

## Ensuring a bright future for research libraries

The RIN's new guide, *Ensuring a bright future for research libraries*, provides advice to vice-chancellors and senior institutional managers on ensuring library and information services keep pace with the evolving needs of researchers. It was produced by a working group set up to take forward the conclusions from the RIN and RLUK report on *Researchers' use of academic libraries and their services* (April 2007). The guide was launched on 18 November with presentations from Professor Robert Burgess, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Leicester and Dr Michael Jubb, Director of the RIN.

Good library and information services are an essential underpinning for research, just as they are for successful teaching and learning. Success in research, at both national and institutional levels, depends critically on the quality of the information services to which researchers have access.

So, what does this mean for research libraries? Digital technologies and online information resources have brought fundamental changes in how research is done, and also in what researchers expect from library and information services. The services that librarians and information professionals provide have also changed fundamentally over the past decade, and they can now offer much more in providing leadership that brings improvements in research performance and effectiveness. New resources, services and technologies continue to create new opportunities, new challenges and new expectations. Library and information services need the resources and the continuing top-level support within their institutions to ensure that they can fulfil their potential and meet these challenges.

The guidance offers a framework setting out the key issues that will ensure research information services develop effectively. It builds on the current evidence available about (i) how



researchers are making use of current library and information services; and (ii) the different perspectives and expectations of researchers and information professional on how these services might be developed and improved for the future.

The framework covers six main areas:

- 1 Linking library content and collections to research strategies: since no single institution can provide all the information resources needed by its researchers, higher education institutions (HEIs) need to develop collection and content development strategies that are explicitly related to their research strategies and priorities.
- 2 Researchers' needs in cataloguing, navigation, discovery and access: HEIs need to ensure that their researchers can readily make use, through the library and other providers, of services that enable them to discover, locate and gain access to the relevant information sources.

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## What motivates researchers to publish?

The RIN, working in collaboration with HEFCE and JISC, has commissioned research to examine the motivations, incentives and constraints that lead researchers in the UK in different subjects and disciplines to publish and disseminate the results of their work in different ways; and how and why they cite other researchers' work. The study

is being undertaken on behalf of the RIN and JISC by a consortium from Loughborough University and Manchester Metropolitan University.

A crucial part of the study will be to establish an independent and authoritative base of evidence as to how research assessment influences researchers' behaviour. These issues are of particular importance in the

context of proposed move to a new Research Excellence Framework (REF). The results of this work will help to inform the Higher Education Funding Councils about the REF's potential impact on how researchers publish their outputs and on the development and take-up of new modes of scholarly communications and of research information services. The project runs from December 2008 to May 2009 and will also form a baseline for future studies carried out at appropriate intervals. [www.rin.ac.uk/research-assessment-behaviour](http://www.rin.ac.uk/research-assessment-behaviour)

# Exposing rare and unique research collections



The Challenge Fund continues to expose rare, unique, and under-used resources to the UK research community via the Copac library catalogue. The Challenge Fund was established by the RIN, Research Libraries UK (RLUK) and the British Library, and the scheme has allowed sixteen new and specialist library collections to be added to Copac, with more libraries to be included in the near future. Copac is a Mimas service, based at the University of Manchester and funded by JISC, using records supplied by RLUK.

Most recently added to the collection are records from the French Institute, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow and Chetham's Library, the oldest public library in the English-speaking world. Other rare collections come from the library of the Natural History Museum; the Women's Library at London Metropolitan University; the City of London Guildhall Library; and the library of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. These collections cover subjects ranging from earth science and botany to feminism and English topography. They also include large numbers of rare books, antiquarian pamphlets, broadsheets, 'zines, and ephemera.

The inclusion of these libraries in Copac means that researchers no longer have to know of the existence of a collection before they can discover its resources. A Copac search for specialist items will now uncover a wider range of research material, much of which has been underexposed or not available elsewhere. The exposure of these specialist collections is already proving valuable to researchers. The University of Exeter, for instance, has reported a 25% increase in the use of its Arabic collections since being included on Copac. These collections provide significant but little-known resources about Arabic culture, and this rise in usage promises

an increase in the range and scope of research being produced in this area.

Copac's ability to aggregate music and fine arts collections across a range of UK institutions also goes from strength to strength. Holdings from the British Library and Oxford University, for instance, are now complemented by those of the Royal Academy of Music, National Library of Art at the V&A, the Tate Library (Tate Britain), and the library of the Courtauld Institute. The library of the Henry Moore Institute is due to join these collections in the New Year.

Although varied in their scope and coverage, and providing a broad range research opportunities, the Challenge Fund libraries represents only a small proportion of the UK's research information assets. Much of this information is still largely unknown to the research community, and at present the Copac team is exploring ways to continue the valuable work initiated by the Challenge Fund.

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<http://copac.ac.uk>

## World class research needs world class information resources

The RIN ran an expert workshop on 2 December 2008 to investigate how to maximise the accessibility of information resources to support the work of the UK's five Centres for Language Based Area Studies, and of other universities doing research in these subject areas.

The five Centres were set up by HEFCE, the Scottish Funding Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and the Economic and Social Research Council with the aim of 'creating a world-class cadre of researchers that will enhance the UK's understanding of the Arab world, China and Japan, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union'. Consultations with the five Centres and other universities have shown that there are many shortcomings that need to be addressed if we are to ensure that UK researchers have access to the information resources needed for them to work in these critical areas.

The workshop consisted of a series of short presentations followed by three round table discussions. Research directors, researchers and specialist library staff discussed the availability and accessibility of information resources for researchers and provided a series of recommendations for improvements. The presentations and a short report are on the RIN website. For further information contact [sally.curry@rin.ac.uk](mailto:sally.curry@rin.ac.uk)

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[www.rin.ac.uk/clbas-workshop](http://www.rin.ac.uk/clbas-workshop)

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- 3 Sharing skills and expertise: HEIs need to develop arrangements to promote better communication and engagement between library/information specialists and academic research staff, so that they can share skills and experience with each other.
- 4 Communicating and evaluating research outputs: HEIs need to ensure that they make use of the expertise of library and information professionals and develop strategies that optimise the dissemination and impact of the research undertaken by their staff.
- 5 Curation, preservation and disposal: HEIs need to have policies and procedures in place to manage their information resources effectively, and to ensure that those of value are preserved for the long term.
- 6 Sustainable resources: library and information services need resourcing at a level that enables them to deliver and

develop their mission to support and enhance research performance; HEIs need to invest appropriately in order to ensure that these services at least keep pace with increases in the volume of research outputs produced worldwide.

To help illustrate these points, the RIN website lists examples of good practice in library and information environments. More examples are welcome, contact [stephane.goldstein@rin.ac.uk](mailto:stephane.goldstein@rin.ac.uk)

The RIN hopes the guidance will be useful in assisting senior HEI managers to formulate and develop their institutions' overall research strategy and policy. We welcome views and feedback, and would be happy to discuss the issues that the recommendations raise.

The guide and a summary flyer are available on the RIN website, or you can order hard copies via [catherine.gray@rin.ac.uk](mailto:catherine.gray@rin.ac.uk)

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[www.rin.ac.uk/bright-futures-libraries](http://www.rin.ac.uk/bright-futures-libraries)

# Effective data management: Working together

The second meeting of the Research Data Management Forum (RDMF) was held in Manchester on 26-27 November 2008, co-sponsored by RIN and the Digital Curation Centre (DCC). The event took *Roles and responsibilities for effective data management* as its primary theme. Martin Donnelly, e-Science Liaison Support Officer at the DCC reports on the event:

DCC Associate Director Liz Lyon and RIN Head of Programmes Stéphane Goldstein welcomed thirty-five invited delegates – comprising senior decision-makers, repository and data centre managers, digital librarians and academic/clinical researchers – to the event, and the discursive element began with a keynote presentation from Andrew Treloar of the Australian National Data Service (ANDS).

Andrew contrasted the UK and Australian research environments, showing how the complexity of developing a national consensus increases with the number of funding bodies and higher education institutions. It follows that there is a need for a coordinated approach at international level which recognises that the players in the scholarly 'ecosystem' are all connected; put another way, all the pieces matter. The ANDS' role as a service delivery coordinator is therefore twofold: to drive cultural change across the various sectors, and to build partnerships between those with responsibilities for data.

The second day began with a presentation from Alma Swan of Key Perspectives, who outlined the several roles identified in her JISC-funded survey *Skills, Role and Career Structure of Data Scientists and Curators: Assessment of Current Practice and Future Needs* (July 2008). Focusing on research institutions, Alma showed that the occupation 'data scientist' is in fact an amalgam of a very broad range of activities/roles: a hybrid position. Data scientists will generally hold additional skills that data authors/creators do not have, although the boundaries between these roles are often indistinct. Furthermore, data scientists tend to fall into their roles by accident, typically originating in computing science, information science, or a particular academic discipline. What is not currently clear is how we can rationalise these idiosyncratic functions, and define the roles and requisite skills in a way that demonstrates an attractive career path.

Alma's talk was followed by viewpoints from representatives of four key roles: Data Creator (Stephen Lawrie from the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Edinburgh);



Data Scientist (Helen Parkinson from the European Bioinformatics Institute); Data Librarian (Robin Rice from the national academic data centre, EDINA); and Data Manager (Sam Pepler from the British Atmospheric Data Centre). Sam offered biographical sketches of his BADC colleagues, outlining their qualifications and career paths to date. The common thread between these diverse accounts was the tendency for skills to be picked up in-post, and often via informal channels or, as one speaker put it, 'by osmosis'.

Sheila Corrall of the University of Sheffield then spoke about professional education and training perspectives, dividing the players into three types: conduit specialists (information technologists), content specialists (library/information scientists), and context specialists (academics and other professionals); effective information scientists must traverse all three specialisms. Since these fields are continually evolving, constant up-skilling will be necessary in order to keep pace. The key challenge will be how to coordinate and fund the appropriate training.

After the post-presentation discussions, delegates split into parallel breakout sessions arranged according to three themes: the appropriateness of current librarian skillsets; strategies for up-skilling the research community; and methods for sharing skills between data scientists and data managers. Feedback from the breakout groups supported the emerging view that increasing formalisation of training opportunities will be crucial as the discipline matures and develops.

Closing the event, the DCC's Graham Pryor identified three major themes which emerged from the various group

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## Towards the academic library of the future

**JISC, SCONUL, RLUK, the British Library and RIN will be working together on a major strategic initiative to explore the substantial challenges facing academic libraries as they respond to a period of unparalleled change in the external environment. Derek Law, former Head of the Information Resources Directorate and Librarian of Strathclyde University, has been appointed programme consultant to oversee and lead the initiative.**

Workshops, studies and a combination of partnership and advocacy with key stakeholders in the higher education arena will build on existing work to develop a transformative

agenda to help ensure the continuing relevance of libraries to the communities of information creators and users they serve. In particular the programme will explore what is best done locally and what is best done through cooperation at regional, national or international level.

The programme will run over a period of two years, with regular briefings and other work to secure widespread involvement and participation. A steering group of senior representatives from each organisation will oversee the programme and invite experts to the workshops to consider the issues and to reach positions that will help to shape directions for academic libraries. In

addition, a full communications strategy will be developed which will include the use of wikis and blogs to ensure wider consultation.

Michael Jubb, Director of RIN, says: 'Digital technologies and online information resources have brought fundamental changes in how research is done, and also in what researchers expect from library and information services. Effective services, at both national and institutional levels, are an essential underpinning for success in research. This programme will help to ensure that library and information services keep pace with the evolving needs of researchers.'

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[www.rin.ac.uk/library-future](http://www.rin.ac.uk/library-future)



#### ■ UKRR update

Frances Boyle has been appointed as the new manager for the UK Research Reserve (UKRR) and will take up post in February 2009. Frances most recently served as the Executive Director of the Digital Preservation Coalition and previously worked in the Oxford University Library Services, leading the IT Development Team and was Project Manager for Phase 1 of the Oxford Google Digitisation programme. [www.rin.ac.uk/ukrr](http://www.rin.ac.uk/ukrr)

#### ■ Support of teaching by libraries in higher education: analysis of costs

A new briefing paper from the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) analyses some of the principal costs incurred by libraries in higher education, in their role in support of teaching. Largely based on evidence from their Annual library statistics, it gives a broad view of the position in UK higher education. [www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/pubs/support\\_of\\_teaching.pdf](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/pubs/support_of_teaching.pdf)

#### ■ Digital preservation policy study

A new JISC-funded study aims to provide an outline model for digital preservation policies and to analyse the role that digital preservation can play in supporting and delivering key strategies for higher and further education institutions. The study also draws widely on policy and implementation from other sectors and countries and will be of interest to those wishing to develop policy and justify investment in digital preservation within a wide range of institutions. [www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/publications/jiscpolicyfinalreport.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/publications/jiscpolicyfinalreport.aspx)

#### ■ ALPSP scholarly publishing practice survey

The third in a series of surveys undertaken to establish current scholarly publishing practices and designed to track changes in policy and practice since 2000, has been published by the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishing (ALPSP). It provides a vast array of evidence about current policies and shows how practices have changed over time, with comparisons with survey results from 2003 and 2005. There are new sections on publishers' practice on author rights and also Web 2.0 technologies. The online version is free to ALPSP members. [www.alp.org/ngen\\_public/article.asp?aid=24781](http://www.alp.org/ngen_public/article.asp?aid=24781)

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discussions: (i) that the Forum should produce a white paper on training needs and identification of career opportunities in data management; (ii) that there is a need for some kind of certification which recognises the skills acquired by practitioners already at work in this area; and (iii) to investigate the possibility of creating of a national data management education and training forum. The actions identified by these recommendations will be developed over the coming months, informed by online and offline discussions.

The Forum's next meeting is expected to be held in spring 2009. Full details will be released via the RDMF blog (<http://data-forum.blogspot.com>) and the Research Data Management mailing list ([research-dataman@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:research-dataman@jiscmail.ac.uk)), so subscribe to these to be kept in the loop.

## RIN: in brief



#### ■ Discovering physical objects: Meeting researchers' needs

The RIN's report *Discovering physical objects: Meeting researchers' needs* (October 2008) investigates how researchers discover and gain access to physical objects and artefacts; the project was based on an examination of practice in four distinct disciplines: archaeology, art history, earth sciences, and social and economic history. Many museums face increasing difficulties

in providing high-quality support for research and scholarship. The report shows that there is great scope for developing collaboration between museums, galleries and the research community, which would bring benefits to both. Visit [www.rin.ac.uk/objects](http://www.rin.ac.uk/objects)

#### ■ RCUK code of research conduct

The RIN has submitted a response (October 2008) to the Research Councils UK (RCUK) consultation on a *Code of conduct and policy on the governance of good research conduct*. The consultation concerns the core issues of plagiarism and falsification of data and also areas such as the proper representation of credentials and findings, conflicts of interest, access to data for replication, abuse of peer review, and informed consent and protection of research subjects. It also covers concern about whether weaknesses and cases of poor conduct which have been identified are fully pursued and publicly available, so they are unlikely to be repeated. The RIN's response focused on those aspects of the Code that relate to data sharing and management. Visit [www.rin.ac.uk/rcuk-research-conduct](http://www.rin.ac.uk/rcuk-research-conduct)

#### ■ Making sense of research funding in UK higher education

The RIN has published a new factsheet to help explain the complex research funding process in the UK higher education sector. It explains the concepts of dual support and the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) methodology and gives an overview of how research councils allocate funding, as well as discussing the Research Assessment Exercise and its replacement, the Research Excellence Framework. Available at [www.rin.ac.uk/making-sense-funding](http://www.rin.ac.uk/making-sense-funding) or email [sarah.gentleman@rin.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.gentleman@rin.ac.uk) for hard copies.



#### ■ The use and relevance of Web 2.0 tools

The RIN is starting a new project in early 2009 looking at the use and relevance of Web 2.0 tools for UK researchers across different disciplines and to explore the implications for the future of scholarly communications. [www.rin.ac.uk/web2-0](http://www.rin.ac.uk/web2-0)