based on E-Prints software and is compliant with the Open Archive Initiative (OAI) standards for repository interoperability. Its contents will be harvested and searched through the Intute Repository Search project. It offers a redirect service, UK Repository Junction, to ensure that content that comes within the remit of an extant repository is correctly placed there instead of in The Depot.

Further information at http://depot.edina.ac.uk/

Sustaining the Digital Library

A Symposium on Sustaining the Digital Library will be held in Edinburgh, 13-14 September. The

intention is to present the major challenges which now confront staff with strategic responsibilities as existing services are converted to digital form, and new digital knowledge services find their place within the library portfolio.

Numbers are limited, and so this message is being sent initially to Library Directors via the CURL, SCURL and SCONUL lists. If you, or a senior colleague on your staff, wish to attend, please email Linda Cooper (linda.cooper@ed.ac.uk) to express your interest as soon as possible.

Details are available and will be kept up to date at http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/news/sdlc.html.

3RD INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL CURATION CONFERENCE

The UK Digital Curation Centre (DCC), the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) are pleased to jointly announce the 3rd International Digital Curation Conference to be held on 12-13 December 2007 in Washington DC, USA. Entitled "Curating our digital scientific heritage: a global collaborative challenge" the conference will focus on emerging strategy, policy implementation, leading-edge research and practitioner experience, and will comprise a mix of peer-reviewed papers, invited presentations and keynote international speakers. Further details and a Call for Papers will be published shortly at http://www.dcc.ac.uk/events/dcc-2007/

INFORMATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

As information systems and supporting technologies become more critical to the successful operation of HEIs, managers and governors need increasingly to assure themselves that investment is aligned to strategy. In 2005 JISC commissioned a project, based at the University of Strathclyde, to develop a framework and toolkit designed to facilitate institutional self-assessment of the management and governance of information systems. The process described in the toolkit encourages senior policymakers to reflect on what they want to achieve from the institution's investment and whether current structures and practices are aligned to these objectives. The toolkit then encourages institutions to develop an action plan.

The draft toolkit has been piloted by several HEIs including the University of Brighton, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, the University of Cambridge, Durham University, Glasgow Caledonian University, Liverpool John

Moores University and the University of Northampton. Formal launch is expected in the autumn of 2007. Information and comment to: michael. coen@strath.ac.uk.

JANET LAUNCHES ITS NEW WIRELESS TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE

The JANET Wireless Technology Advisory Service was launched on 4 April. The service is available to academic and research organisations and will provide unbiased expert advice on a wide range wireless technologies and their implementation, including e-mail or telephone advice and guidance on planning and implementation of wireless technologies.

To open an enquiry, simply contact JANET Service Desk, by e-mail: ervice@janet.ac.uk, or phone 0870 8502212 quoting the WTAS service.

INFORMATION COMMONS OPENS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

The University of Sheffield's Information Commons opened on 10 April, a little later than originally planned but on budget. By early afternoon over 2,000 people had passed through the turnstile. A link to the official press release follows: http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/mediacentre/2007/785.html

SCONUL APPOINTS COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Elliot Frankal has been appointed communications officer for SCONUL from 1 June. A freelance journalist who specialises in public sector and social enterprise copywriting, he will be assisting the Secretariat and available to help all our various Groups to get news to our members - and to the people SCONUL hopes to influence. This arrangement will reviewed after six months, so Elliot is likely to be in touch with our newsmakers soon.

SCONUL WORKSHOP ON TRANSPARENCY OF COSTS, 4 MAY

SCONUL's event to discuss the transparency of costing was seen as a great success by its capacity attendance of 34 delegates. Senior library managers heard from expert speakers and welcomed the chance to share information about the costs of their operations, and how to approach the task of assigning costs to their processes.

HEFCE announces TRAC (Transparent Approach to Costing) strategy group

Last month HEFCE formed a new group to lead strategy in the TRAC area - see http://www.hefce.ac.uk/finance/fundinghe/transparencyreview/

UK collaborative collection management

Sally Curry has been appointed to the role of the Collaborative Collection Management (CCM) Programme Adviser. The post is jointly funded by CURL (www.curl.ac.uk) and the Research Information Network (www.rin.ac.uk), and will focus on advocacy to raise the profile of CCM, and on identifying potential subjects for collaborative management.   Sally will also be working to gauge the level of support needed for the development of successful CCM across the UK, and she has already begin liaising with the UK Research Reserve, mentioned in last month's e-bulletin. An Expert Workshop on CCM will be held in July to assist in clarifying the community's needs and priorities for CCM.

If you are wondering - Collaborative Collection Management (CCM) is the collaborative approach, both locally and nationally, to securing long term retention, management and development of the distributed UK Research Collection and preserving access to these resources.

EBLIDA elects new President and Executive Committee

The small but energetic library lobbying group EBLIDA, which pursues library interests in the European institutions, held its annual meeting in Reykjavik this month. Newly elected as President is Gerald Leitner, secretary general of the Austrian Library Association, and SCONUL is again represented on the new Executive Committee with the re-election of Toby Bainton. Press releases at http://www.eblida.org/index.php?page=press-releases

RoMEO & JULIET help SHERPA win prestigious European award

In April, the JISC-funded SHERPA partnership, based at the University of Nottingham, was awarded the prestigious SPARC Europe Award for Outstanding Achievements in Scholarly Communications.

The award recognises SHERPA's practical solutions to a number of problems including the

Repositories Support project, to deliver best practice around digital institutional repositories. Also SHERPA's development of a suite of tools in support of Open Access, including OpenDOAR (a world-wide directory of repositories hosting freely available peer-reviewed publications), JULIET (a listing of funding bodies' policies regarding deposit mandates) and RoMEO (listing publishers' copyright policies in relation to articles deposit)'. www.sherpa.ac.uk

Digital repositories and copyright issues

Though they relate to Australian law, the copyright guides produced by the OAK Law project will be of interest to anyone interested in the legal aspects of electronic theses, and digital repositories generally. See : A guide to developing open access through your digital repository, and Copyright guide for research students - what you need to know about copyright before depositing your electronic thesis in an online repository   at http://www.oaklaw.qut.edu.au/

New clauses in model licence for JISC deals from 2008

The widely-respected 'NESLi2' licence used for journal deals negotiated on behalf of JISC has been modified to give an improved definition of 'Authorised Users' amongst other things. See http://www.nesli2.ac.uk/model.htm

The National Archives digitise Cabinet papers

The National Archives (UK) have been awarded £800,000 by JISC to digitise and make available online over 500,000 Cabinet papers (including minutes and memoranda) from 1917 to 1975. The service will included study packages for A Level and higher education students. http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/news/stories/149.htm

Intute 'discovers the best of the web'

Online resource provider Intute has published a selection of booklets to demonstrate the resources on offer for students, lecturers and researchers. Nine 'best of the web' booklets on a variety of subjects are now freely available at www.intute.ac.uk/support.html

SCONUL Access

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As readers of *SCONUL Focus* will be aware, SCONUL's access schemes, in particular SCONUL Research Extra and UK Libraries Plus, are now being managed by a new Access Steering Group. The Access Steering Group, established in 2006, stems from the SCONUL Executive Board's strategic review of the organisation and the work of the Task and Finish Group on Access, one of the aims of which was to oversee the operation of SCONUL access schemes and to integrate existing co-operative schemes within an overarching management framework. The initiative from UK Libraries Plus to align itself more closely with SCONUL was undoubtedly a catalyst.

The groundwork for moving the agenda forward was undertaken by a small group representing both SCONUL Research Extra and UK Libraries Plus, chaired by the SCONUL Secretary. The idea was very much not to determine in advance what the schemes would look like, but rather to put in place the means of taking them into the future. The following had been put in place by August 2006 when SCONUL Research Extra and UK Libraries Plus began to be administered formally as SCONUL Access:

1 an agreed constitution for SCONUL Access

2 a management group, comprising three members appointed by the SCONUL Executive Board, and four members elected by member institutions

3 administrative support for the day-to-day running of access arrangements provided by Susan Baker (susanb@clayworthsj. demon.co.uk) and Maria Hiscoe (m.hiscoe@ netcomuk.co.uk), who already had close involvement with the existing schemes.

The key task of the group is to manage SCONUL's access agenda for the future and, given the various barriers which stand in the way of library users, this is a challenging task.

The overriding objective has to be to make libraries welcoming and accessible places for everyone, with the least possible fuss. Our ambition is to make SCONUL Access fully inclusive, without exceptions. We need a simple scheme that is intuitive for users and library staff alike, takes the user's perspective and avoids confusion. The group is actively investigating how IT can be used much more than at present to facilitate access and deliver what is needed – a sophisticated access website should make access easier for everyone, letting us dispense in due course with paper forms, signatures and so on. Inevitably there will emerge a new brand, but this needs to be one that recognises the achievements of the past, especially the practitioner-led approach of UK Libraries Plus, and also one that moves things forward in a properly user-focused way.

In the coming months, SCONUL libraries and their access representatives can expect to hear much more of our plans for SCONUL Access. There has been much discussion of the structure of the access scheme, the statistics required for the management of the scheme and a supporting website. Information on the current SCONUL website relating to access is also developing (see http://www.sconul.ac.uk/groups/access/ for details). There will be a good opportunity to learn about future directions at the annual meeting for library representatives that is being held at the University of Leeds on 11 June 2007. Meanwhile, our administrators will also be in touch to provide further information about SCONUL Access and to obtain feedback on proposals for the future. Let us have your input and views and help make SCONUL Access serve our library users even more effectively than before.

VAMP gets WIKI'd

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Following the report in issue 38 of *SCONUL Focus*, which covered the background, objectives and initial phases of the SCONUL Value and Impact Measurement Programme (VAMP), this article provides an update on further progress. In so doing it incorporates a brief report on the recent Library Assessment Conference held in the USA in September 2006. A paper on VAMP was presented at this conference in order to test the assumptions behind the programme with North American colleagues. This would give an indication of whether value and impact measurement is an issue outside these islands.

Library Assessment Conference, Charlottesville, Virginia

This conference was the first organised in North America to be completely committed to library assessment, evaluation and performance measurement. Despite its experimental nature, this collaboration between the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Universities of Washington and Virginia attracted more than 200 people, double the estimate of likely attendees. There were a few participants from outside North America, but the focus was on practical and local assessment, through about fifty papers that came mostly from practising academic librarians, but with some key academics and researchers also contributing.

It is not my intention here to write a complete conference report, as the proceedings will be published in May 2007. There were several sessions on LibQUAL+, which showed some interesting approaches to analysing and using the results as well as consideration of the more strategic impacts of using this survey technique. As is usual with a parallel-session arrangement, there were many papers that I was unable to attend,

and these will be well worth following up in the proceedings. There was much of relevance to SCONUL members on topics such as information literacy, organisational culture and digital libraries amongst the varied offerings.

A concern to an outsider about the fact that this conference was predominantly North American in outlook and makeup was lessened from a personal point of view by my work being referred to in both the opening and the closing remarks. The organisers had also sought to make me welcome by asking me to chair a session and to act as a 'luminary'. This latter seems to me to be an innovation that should be taken up more widely: various bars were booked in the evenings for two or three experts ('luminaries') to offer and facilitate discussion amongst any conference participants who wanted to turn up. In practice this worked very well, although treated quite differently in style by different groups.

The relevance of value and impact measurement came through very strongly from the first non-librarian keynote speaker, John Lombardi, Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. The thrust of the talk precisely reinforced the aims of VAMP by asking how librarians might justify asking for a large slice of institutional capital resources for a new library building extension. This led to some broader questions, including 'What is the strategic future of a university research library?' and 'How is the library a competitive advantage?' The blunt message was that the missing metric was the one that shows that a library is effective in sustaining research. If it is no longer collection size, then what is it? We were urged to find a metric for research impact, because that would be the only one that university leaders would be likely to credit.

This theme was taken up in one of the evening 'luminary' sessions. Perhaps this was assisted by its taking place in a bar with over 300 types of beer on offer, but it was probably more the presence of some key performance-measurement experts, very ably drawn out by Joan Stein. The conclusions emerged that universities would appear to have two bottom lines: one academic and one financial. The former depends on reputation in research (at least in so-called 'leading' universities), with teaching and learning reputation coming a distant second (except of course in institutions where aspects of these are considered to be main distinctive selling points). This results in pressure on the library to demonstrate its contribution in these two dimensions: through impact

on research, teaching and learning and through 'value for money' or related measures. This also implies that 'competitive' data will be highly valued. This obviously supports the rationale for VAMP and also explains why 'value' and 'impact' seem to have come together to become an item, although each aspect requires a different approach and probably results in quite different types of measure.

Another of my reasons for attending the conference was to assess the application of the 'balanced scorecard' in academic libraries in the US. This is important in my particular context because of broader institutional use of the technique. However, although the presentations on the scorecard were very helpful and informative, they tended to reinforce the view that the quality culture in which techniques are used is probably more important than the specific approach taken. The presentation given by the staff of the University of Virginia in the conference was reminiscent of a similar one given to a meeting at Staffordshire some years ago by the northern UK group of universities engaged in benchmarking. The zeal and commitment, the energy, excitement and desire to learn involved were a hallmark of both presentations. Also the fact that staff at all levels were both involved and able to present their views so cogently seemed to indicate that there is something else in these libraries, independent of the technique, that would probably guarantee the success of any approach taken. What this 'something' is remains to be precisely defined, but there is work on this 'meta-quality' of a library in progress.

The VAMP paper was the last one delivered within the final parallel sessions of the conference, and the organisers had seen fit to arrange for me to follow one paper on contingent valuation, co-authored by Don King, and another delivered by Charles McClure. Fortunately this rather challenging context led quite helpfully into a description and discussion on our approach to value and impact measurement, and indeed there was considerable overlap in what was sought through the different initiatives described. There was considerable interest in the VAMP project from the audience, although also some surprise at the gap between the ambitious objectives of the programme and the scale of funding, time and effort we are applying to the work.

I left the conference heartened by the response to our SCONUL work, and with the view strongly

reinforced that what we are attempting through VAMP is both timely and worthwhile.

VAMP UPDATE

The second two phases of the project have been running in parallel. The first research phase provided a sound basis for planning and undertaking both the commissioning and the collection of relevant content, and also for the detailed specification of the website. The subgroup has met a number of times to assess progress and refine the concept, and I am grateful to them for their advice and guidance. Various interested people have been asked to join a wider group that we hope will form the basis of the intended community of practice that will develop as a result of the work. This group will act as testers for the site following its soft launch in April 2007. A presentation was made to the SCONUL autumn conference in November 2006 to inform the broader membership of progress and plans.

Content development

The main content elements sought were, unsurprisingly, on impact and value. The former was commissioned from David Streatfield of Information Management Associates. David had been one of the consultants for the LIRG (CILIP's Library and Information Research Group)/SCONUL Impact Initiative, and the result is based a distillation of the learning from that programme. This work will form the main initial element of the impact area of the VAMP site. We hope that this will be a catalyst for others involved in this initiative to add their own experiences and knowledge to the site in due course.

The second major area of work is that of value, costing and, in particular, the evaluation of the contribution of library staff. Sue Boorman of Higher Education Consulting has been approached to undertake this work, and negotiation has suggested that this strand should be achieved in a collaborative way, drawing on the knowledge, experience and requirements of SCONUL members. As a consequence this will mean the programme continuing perhaps longer than originally anticipated, although a better outcome is likely using this method. A first exchange of views on costing and value will take place at the SCONUL transparency event taking place in May 2007.

Other content for the site has been drawn from a number of sources to provide initial information

for members on a range of approaches described below.

Website

The website work is being undertaken by Cranfield University's Shrivenham campus development team. The underlying technology is akin to the existing SCONUL website, making use of the open source content management system and software Zope and Plone. The ultimate aim is to create a seamless linkage with existing site content. As usual with website development, there have been issues to address and problems to overcome. What has also emerged is a broader question for SCONUL about web strategy and the role of the website in future. How can we use modern web technology to fulfil our objectives, and how much of our business can be done through new applications and services emerging from what are referred to as 'Web 2.0' developments? Many of us are of course facing this question locally from both an institutional and a library service perspective. VAMP is a vehicle for experimenting with some of these new social networking phenomena, and this is discussed further below.

The site structure will be to collect all SCONUL 'performance' content under a single tab. New VAMP material will therefore be fully integrated with existing WGPI (SCONUL's Working Group on Performance Improvement) content, and the intention is that 'VAMP' as a label will not be used in the longer term, although there is an area of the site that will provide full details of the programme.

There will be five main 'category' areas of content. Under each 'category' there will be definitions, techniques, tools, methods or concepts and experience (local case studies, reports, papers or other material) for a number of 'approaches' to performance improvement or measurement. In a few cases, individual approaches will be grouped within a 'topic area' for convenience; for example, the various survey methodologies in use in the sector will be grouped together under a single heading.

The five category areas are:

Frameworks, which it is hoped will include information on the 'balanced scorecard', the European Framework for Quality Management and key performance indicators

Impact, which will include the toolkit developed within the programme, and also information literacy measurement

Quality, including benchmarking, charter mark, customer relationship management, Investors in People, quality maturity model and surveys (LibQUAL+, the SCONUL satisfaction survey)

Statistics, including all the current SCONUL statistics material and services and reference to the HELMS statistical publications

Value, hopefully to include contingent valuation, e-resource value, transparency costing and any products subsequently developed under the programme.

This list is of course expandable. If there are additional subjects or areas that members feel could usefully be included on the site, we will add them. We are seeking those with knowledge and experience of any approaches and techniques in academic libraries which could be shared to the benefit of the community to input relevant information.

One of the potential spin-offs of the website is the development of a taxonomy for library performance and evaluation, and taxonomy capability is built into the site.

Social networking and the community of practice

The SCONUL Executive Board is seeking experimentation with the new web 2.0 technologies for social networking. This was always part of the VAMP intent, and it is an intrinsic part of the programme.

As can be appreciated from the list above, the body of the site is conceived as a WIKI roughly equivalent to a community-built encyclopaedia of performance measurement and improvement techniques. Unlike WIKIpedia this will, however, be a moderated collection of tools and techniques, with WGPI providing the editorial control necessary to maintain the site with form and content suitable to the membership. Thus though VAMP does indeed get WIKI'd, we hope that it will be 'wicked' in the more contemporary use of the term. SCONUL members and others active in library performance measurement will be able to submit approaches, tools and techniques or local experience of use of these through case studies, papers, reports or links.

In order to develop the community of practice other communication and collaboration tools will be built into the site. In particular there will be an open forum for broad discussion of performance and evaluation, as well as a closed forum for SCONUL representatives to allow discussion of more sensitive issues in a secure manner.

Launch

The site will be launched for Beta testing in April. This will allow those who have been enlisted into our embryonic community of practice to make contributions and undertake some user feedback and testing. The site will be launched more formally at the SCONUL conference in Birmingham in June 2007.

CURL/SCONUL Digest of Scholarly Communication News

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This is taken from the CURL/SCONUL Digest of Scholarly Communication News of February and April 2007. This online newsletter (supplied to SCONUL representatives in member libraries) is a service provided by the CURL/SCONUL Group on Scholarly Communication for internal distribution to staff of library and information services in SCONUL institutions.

The Group also encourages the use of the "Digest" to inform academic staff within universities in the UK and Republic of Ireland of developments in scholarly publishing.

CURL/SCONUL DIGEST OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION NEWS - FEBRUARY 2007

SUPPORT FOR OPEN ACCESS FROM EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS

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

enth Framework Programme (FP7) to publish the results of their research in an open access repository within six months of initial publication. The EURAB report is available at http://ec.europa. eu/research/eurab/pdf/eurab_scipub_report_recomm_dec06_en.pdf and is notable for having been written by people who have not been long-standing advocates of open access. Whether the European Commission will follow the advice presented to it in the forthcoming Communication is still an open question, given the intense lobbying of the Commission that has been coming from the publishing industry. Aware of the lobbying, several European information organisations have set up a petition urging the Commission to implement the Recommendation in the EC scientific publishing study in favour of open access. The petition, available at http://www.ec-petition.eu/, currently has over 15,000 signatures. All of this action should lead into an interesting conference on "Scientific Publishing in the European Research Area" to be held in Brussels, 15-16 February 2007.

COPYRIGHT EXTENSION TERM REJECTED BY EU-COMMISSIONED REPORT

The 'Recasting of Copyright and Related Rights for the Knowledge Economy' is a new study commissioned by the European Union and produced by the Institute for Information Law of the University of Amsterdam. The report strongly rejects the music industry's call for the extension of the term for neighbouring rights. "The authors of this study are not convinced by the arguments made in favour of a term extension. The term of protection currently laid down in the Term Directive (50 years) is already well above the minimum standard of the Rome Convention (20 years), and substantially longer than the terms that previously existed in many Member States..... The market dominance of the 'majors' is an economic factor to be taken into consideration. A term extension would in all likelihood strengthen and prolong this market dominance to the detriment of free competition." The EU (European Union) report is confirming what other national reports have already pointed out. During the similar UK debate, the report commissioned by the Gowers review on the economic evidence on copyright term extension showed that it was "very likely that a term extension of the type under consideration would cause a net welfare loss to society" and estimated the loss to £155 million p.a.. Regarding the results of the harmonisation process, the report states that it "has produced mixed results

at great expense, and its beneficial effects on the Internal Market remain largely unproven and are limited at best" and also "advises the EC legislature not to undertake any new initiatives at harmonisation, except where a clear need for amendment of the existing acquis can be demonstrated." The executive summary of the report is available at http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/copyright/docs/studies/etd2005imd195recast_summary_2006.pdf.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

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

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT OVER-RULES DRM FOR LEGAL DEPOSIT

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

CONTINUING SLOW PROGRESS AT WIPO

Discussions at WIPO, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, are notorious for slow progress on any issue, the discussions being

dominated by political and commercial pressures. Such slow progress normally suits those bodies – usually from the developed world – who like the "status quo". However delays in discussing the new WIPO Broadcasting Treaty may be to the benefit of the public interest. After nine years of negotiation WIPO committees are still considering the objectives of a Broadcasting Treaty. The danger remains, however, that restrictions will be placed upon the content of a broadcast signal as well as the signal itself. A draft of the Treaty would give companies that distribute information exclusive rights (as a "related" right) to prevent people from re-using the information, even when the information is in the public domain. An additional permission would have to obtained before information could be copied, republished, remixed or re-used in other ways. These discussions are obscure, and not well-reported, but they are important for information workers in the public sector.

No New Legal Protection for Search Engines in the UK

In December 2006 the UK's Department of Trade and Industry published the Government's Response to a consultation on "the liability of hyperlinkers, location tool services and content aggregators" as part of the UK implementation of the EU Electronic Commerce Directive. Essentially this was a consultation about the liability of search engines when linking to copyright-protected content. The Internet Service Providers (ISPs) responding to the consultation wanted to see the liability of providers of search engines limited, whereas rights-holders were worried that this would erode the permission-based approach upon which intellectual property is based. SCONUL was one of the 38 respondents to the consultation, arguing for limitations on liability, on the grounds that all sorts of people, educational institutions and small businesses, would benefit from limitations, which would put a ceiling on the damages they might have to pay if they unwittingly link to unsound information. The DTI has sided with the rights-holders on the basis that there is insufficient evidence for a need to extend the limitations on the liability of search engine providers. The Response is at http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file35905.pdf.

New Clarification for Funding of Open Access (OA) Publication Fees

A meeting organised by CURL (Consortium of Research Libraries in the British Isles) in

November 2006 identified confusion regarding the payment of open access publication fees from research grants. Following the meeting RIN (Research Information Network) worked with RCUK (Research Councils UK) to draft guidance notes for authors and university administrators on the payment of these charges under either indirect or direct costs claimed from Research Councils as part of the funding of research (the difference between the direct and indirect route depending on the timing of publications arising from the research). The details are available in a RIN Briefing Note at http://www.rin.ac.uk/files/Briefing%20Note%201%20-%20Payment%20of%20Publication%20Fees.pdf. The situation is still complex and it will be important for authors wishing to publish in OA journals to receive guidance from research administrators or library staff in following the correct route, but as a result of the work by RIN and RCUK it is now clear that OA publication charges are a legitimate call upon research funds.

Value-based Pricing for Journals?

The University of California (UC) libraries have issued a report describing their work on value-based pricing of academic journals. The press release announcing the report describes the work as "a direct outcome of the UC libraries' collective strategic priority to advance economically balanced and sustainable scholarly communication systems". This strategic priority has been evident in recent years in an increasingly hard line in negotiations with publishers and in establishing alternative publication routes for authors. The libraries' approach includes suggestions for annual price increases tied to production costs; credits for institutionally-based contributions to the journal, such as the work of editors; and credits for business transaction efficiencies from consortial purchases. The libraries are seeking an explicit method for aligning the purchase or licence costs of scholarly journals with the value they contribute to the academic community (for example in citations) and the costs to create and deliver them. In addition to describing the work done to date, the report provides examples of potential cost savings and declares UC's intention to pursue value-based prices in their negotiations with journal publishers. In addition, the report invites the academic community to work collectively to refine and improve these and other value-based approaches. The report is available at http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/cdc/valuebasedprices.pdf.

Norwegian Libraries Decide Against Blackwell Offer

Many librarians across the world have been feeling "enough is enough" when faced with price increases for journal packages above normal inflation combined with restrictions such as no-cancellation clauses. A number of "big deal" negotiations – including some in the UK – have "gone to the wire" and only been completed close to the deadline for content to continue to be available, although few negotiations have resulted in a complete breakdown. The Norwegian libraries recently found themselves in this position of being faced with – in their view – unacceptable conditions for the renewal of their deal for access to titles from Blackwell Publishers. The details of the negotiation are confidential but reluctantly the Norwegian libraries announced that they had to say "no" in the interests of providing value for money to their users.

UKPMC Goes Live

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

Rin Study on Researchers and Discovery Services

A recent study undertaken by Rightscom on behalf of the Research Information Network identifies the discovery services used by researchers "to discover and locate the wide variety of

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

European Commission Support for New Developments

Over 500 delegates from 50 countries attended the Scientific Publications Conference hosted by the European Commission in Brussels 15-16 February 2007. The Conference was opened by Commissioner Janez Potocnik, who spoke of the need for change in scientific publishing to meet the change in the research process. In summarising the benefits from improved access to scientific information he urged stakeholders to collaborate. Representatives of all stakeholder groups were given an opportunity to give their views in the Conference presentations. Commissioner Viviane Reding closed the Conference with a speech balancing the views of different stakeholders and also outlining actions the Commission intends to take, actions which are cautious but move in the general direction of the Recommendations in the Scientific Publications Report the Commission sponsored. Although not in the official text of her speech, Commissioner Reding also announced that the Portuguese Government will be making scientific publications a feature of its forthcoming Presidency of the EU. All the documents relating to the Commission's work on scientific publications are linked at http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/page_en.cfm?id=3459 .

MIT Refuses to Accept DRM Restrictions

The MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Libraries have cancelled access to the Society of Automotive Engineers' (SAE) web-based database of technical papers, rejecting the SAE's requirement that MIT accept the imposition of Digital Rights Management (DRM) technology.

According to the libraries SAE's DRM technology severely limits use of SAE papers and imposes unnecessary burdens on readers. With this technology, users must download a DRM plugin, Adobe's "FileOpen," in order to read SAE papers. This plugin limits use to on-screen viewing and making a single printed copy, and does not work on Linux or Unix platforms. At a time when technology makes it possible to share research more quickly and broadly than ever before, SAE is limiting access to the research that has been entrusted to the Society. In addition to imposing DRM on access to the papers for paid subscribers, the SAE also prevents information about its papers from being found through any channel other than the ones they control. It is known that some publishers are attempting to prevent non-commercial re-use of content they publish on behalf of the academic community, for example for text-mining, and the MIT action sends a clear signal to publishers that such restrictions will not be tolerated. See http://news-libraries.mit.edu/blog/archives/category/subject-areas/engineering/

Better News from WIPO

More than two years after the introduction of proposals to make the work of the World Intellectual Property Organisation more favourable to developing countries, a preliminary agreement has been reached. Between 19 and 23 February WIPO members negotiated on 40 proposals on development in the Provisional Committee on Proposals related to a WIPO Development Agenda (PCDA), and compressed them into 24 agreed proposals. The next and final PCDA meeting for this year will be held in June, when another 71 proposals will be addressed. They also approved a proposal for WIPO "to approach intellectual property enforcement in the context of broader societal interests and especially development-oriented concerns", with a view that "the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights should contribute to the promotion of technological innovation and to the transfer and dissemination of technology, to the mutual advantage of producers and users of technological knowledge and in a manner conducive to social and economic welfare, and to a balance of rights and obligations". The lengthy WIPO negotiations continue but the February meeting was definitely a step forward.

US Government-funded Data to be Publicly-accessible?

An article in the 22 March issue of *Nature* (http://ealerts.nature.com/cgi-bin24/DM/y/hc530SpivX0HjB0BOpY0EA) suggests that the US government is considering a plan to store almost all scientific data generated by federal agencies in publicly accessible digital repositories. Scientists would be able to access data from any federal agency and integrate it into their research. Nature reports that a draft strategic plan will be drawn up by next autumn by a Working Group on Digital Data representing 22 agencies, including the National Science Foundation, NASA, the Departments of Energy, Agriculture, and Health and Human Service. It is anticipated that a public infrastructure will be set up so all researchers have a permanent home for their data, a national network of online data repositories linking the various sets of data.

Wellcome Trust Funds

The future of open access journals depends upon trouble-free arrangements for the payment of open access publication fees by authors wishing to publish in OA journals. The Wellcome Trust (WT) has led the way in ensuring that its grant-holders have the funds available to publish on OA, making specific grants available to 30 UK universities. Recently the Trust held a meeting of university administrators and librarians to assist those responsible for making the funds available to Wellcome Trust-funded authors. Philippa Hatch of Imperial College Library (e-mail p.hatch@imperial.ac.uk) described the procedures in place at Imperial, and is willing to share her experience in resolving issues - such as meeting the Wellcome Trust's reporting procedures – with CURL/SCONUL colleagues also administering WT open access funds. Kathryn Lallu of the Wellcome Trust (e-mail k.lallu@wellcome.ac.uk) has already answered many queries from universities about the WT grants and is also willing to help universities in establishing author-friendly procedures. It is important for WT grant-holders to realise, for example, that WT funds can be used for open access publication even after the period of the research grant has come to an end.

RIN Public Policy Statement Agreed

The Research Information Network has launched a public policy statement of scholarly communication principles which has now been signed by 14 major organisations representing librarians, publishers and research funders in the UK. The

statement (which can be read at http://www.rin.ac.uk/sc-statement) marks a significant step forward in setting out a shared set of principles and objectives, and provides a framework to help policy-makers – in Government and in the higher education and research sectors – as well as researchers, publishers and librarians to develop policies and strategies aimed at enhancing access to reliable and quality-assured information for the benefit of all. The statement is not an end in itself, and there is much more to be done in working with all the stakeholders to find out how the principles can be applied in key areas.

NISO Shared E-resource Understanding

NISO's Shared E-Resource Understanding (SERU) Working Group has posted its first public draft best practices document on its website. This document, "The SERU approach to e-resource subscriptions: framework for development and use of SERU," presents a shared set of understandings to which publishers and libraries can point when negotiating the sale of electronic content. The framework aims to offer publishers and libraries a solution to the burden of bilateral negotiation of a formal licence agreement by allowing the sale of e-resources without licences if both parties feel their perception of risk has been adequately addressed by current law and developing norms of behaviour. The SERU Working Group welcomes comments on its draft document (available from: http://www.niso.org/committees/SERU/#working). Following the initial comment period, a revised draft version will be made available in late May for trial use during 2007. SERU was launched in late 2006 in partnership with the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP), the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), and the Society for Scholarly Publishing (SSP). More information about the SERU Working Group, including FAQs and an electronic mailing list, can be found at http://www.niso.org/committees/seru/.

US Petition Follows European Lead

At the European Commission's Scientific Publications Conference in February, a petition in support of open access containing over 21,000 individual and organizational signatures was presented to Commissioner for Science and Research. To build on this momentum, several leading American organisations – representing libraries, health groups, students, and consumers – are jointly supporting a "Petition for Public Access to Publicly

Funded Research in the United States". This petition, which is open to supporters around the world, will demonstrate to US policymakers the depth and breadth of support for access to federally funded research in the United States. The U.S. petition is written to support public access to research funded by the US government as well as the reintroduction and passage of the Federal Research Public Access Act. The "Petition for Public Access to Publicly Funded Research in the United States" (http://www.publicaccessstore-search.org) is open to individuals and organisations of all types.

New Initiative from Creative Commons

Creative Commons has announced the launch of a new division called "CC Learn", which will extend the work of Creative Commons to support open educational material and repositories across all ages of learning. CC Learn will be more focused on teaching materials, while the work on open access to the scholarly literature will remain part of the Scholar's Copyright project in the Science Commons division (see http://sciencecom-mons.org/projects/publishing/index.html). CC Learn's immediate goal is to work with those who already provide open educational resources to remove barriers in combining or remixing content from different open collections, making material more interoperable, aiming to increase the sharing of repository content.

Free Images from Metropolitan Museum of Art

The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art has announced that it will distribute, free of charge, high-resolution digital images from many of the works in its collection for use in academic publications. This new service, which is effective immediately, is available through ARTstor, a non-profit organisation that makes art images available for educational use. Initially approached by the Metropolitan Museum in 2005 to develop this initiative, ARTstor has worked in close consultation with Metropolitan Museum staff to create its new service, entitled "Images for Academic Publishing" (IAP), which will make images available via software on the ARTstor Web site (www.artstor.org). Initially, nearly 1,700 images representative of the broad range of the Metropolitan Museum's collection will be available through the more than 730 institutions that currently license ARTstor. Efforts to expand this accessibility are now under way and will be announced by ARTstor at a later date. ARTstor, a digital image library, was created in 2001 as a non-profit initiative of

the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It is now an independent non-profit organisation dedicated to serving education and scholarship in the arts and humanities. The institutions currently participating in ARTstor are located in North America, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Press release at http://www.metmuseum.org/press_room/full_release.asp?prid={A113E0AD-AA4E-471B-8F04-736A21F1A70A}.

REAL DATA ON WEB 2.0 USE

The JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee)-funded SPIRE (Secure Personal Institutional and Inter-Institutional Repository Environment) Project has published the results of a survey of use of Web 2.0. The project was originally looking at a P2P (peer to peer) model for informal sharing but changed focus to look at Web 2.0. The survey had around 1400 respondents and has produced some interesting data on which services are popular and how they are used. The results show a very high engagement in Web 2.0 by respondents aged under 18 (a sign of the future for Web services?), although older age-groups used institutional web services more heavily than younger users. Of the purposes for use of Web 2.0, Wikipedia showed the highest use, but humble e-mail also featured strongly. The report on the survey is at http://tallblog.conted.ox.ac.uk/index.php/2007/03/16/some-real-data-on-web-20-use/.

AND FINALLY, A QUIET ANNIVERSARY

On 14 February a dinner was held in Brussels to mark the fifth anniversary of the launch of the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI). Although the roots of the open access movement are in scholarly communication developments in the 1980s and 1990s, the BOAI formulated the vision, the definitions and the strategies to enable open access to become a reality on a growing scale. At the time few paid any attention to the concept of open access. The BOAI was not conceived in a five-star hotel in Washington or in London but in a plainly-decorated room in an old building in Budapest in December 2001, and the authors of the Initiative – while having many years of experience in the worlds of academic information and publishing – did not represent major organisations, companies or public bodies. Although politicians often speak of improving access, no political body in 2002 would have supported open access to publicly-funded research, or if they had drafted the BOAI would have hedged it around with qualifications. The Open Society Institute was at the time perhaps the only inter-

national body with sufficient independence to back the Initiative. Following the initial Budapest meeting the text of the Initiative was drafted and support secured from members of the international research community before the Initiative was launched. Many organisations and institutions now support open access, and other declarations and initiatives have followed BOAI, but 14 February 2002 remains an important date in the story of open access.

News from member libraries

University of Buckingham

The Mewes-Davis archive, held at the University of Buckingham between 2000 and 2007, has now been transferred to the RIBA Library (British Architectural Library, Royal Institute of British Architects) at Portland Place, London. The archive, a collection of materials produced by or associated with Mewes & Davis, a Plymouth-based firm of architects, has been compiled by Ann Davis Thomas, daughter of Arthur Joseph Davis who was one of the partners of the firm. Mrs Thomas has undertaken the huge task of preserving her father's legacy and has spent many years compiling the archive. It consists mainly of copies of biographical details of Charles Frederic Mewes (1860-1914) and his partner, Arthur Joseph Davis (1878-1951), design works, floor plans, office drawings, photos, correspondence, press cuttings, lists of buildings and articles from books and journals. The Mewes & Davis firm of architects still operates in Plymouth today. In the early 20th century, it was one of the most famous and sought-after practices in the country. Their design commissions included fashionable hotels such as the London Ritz and other important buildings such as the Royal Automobile Club. As a senior partner, Davis also worked on the design of several bank buildings, private commissions such as Luton Hoo and Coombe Court and the interiors of ocean liners, such as the Queen Mary and the Aquitania. The Mewes-Davis archive has found an excellent home at the RIBA. It is hoped that in its new location greater use will be made of it by researchers. It is a collection fully deserving to be preserved for posterity.

On a different note, the University of Buckingham has taken out a subscription to 9,000 e-books via NetLibrary which we have just dataloaded into our Unicorn catalogue.

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University of Cambridge

MAP DEPARTMENT REFURBISHMENT

The library's application to the Wolfson CURL Library Programme for funding towards the refurbishment of the map department has been successful. The University Library moved into its present building in 1934 and the map department is still in its original accommodation, with most of the shelving and storage facilities dating from the 1930s. So although library users have a world class and constantly expanding map collection at their disposal, the physical surroundings in which it is stored and used have failed to keep pace with developments and improvements made elsewhere in the library. After the refurbishment the most visible changes will be apparent in the map room itself which will be redesigned to present a less cluttered, better organised environment. In particular, more satisfactory seating will be provided for readers studying large maps and atlases, and facilities for disabled users will be enhanced. The new furniture will include modern, easy-to-use, map-safe drawers, some of which will be stacked in mobile units to maximise flat storage capacity. The refurbishment will also facilitate greater control over environmental factors such as temperature and humidity, thus enhancing conditions for staff, readers and the collections. The work will start some time between June and September 2007 and will take about nine months.

De Monfort University

LEARNING ZONE

Valentine's Day, 14 February, witnessed the opening of the Learning Zone at the Kimberlin library at the Leicester city campus and we shared the love with free heart-shaped shortbread from the new library café!

The Learning Zone is a new social learning space, occupying much of the ground floor which has been entirely remodelled and refurnished. Facilities include bookable syndicate rooms with high-quality presentation equipment (plasma screens, interactive whiteboards), a variety of work spaces including sofas, quick-access IT and different-sized tables for group and individual work. There is wireless network throughout the area, and students can borrow laptops, use some of the fixed IT or bring in their own equipment. A Learning Development Zone, designed as an inclusive learning and teaching space has also opened on the same floor.

Pictured at the opening of DMU's Learning Zone are (from the left): Richard Partridge, Public Services Manager; Kathryn Arnold, Director of Library Services; and Laura Thomas, student representative for the Faculty of Business and law.]

Initial reactions have been overwhelmingly positive from students and staff throughout the university.

RFID

RFID technology has been introduced at Leicester city site. There are four self issue units and two self return units and a new security system at the large Kimberlin Library. This will allow students to use library facilities even when service desks are unstaffed - late at night, for instance, or early in the morning.

The security system is already complete and is being piloted at the Law Library. Subject to the trial proving satisfactory, the new system will be fully introduced at the main Kimberlin Library. Extension of RFID to the library on the Charles Frears campus is due later this year.

OLWYN REYNARD

Olwyn Reynard – Academic Librarian (Electronic Resources Development) – retired at the end of February after a long and distinguished career with DMU and its precursors. Olwyn will be best remembered for her time at Scraptoft where she was Campus Librarian from 1976 to 2003. After studying at Newcastle University, Olwyn began her career in 1964 with a job as Library Assistant with Durham County Library. After undertaking professional training alongside this role, Olywn was promoted in 1969 to her first professional post – also in Durham – as Branch Librarian. Her move to Scraptoft came later the same year – taking up the post of Assistant Librarian at the then City of Leicester College of Education (Scraptoft). Promotion to Deputy Librarian came soon after in 1974.

When the College of Education and Leicester Polytechnic merged in 1976, she became Campus Librarian, continuing in that role after the polytechnic evolved to become DMU in 1992 until closure of the Scraptoft campus in 2003. Since 2003 Olwyn's valued expertise has been put to good use in her role as Electronic Resources Librarian at the City campus. Over the years Olwyn played a key role in library activities – both internally and externally. Just one example was her work to establish links with other health libraries in the area – including the then separate Charles Frears School of Nursing. Olwyn's encyclopaedic knowledge of the library information world – particularly in the areas of journals and e-journals - will be much missed.

RESEARCH INFORMED TEACHING AWARD

Earlier this year the Department won a £5000 Research Informed Teaching Award (or RITA). This will fund a project to investigate how and why students seek help with aspects of their learning, pilot a range of support strategies and create an evidence base for purposeful staff development within an integrated learning support environment. The project leader is Mary Pillai, Academic Team Manager from the Centre for Learning and Study Support. She will be working with other members of library staff to identify key issues for students and also start to explore ways that integrated library and learning support services can develop and extend their work to enhance the student learning experience.

LIBLEARN

LIBLearn is a new area on Blackboard (the DMU Virtual Learning Environment) which gives an overview of the Library, its services and resources. Initially being trialled with members of the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, a launch for all members of the university is planned for the next academic year.

LIBLearn provides visitors with a quick and easy way of finding information about the Library, and to understand what the Library can do to support learners. Distance learners will find it of particular benefit as it incorporates information about remote services and resources.

The area includes a brief survey which will help us assess the effectiveness of LIBLearn, and to improve and evolve the site.

This is one of a series of projects recently developed. September will also see the launch of a new skills portal for the university, led by the library

and a new library promo which will be distributed in a variety of media.

University of East London

Docklands Library and Learning Centre from the dockside,

Docklands Library and Learning Centre,

Developments have been tumbling over each other in the past year. They have ranged widely from the opening of our new library spaces at both Docklands and Stratford to achieving Charter Mark status as a university and to various exciting projects and successful funding bids concerned with our developing archives.

New learning spaces

Many of you have already been to visit the new library on our Docklands Campus. The space is extraordinary, with a colossal open area flanked by the rising tiers of the library floors, containing books, study and social spaces. The 'trading floor' contains 500 PCs, configured into teaching pods and open access clusters. The building also contains the Business School, a 400-seat lecture theatre and the 'Hub'. This is one of the best and most popular social learning spaces on campus with its group study, media and skills development facilities. The Hub commands terrific views across the dock, the airport and the river, and is a popular space for many events in the university – from open days to lunching the Queen and Prince Philip during the official opening of the building. In contrast, the Stratford Library is in a beautiful 19th century Passmore Edwards building, with many original features and a fine glass-domed reading room. The School of Education is now based at Stratford and the library extended to create space for the collection, IT clusters and readers – with the permission of English Heritage, of course.

Black History Month

A university visit to Texas Southern University in Houston resulted in a wonderful opportunity for the library to take a leading role in our university's celebration of Black History Month in October.

Texas Southern, a predominately black university, has a unique archive of material documenting black lives and histories and we arranged a special exhibition of selected materials here at UEL relating to slavery and black achievement. This was the first time these books and pamphlets had been exhibited outside the United States. We supplemented this with examples from our own Hackney Empire Theatre Archive and Diversity Arts Forum, which demonstrate black achievement in writing and the arts. We felt this gave a nice balanced exhibition of black achievement, history and slavery.

Bernard Forrester, archivist and co-ordinator of special collections at Texas Southern joined us for a week during Black History Month. He gave a public university lecture on 'Black histories and the hidden mysteries of African heritage' followed by emotive poetry readings by two artists, Michelle Marie (a library assistant at UEL) and ShortMAN. The evening was rounded off by a debate on *Why, in celebrating black achievement, is it still important to study the history of the African slave trade and slavery?*
Michelle Marie Clarke-Campbell and another library assistant, Carol Hughes, organised two poetry and printmaking workshops for local school children as a way of reaching out to the

local community. Michelle said: 'It's been wonderful to work with these bright young minds; their imagination is really inspiring. From what I've seen, these children are definitely university students of the future.'

Finally three black law lecturers led a successful seminar in the library entitled *Law criminology and the Black community* which examined processes, changes and developments in the law and its effects.

Black History Month - poetry workshop with Michelle Marie

Library and Learning Services received a great deal of praise for taking the lead in our Black History Month celebrations, and are already planning events for this coming year together with other colleagues in UEL.

Black History Month - printmaking workshop with Carol Hughes]

ARCHIVES

We have seen some dramatic activity involving our archives, stimulated by the growth of performing arts within our university. We were fortunate to have acquired the Hackney Empire Archive and the LIFT Archive (London International Festival of Theatre) and both acted as a catalyst for some successful funding bids. We were

delighted to be awarded half a million pounds to create the East London Theatre Archive as part of the second phase of the JISC Digitisation Programme. This exciting project will create an invaluable database of performing arts resources, from playbills and programmes to press cuttings and photographs. We are leading a partnership including the Victoria and Albert Theatre Collections, the Arts and Humanities Data Service and many remarkable local East London theatres.

Andrew McDonald, Director of Library and Learning Services, said: 'East London has played a unique role in the development of modern theatre – it was here that music hall and variety performances first took shape – but the area's rich theatrical history has for too long been overshadowed by a narrow focus on the West End. The East London Theatre Archive will play a major role in addressing this imbalance. Not only will it support learning, teaching and research within UEL itself, it will also provide an academic resource of national and international significance and make an important regional heritage asset available to the local community.'

CHARTER MARK

UEL achieved Charter Mark status in November 2006, the first English university to attain the award as a whole institution under the new regulations. Paul Harrington, the assessor, explained: 'It's a brave move for such a large organisation to go for the Charter Mark award for the whole of its provision. So I congratulate UEL for their total commitment to customer service and for their strong sense of self-belief in having the confidence to submit all schools and services for assessment against the national standard'. Library services were specifically commended.

LEARNING AND TEACHING FUNDS

Our first application for library projects to enhance the quality of learning and teaching within UEL was successful. We have three projects in partnership with the academic community. One is to create an interactive computer game to introduce and welcome students to our libraries. The other two are to develop an information portal for sports law and to examine how the use of archives can improve learning within our school of architecture & the visual arts.

INFORMATION SKILLS

Our commitment to information skills training continues. We have successfully launched a new online course both on our public web pages and within UEL Plus, our university's virtual learn-

ing environment. Additionally we have installed PLATO – Plagiarism Teaching Online – a teaching package designed to encourage students to learn about referencing and plagiarism. We also continue to increase the amount of time our subject librarians spend delivering face-to-face training to students with 10% more sessions than last year.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

In August 2006 we launched a new front-end for accessing our extensive collection of electronic resources. After careful consideration we purchased a suite of products from Serials Solutions including an A-Z journals list, a federated search engine and an open-URL link resolver. The next stage will be importing full MARC records for e-journals into the library catalogue. While the usage of electronic resources has increased each year (indeed we saw a healthy rise of 64% last year), by making access easier and clearer for our users we anticipate further substantial increases in usage.

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Keele University

BUILDING REFURBISHMENT

Keele University Library is currently halfway through a refurbishment programme. We opted to undertake most of the work during the summer in order to minimise its impact on users. This led to the project being split into two phases, the first during summer 2006 and the second during summer 2007. In 2006, the work undertaken concentrated on the middle floor, remodelling the entrance area, the main service points and creating a group study area.

ARTIST'S IMPRESSIONS OF THE REMODELLED ENTRANCE AREA
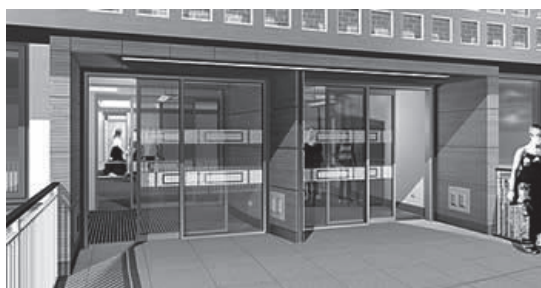
Exterior view

Interior view

Work on the ground and top floors of the library follows in summer 2007. The project will lead to:

- A comfortable working environment with a more up-to-date and inviting ambience
- A choice of study spaces ranging from quiet individual study through to group study areas designed to meet the needs of today's students
- Group study rooms featuring networked PCs, data projectors and other equipment to facilitate and assist project work.
- Refurbished music library
- Individual study carrels available for both students and researchers, especially those based off campus
- Wireless networking capability throughout the building
- Better facilities for disabled users
- An enhanced and refurbished refreshment area recognising the library's role as social space
- Refurbished toilet facilities

Phase 1
This phase was successfully completed during summer 2006. The new group study areas and group study rooms have proved extremely popular amongst students.

Phase 2
The second phase is scheduled to start in April 2007. This will include work on the music library, study carrels, refreshment area and continued refurbishment of toilet facilities.

INTRODUCTION OF RFID

We have recently introduced RFID to our short loan library. Staff have tagged around 35,000 items in just over two months. The system went live in February 2007, allowing us to sort out any teething problems ready for promotion in September.

Although self-service is available in the rest of the library, the short loan collection was, until now, available only while the library counters

were staffed. The introduction of RFID will allow for more flexibility for our users as well as freeing up staff time for other tasks. Initial thoughts from staff and users are positive and everyone is impressed with the speed of transactions.

New arrivals

Keele University Library welcomed two new staff in December and January. Georgina Spencer joined the team as liaison librarian for humanities and education in December 2006. Joining Keele from Leeds Metropolitan University, she will also have responsibility for library publications and the enquiry desk. Michael Debenham joined Keele from Gray's Inn in January 2007. As the new electronic resources officer he will have responsibility for the library website, managing electronic journals and databases, as well as digitisation of existing stock and special collection materials.

Kingston University

Self-service impact

In September 2007 RFID based self-issue and return was launched at the Penrhyn Road LRC. The take up by students has been beyond our expectations with a consistent 85% of issues being handled by the self-service machines during the first four months of implementation. Library staff and LRC helpers were very proactive in encouraging students to use the new system but the units, with their modern games machine style appearance, also attracted the students.

Self-service went live at our Knights Park LRC in February and the task of stock tagging has now moved onto Roehampton Vale LRC with Kingston Hill following on in May.

A reduction in lending services work has led to a wider role for counter staff, and has enabled us to realise our objective of providing an Integrated Student Support model (see below) at our Helpdesks.

Integrated student support

One of the key barriers to the Integrated Student Support (ISS) project had been space. The project aimed to bring other Student Support staff into the LRC, such as Careers, Student Funding and Accommodation office staff, but with a busy issue desk full of library staff, it was impossible to provide a suitably prominent location for these other activities. However, with the implementation of self-service we were able to redeploy library staff to provide greater support on our subject

helpdesks whilst creating space for other support staff to work. This has proved very successful and co-operation between different groups of staff has been good with LRC staff now taking appointment bookings on behalf of the other services. The ISS model has now been rolled out in a more limited fashion to all our LRCs with the intention of developing this further as building and space developments permit. For further information on ISS, please contact Sue Robertson (suerobertson@kingston.ac.uk)

Dashboard

Related to the ISS project, the autumn term saw the launch of our Helpdesk "Dashboard". The Dashboard was designed in response to the increasingly wide range of enquires received at our LRC Helpdesks. To provide an effective and efficient enquiry service, our staff are required to access an equally wide range of resources from the student information system, password lists, the VLE and so forth. The Dashboard brings all these services together, linking them from a single page within our Sharepoint-based intranet and ensuring that all staff have the right services and systems at their fingertips to answer enquiries. For more details of our Dashboard and how it was created, check out the article in this issue of Focus or contact Cathy Murr (c.murr@kingston.ac.uk)

Room bookings launch

Also during the autumn term, we launched a new self-service room bookings service for students. Devised in-house by our Technical Services team, this service enables students to book our small study rooms online without the intervention of library staff.

Digitisation service

In May 2006 we launched our Digitisation Service under the CLA Trial Licence. Scanned items are loaded into our Blackboard Content System and then linked into the relevant modules by teaching staff. Over a 10 month period, we have now scanned 200 items, all of which would previously have been placed in our Counter Loan collection. Scanning them ensures that they are available to students 24 x 7 rather than being restricted to availability in staffed hours only.

New university project

The construction of the extension to the Kingston Hill LRC is now well underway and students and staff have become accustomed to negotiating their way to the temporary entrance. The extension is on schedule and is due to be ready for the

start of the 2007/08 session, providing substantial improvements to study space.

Elizabeth Malone
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Leeds Metropolitan University

SKILLS FOR LEARNING

Skills for Learning (our study skills support programme) was ten years old in 2006 and celebrated its first decade, along with the launch of a new look website, at two birthday parties for students. To encourage them to explore the website, students were invited to enter a competition to devise a new slogan for Skills for Learning. We received over one hundred entries and the winning slogan was: 'Skills gym – build yourself up'. For academic staff we also ran two birthday learning lunches which offered the chance to find out more about how Skills for Learning can support staff and students. Participants explored new content in the Reflection, Research and Enterprise themes through demonstrations and hands-on. There was also an opportunity to discuss new developments. For further information on Skills for Learning please contact Marie Scopes (m.scopes@leedsmet.ac.uk) or the Skills for Learning team (skills.for.learning@leedsmet.ac.uk).

HEADINGLEY LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT

The redesign of Headingley Library was finished in time for a celebratory event on 1 March, attended by over a hundred people including the vice-chancellor and governors. The evening also included a lecture by Peter Hoare, editor of *The Cambridge history of libraries in Britain and Ireland*, entitled 'Libraries as resources for research and as subjects of research: a historical view'. As part of the redesign a new group study area has been created on the ground floor of the library. It is heavily used, alongside the loan of laptops to take advantage of an extended wireless network, and initial feedback from students has been positive. This is complemented by a silent study area – more than doubling the amount of silent study seating – and a new area created with comfy seating as an informal space for eating, drinking and study. Three IT labs with new presentation equipment, a purpose built disability resource room and a one-to-one support room for confidential discussions have also been developed.

WORLD-WIDE HORIZONS: THE GLOBAL CITIZEN

For the second year in a row the library has worked in partnership with the School of Film, TV and Performing Arts and the Leslie Silver International Faculty to run a successful international film festival open to staff and students. This year's theme was The Global Citizen with each film in the series exploring what it means to be a citizen in a new or evolving global context. The screenings of titles held in library stock were introduced by a colleague in the School of Film and then followed by questions and debate.

NEW LEARNING ADVISERS

Three new learning advisers were appointed at the end of 2006. Lisa Ford, the learning adviser for the Leslie Silver International Faculty, is working in the areas of tourism, retailing, hospitality & events, applied global ethics and languages. Lisa Ford joined us from Park Lane College where she was Learning Resources Centre site manager. Lizzy Bellarby, formerly a researcher in information management at Leeds Met, has been appointed as Learning Adviser for computing, IT systems and information management. Alison Park, an internal appointment, is the new Learning Adviser for the areas of education, childhood and early years, core curriculum studies, and CPD.

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London School of Economics

LSE Library welcomes thousands of visitors each year, many via the SRX and SCONUL Vacation Schemes but is also keen that LSE students and staff are aware of their eligibility to visit other libraries. To this end LSE Library recently hosted a display of information about accessing other Libraries. Staff & students were encouraged to participate in the various schemes available, including the UK Libraries Plus schemes as well as both the SCONUL Research Extra Scheme for researchers and staff and the SCONUL Vacation Scheme for all students. Key benefits and ease of use were stressed. The display also included information about Senate House Library, other Libraries within the University of London, public special & national libraries and online resources for discovering library holdings such as COPAC and InforM25.

The display was designed by the LSE Design unit, using copy supplied by the library, and incorporates a circular motif which mirrors the Norman Foster designed library building interior.

Oxford University's Social Science Library (SSL) has joined the five-year old collaboration between the Library of the LSE and the British Library in support of social science research.

Jude England, Head of Social Science Collections and Research, British Library (BL), Maureen Wade, Head of Library Services at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and Margaret Robb, Social Sciences Librarian at Oxford University, met at LSE in March 2007 to sign this important concordat. The agreement brings together three of the UK's most renowned libraries in a range of collaborative activities to improve support for social science researchers.

The potent addition of Oxford University's modern social science library (SSL) with access to a wide range of resources significantly enhances an already powerful partnership, signed in 2002, between the UK's largest and most comprehensive research collection (BL) and the world's largest library devoted exclusively to the social sciences (LSE). The BL and LSE have already agreed collaborative collection policies on European government publications, recorded on both their websites.

Recognising the complementary nature of their social science collections, the BL, the Library at LSE and now Oxford's SSL will collaborate closely on collection development in agreed areas, as well as on information services, staff development and a range of special projects on matters of mutual interest such as digitisation and preservation of government documents on the web.

Maureen Wade, Head of Library Services at LSE said 'The addition of Oxford's SSL to the concordat will strengthen our combined ability to support the world's social science researchers, as well as promoting the appropriate preservation of publications for future generations.'

Jude England said 'We're delighted that Oxford SSL has joined the concordat and are particularly looking forward to enhancing the services we provide, as well as to working together to anticipate the needs of the next generations of social scientists.'

Margaret Robb, Social Sciences Librarian said 'This concordat recognises the rich and diverse social science collections held by Oxford University and its aim, through this collaboration, to fur-

ther enhance the materials and services available to social scientists.'

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National Library of Scotland

National Library Road show

The National Library has held its first road show, in partnership with Aberdeen Library & Information Services. Staff from the NLS collections, marketing, and customer service divisions accompanied treasures from the National Library and a display to the Aberdeen Central Library. People in Aberdeen were encouraged to register with the NLS and use their remote services. It is hoped to hold further road shows in other parts of Scotland during 2007.

Reading rooms reorganised

Reading rooms at the George IV Bridge site have been developed to provide additional space for the consultation of rare books and manuscripts. In response to customer demand the NLS have also opened a silent reading room to provide library users with an area that is free from computers and other electronic equipment.

Smart card technology

The NLS is streamlining its registration procedures and plans to introduce a web-based system. It will be possible to register remotely via the NLS web site. This will enable access to a range of electronic resources. Users will also be able to subscribe to library mailing lists and will be able to amend their contact details online. Smart card technology is also being adopted for access to the reading rooms. Smart cards will be introduced gradually to new customers and when current readers renew their cards. In time the smart card technology will be adopted for other services such as using PCs and paying for print services.

Website award http://www.nls.uk

The library has won an award in the Web Marketing Association's annual WebAward competition for 2006. It was selected as Best Government Website and its efforts to make the site accessible and usable were commended.

Publishing at the NLS

The library has re-launched its publishing programme and is actively pursuing its own projects and publications in partnership with other organisations. The NLS would like to hear from publish-

ers, free-lancers with expertise in book production and design, and external contributors. Enquiries should be directed to Julian Stone, Marketing Communications Officer.

Customer charter

The NLS has conducted a 'mystery shopper' programme where services are tested incognito. Results have been encouraging with high satisfaction rates reported and the information has helped inform the Library's first customer charter that sets out the standards of service that the NLS aims to offer.

University of Northampton

SFX and Metalib

The implementation of SFX (badged as 'Find It' and 'Find my reference' at Northampton) went according to plan last summer and is now being heavily used. Both students and staff greatly appreciate being able to locate full text from a single interface.
The delay in releasing version 4 of Metalib has meant that it is now scheduled for roll-out at the beginning of the next academic year.

NECTAR: the Northampton Electronic Collection of Theses And Research

NECTAR is the name for the University of Northampton's proposed institutional repository. Intended as a showcase of university research, it will contain the entire range of research outputs: published and unpublished; text, image and multimedia. At the point of writing, repository software is being evaluated and the intention is that a pilot repository will be created over the summer.

For further details contact Miggie.Pickton@northampton.ac.uk

E-learning 2.0

Have you engaged in an online discussion, uploaded your holiday photos or posted a comment about a video or news article on the internet? Welcome to the world of Web 2.0, the second generation of web based services. These services enable users to create content by various means such as blogging, contributing to wikis (Wikipedia), uploading videos (YouTube) and social networking (MySpace).

There has been an increase in the use of these new technologies for recreational purposes but research into their potential for learning is at its early stages. There is much experience at The Uni-

versity of Northampton in using new technology for blended learning, where teaching is conducted traditionally and electronically, and it is keen to continue as an innovator in learning and teaching. A project team, lead by Rob Howe (Head of Academic IT, Information Services), have formed a consortium with Northampton College and Northamptonshire Adult & Community Learning (ACL) to successfully bid for funding of £80K to conduct research into the learners experience of e-learning using Web 2.0 technologies over a period of two years.

The consortium's bid was one of seven successful projects out of 84 bids and will join Warwick, Oxford, Edinburgh, Southampton, Hertfordshire, and The Open University in exploring this area.

This JISC/HEFCE funded project, called E-learning for Learners (e4L) will look at a representative sample of learners on a number of different courses and use semi-structured interviews to better understand how learners experience and participate in e-learning, focusing on their use of e-assessment, e-portfolios and social software.

The study will establish if learners are already engaged with Web 2.0 technology before they start at university or college – e.g. do they already have their own blogs or a MySpace account? If so are they better able to engage with e-learning and will there be any benefit for widening participation using these new technologies?

This study will help to identify which new technologies best support different learners' needs e.g. blogs, downloadable sound files (MP3s), video role play, e-assessment, video conferencing and online discussion areas.
What motivates students to engage with blended learning courses and what, if any, is the impact of this on student's experience?
Are there critical moments in learner's experiences?
What is the potential for blogs in assessment?
Which e-tools do students use to support their education?

As a result of this research, a series of case studies and specific guidance will be produced that will benefit the consortium partners and inform the wider education sector on student expectations for Web 2.0 and learning and best practice for the design and delivery of programmes.

The awarding of funding from JISC/HEFCE is excellent news for The University of Northamp-

ton. It will enhance our students learning experience and place the institution at the forefront of innovative pedagogy and facilitate an effective, flexible yet dynamic learning and teaching environment.

The e4L study will involve staff from Information Services (Rob Howe and Rachel Fitzgerald), Office of Learning and Teaching (Caroline Stainton), Northampton Business School, School of The Arts, along with key individuals from the Northampton College (Tony Jewson) and Northamptonshire Adult & Community Learning (Jim Woolley).

For further details contact: Rob.Howe@northampton.ac.uk or visit the website www.northampton.ac.uk/e4l

BITE (Building from Installation to Engagement)

Overview

As a result of a successful bid to the Higher Education Academy, the University of Northampton (UN) has been allocated funding to create BITE, a project that will focus on building on the existing installation of e-learning within the University to engagement with transformative processes and activities that will lead to greater involvement with e-learning for the whole institution. This will be done through the creation of an exemplar online course that consists of bite sized 'chunks' of learning, aimed at staff to enhance and develop their abilities to teach more effectively online.

The Project Rationale

University staff, as a rule, do not have the time to spend on lengthy courses although they are keen on continuing development in the area of e-learning. Previous experience in creating an online course had implied that time was an issue and the recent e-learning benchmarking exercise (ELBME) confirmed that this was indeed the main barrier to staff development.
BITE aims to overcome this problem through the creation of a collection of bite size chunks of learning that staff can dip into whenever they have a need or an opportunity. The project will take core subject areas on e-learning (e.g. the use of blogs in assessment) and develop them into interactive small bites of learning material of approx 30 minutes. The bites will be developed by the core team assisted by academic librarians and will then made subject specific through use of dedicated academic staff, before being piloted.

It is hoped that the deliverables from the BITE project will be integrated into current staff development infrastructure, possibly providing a pathway into the PGCTHE and complementing other provisions and affording a flexible mode of learning.
In parallel to the development of BITE, there will be careful monitoring and reporting of the time and resources needed to develop material. This will lead to a clearer understanding of the costs of undertaking e-learning which, as already noted, was identified as an issue during ELBME.
Aims and Objectives

BITE aims to create a series of bite sized 'chunks' of learning, ranging from instructional to a higher level of skills development. The 'chunks' will be relevant to e-learning and will be personalised to the school or department of the learner.

The project aims to

- impact on staff working practices
- impact on the student learning experience
- Have greater understanding of the costs of e-learning development for UN and the sector
- Develop a methodology to measure the cost of developing e-learning materials
- Increase the quality and proportion of blended learning which will support the aims of the University of Northampton's e-strategy.
- Create a model of delivery that will be transferable between institutions

Anticipated Impact and Outcomes

At the conclusion of this project it is hoped to see a shift in the way that staff embed e-learning within their modules. With more quality e-learning provision, there may also be an impact on student motivation. The learning materials could form the structure of a future accredited course and could also be used as part of existing PGCTHE.

We expect to monitor and reflect on the changes to the staff and student experiences as a result of BITE and disseminate our findings to a wide audience across the HE sector. Examples of materials will be deposited onto JORUM and made reusable for others.

It is expected that the project will develop a staff social network within an online environment, to encourage staff to engage with technology that would also work for their students and thus

improve confidence in staff ability to engage with the pedagogy of online learning
It is also hoped to create a methodology for identifying the true costs of e-learning and a report on the effectiveness of BITE in institutional change

At all times there will be an ongoing blog indicating the successes (and problems) of the project and a web site containing latest project information.

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Northumbria University

A milestone edition of this journal deserves a milestone report to *News from member libraries*. Add to this the fact it is being complied by someone who is personally fast approaching the very same milestone and we have a 'milestone themed' report indeed.

MILESTONE 1 - COMPLETION OF £6M LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT
Northumbria's City Campus Library refurbishment is finally complete after a £6M programme of works to create a radical new learning environment tailored to the needs of today's students. Even before the building was complete the basement and first floor areas were the subject of a JISC/HEFCE case study into best practice.

The building has been designed to support the student learning experience from the moment of entry. The new welcome desk, staffed by our customer support team rather than caretaking staff, directs to our range of services and facilities. This move from a 'security' presence to a welcoming student focussed service has been very well received. The first floor is the hub of student support offering face-to-face enquiries and telephone links from six floors. The learner support team also visit all areas of the building throughout the day, offering a one-to-one enquiry service at the point of need.

The building offers a variety of study environments from the informal Learning Café in the basement with its beanbags, easy chairs and vending machines, to our flexible learning spaces which encourage students to configure furniture and IT to suit their requirements. Alternatively the bookable Research Hubs and study rooms offer spaces for quiet study, group meetings and presentation practice.

A spacious self-service area on the ground floor includes an open access Key Text Collection and allows users to borrow and return materials from 08.00 until midnight every day during term time. The redesign of this area and the work done with RFID tagging has contributed to a rise in the number of items issued using self-service from 18% to 81%.

MILESTONE 2 – INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR NORA
One year after launch, NORA, Northumbria University's library search engine won the 2007 WebFeat Presidents' Award for innovative federated search systems. Since NORA was unveiled in February 2006 it has become one of the most visited websites in the university. The service has handled almost 240,000 search sessions and carried out five million searches on library material. NORA allows users to simultaneously search across 300 databases and 22,000 journals. Representatives from Northumbria travelled to a ceremony in Seattle, Washington, to accept the award.

MILESTONE 3 - ALL NIGHT LONG...?

Since 2003 the library has pushed the boundaries on opening hours and self-service to offer a cost effective service which meets the changing access needs of our students. These students already operate on assumptions of a 24 x 7 society, combining study with work and leisure around non-standard working days. We currently operate midnight opening every day during term time with slightly reduced hours during vacations. From 16 April 2007 however we will embark on a six week pilot scheme of 24 hour opening, seven days a week. The pilot has come about in response to a campaign run by Northumbria Students Union but also will allow us to gather much needed data on 24 x 7 opening, including entry statistics and facilities used.

MILESTONE 4 - MARCET WINS PLAUDITS

MARCET, the university's Staff Development Resources Centre based in the library, has now been commended by the British Computing Society for its excellent IT skills training for four years in a row. The Society awarded its highest

'excellent' rating to the Centre for its management of the university's European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) test centre.

MILESTONE 5 - SKILLS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

The Skills Plus programme, available 24 x 7 through our virtual learning platform, was developed by library staff in conjunction with the university's study skills centre. The package aims to provide information literacy, research and study skills which are now seen as essential in supporting active and lifelong learning. Skills Plus is now embedded in a number of academic programmes and has been improved this academic year by the addition of formative and summative assessments.

MILESTONE 6 - GROWING USER SATISFACTION

The annual user satisfaction survey, carried out by the library each December, showed an increase of 6% in overall user satisfaction in 2006. The actual percentage of users satisfied with the services provided rose from 87% in 2005 to 93% in 2006. We are particularly pleased with this increase since it has come during a time of such upheaval with changes to the physical building at City Campus Library.

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Roehampton University

LRC EXTENSION

In December, three members of our executive went up to Glasgow to see the Saltire Centre and Glasgow University's refurbishments. We gazed longingly at the bean bags, igloos and sofas sadly reflecting that it would never happen at Roehampton. How wrong we were! In January came the quite stunning news that the university was giving us £10 million plus (might be £14 million if we are really lucky) to extend the LRC. The brief is that we do something spectacular to create a signature building for the academic hub. What we do, what it looks like, etc. is, so far, apparently up to us. So the next few months will be furious rounds of consultation and staff discussions. By the time this is in print we will have to be well on the way to a final design as the bulldozers move in on the current lower ground floor (the original Digby Stuart College Library for those that knew it) and the Fincham building, home to many Arts School academic staff. We plan to send lots of staff

out over the summer term to see other libraries in and around London. A lucky few will go even further a field. So thanks in advance to those libraries who host our teams. I will be keeping you posted as we build. And yes, I'm sure we can accept a SCONUL visit in 2010.

Current building works

In the meantime we are still finishing off the original works we were doing re-shaping the existing building before we got the big news on the extension. Nearing completion is our archive store (fire proof and air conditioned) and the associated archives reading room and seminar room. The cyber café works start at Easter and will give us a large social computer space on the ground floor by the entrance. This will be disabled accessible and open 24x7.

In the last issue I noted that we moved every book last summer and created a more serious journals and special collections floor at the top of the building. We hoped this would also better define the silent working area needed by many complainers last year. So far (fingers crossed) there are far fewer complaints about noise this year, so we hope this is working. Unfortunately, in order to make way for the extension, we have to move the books again. Spare trolley anyone?

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Advice for authors

SCONUL Focus is the journal of SCONUL, the Society of College, National and University Libraries. It aims to bring together articles, reports and news stories from practitioners in order to generate debate and promote good practice in the national libraries and the university and higher education college sector.

Contributions are welcomed from colleagues in all fields and at all levels: we merely request that the items contributed are concise, informative, practical and (above all!) worth reading.

Although we do not make strict stipulations about length we do recommend authors to consult a recent issue of *SCONUL Focus* to see if their approach seems in keeping with other published pieces.

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A copy of *SCONUL Focus* can be supplied on request to a member of the Editorial Board or from SCONUL's office at 102 Euston Street, London NW1 2HA,
email: sconul@sconul.ac.uk. An online version can be found via www.sconul.ac.uk.

Items should be submitted (preferably) via email or on disk to your contact on the Editorial Board or Antony Brewerton (antony.brewerton@ warwick.ac.uk).

As well as text, we are also keen to publish images and would especially like to include author photos where possible. Please either send prints or digital photographs (resolution 300 dpi or above) to your contact on the Editorial Board.

It is helpful if authors follow our house style when submitting their articles:

- Spelling in '–ise' etc. is preferred to '–ize'.
- Capitalisation is ruthlessly minimal. In individual libraries it is usual to refer to 'the Library', 'the University', 'the College' etc. Please resist this in our newsletter: unless there is any ambiguity use 'the library' etc.
- Spell out acronyms at their first occurrence. Avoid 'HE' for 'higher education', which we prefer to write in full (our overseas readers may be unfamiliar with the abbreviation HE).
- Please use single quotation marks, not double.
- Web addresses should be written in full and –where possible– be underlined for purposes of clarity.
- References should appear as numbered footnotes at the end of the article, in the following forms (we prefer not to reverse surnames and initials)
    1 A.N.Author, *Title of book*, Place: Publisher, 2000, pp 23-6
    2 P.B.Writer, 'Title of chapter or article', in Q.V.Editor, ed., *Interesting articles about libraries*, Place: Publisher, 2000, pp 262-3
    3 B.M.Researcher, 'Title of article', *Journal of pseudodocumentalism*, 70 (2), 1989, pp 117-20

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We look forward to hearing from you.