

Research Information Network CONSULTATIVE GROUP FOR LIBRARIANSHIP AND INFORMATION SCIENCES

NOTE FROM THE THIRD MEETING – 12 OCTOBER 2006

Action points in italics

Present:

Jean Sykes (Chair) (London School of Economics)
Andrew Booth (University of Sheffield)
James Brown (Research Information Network)
Stéphane Goldstein (Research Information Network)
Ann-Marie James (University of Birmingham)
Michael Jubb (Research Information Network)
Cédric Laizé (Centre for Ecology & Hydrology)
Janet Peters (Cardiff University)
Elizabeth Shepherd (University College London)
Stephen Smith (University of York)
Jackie Van Bueren (Research Information Network)
Steve Wood (Liverpool John Moores University)

Apologies

Phil Bradley (freelance)
William Kilbride (City of Glasgow Museum Service)
Peter Morgan (University of Cambridge)
Norman Paton (University of Manchester)

1. Minutes of the meeting of 4 May 2006 (*paper RIN/LIS/06/12*)

These were approved.

2. Matters arising

Developing links with the **commercial sector**: Stephen Smith had made contact with the BT research library, prompting the Group to consider how best to develop further links with commercial organisations, e.g. Microsoft, IBM, and pharmaceutical and legal corporations. Inviting representatives to the Group might not be appropriate; better to reflect the great variety of organisations and perspectives through meetings or events – but on the understanding that commercial organisations would only engage in dialogue if there are clear benefits for them. Might this be premature? Issues highlighted in the forthcoming RIN report on research funders could provide a practical basis for future discussion.

- ❑ *SS to further discuss with BT library the scope for interaction with RIN.*
- ❑ *RIN Exec Team to present paper to next meeting on options for developing interfaces with commercial sector, including possibility of a workshop.*

3. RIN Consultative Groups: what next? (*paper RIN/LIS/13*)

The Group identified **training needs of researchers** in the use of resource discovery tools as a major developmental issue for RIN to investigate – particularly for younger researchers. The forthcoming RIN report on use of discovery services will provide relevant findings. Building on this and other research and sources of information, a niche role for RIN could be as an agent that identifies and highlights good practice.

- ❑ *AB to draw up a short review of recent research/survey work on training of researchers about research information methodologies and tools, as a prelude to any RIN work on good practice.*

Noted the interest expressed by the PTE Consultative Group in **software management**. Members agreed that, at present, RIN's most valuable contribution might be intelligence gathering on key issues, initiatives and best practice relating in particular to the 'findability', dissemination and preservation of those software products that have the greater potential for application outside areas for which they are designed. [UCISA](#) might be a partner for such ventures. In due course, there might be scope for RIN to facilitate a clearing house facility to allow for information exchange on software – useful, for instance, for indexing purposes.

Any RIN investigation on the management and preservation of **images** might be subsumed in wider activity on digital research data management.

Agreed that the conditions for funding of **activities initiated by Consultative Groups** should additionally include a point about the scope for scalability of projects.

- ❑ *SG to add scalability to the conditions document, as one of the issues to be addressed by Group members when applying for RIN funding.*

4. Towards a RIN communications strategy (paper RIN/LIS/06/14)

The Group considered the various strands of RIN's developing communications activity.

Notwithstanding the importance of printable pdf files drawn from the website, the Group agreed about the continuing relevance of well-designed **printed documents** for distribution and circulation through RIN stakeholders. Emphasised the value of clear branding of such material, particularly RIN reports. For the proposed RIN newsletter, members underlined the need for a glossy and punchy presentation, with a mix of news and thematic content.

Noted the potential usefulness of **audio reports from RIN events** as a resource for research and teaching.

Noted the small but growing level of **contact between RIN and the media**. Suggestions for furthering this included:

- ❑ development of contacts with the specialist press (e.g. *Information World Review*) as well as journals such as *Nature*;
- ❑ advertising of events to complement news releases about the results of RIN work;
- ❑ pointing to best practice could add a 'human interest' element to news stories, which could be attractive to the media;
- ❑ encouraging journalists to use RSS feeds on the website.

The Group expressed interest in the development of interactive features on the **RIN website**.

- ❑ Wikis were recognised as having potential as a collaborative tool within and between Consultative Groups; it was understood that, if members were to use them, they would probably require much support from the Executive Team.
- ❑ Blogs could also be useful, but only if they are fairly focused

- ❑ *JB to liaise with RIN's external designer re newsletter design and branding issues.*

- ❑ *JB to continue with web development work, taking on board comments from the Group.*
- ❑ *JB to establish contacts with Research Council web managers as a means of encouraging flow of RIN*

- there is a danger in creating blogs that are too diffuse.
- ❑ RSS feeds are also useful, but noted that some university firewalls do not allow them to be set up; in such instances, web-based readers might be a way around the problem.
- ❑ The ‘what’s new’ page should have punchier, headline-oriented content.
- ❑ Advantage should be taken of opportunities to get RIN messages across Research Council websites – on the grounds that such websites are regularly consulted by researchers.

information through RC websites.

5. Freedom of information and its impact on information for researchers (*paper RIN/LIS/06/15*)

The Group considered the opportuneness of a **survey of researchers**, to assess their use of FoI legislation. The form to be taken by such a survey was left open. At this stage, it was agreed that, as a pilot exercise, a short questionnaire should be set out and sent to members of all the Consultative Groups. The output of this would help to determine what next steps might be taken in relation to the broader research community.

There could be value in organising a **workshop** bringing together researchers and information managers to discuss the impact of FoI; this would be discussed at the next meeting, in the light of the results from the questionnaire.

The Group felt that the suggested **FoI archive of disclosures** across the public sector would be huge. Any scoping exercise for developing such a facility could usefully receive backing – although probably not financial support – from RIN and its Consultative Groups

Agreed also that there is a case for **exempting researchers from the FoI fees regime**. Assuming there is any evidence that the research community would benefit from such a measure (the above survey work could provide pointers), the RIN might usefully take this up as an advocacy issue.

- ❑ *SW to draw up short questionnaire for Consultative Group members*
- ❑ *RIN Exec Team to circulate this questionnaire once it is ready.*

6. Digital data management (*paper RIN/LIS/06/16*)

There was a single comment on the **principles and guidelines**: could the document be more specific about providing incentives to researchers for preserving datasets, where this is appropriate?

Members commented on the scope and programme for the **workshop** on 5 December:

- ❑ strong view that the thematic perspectives, at the end of the morning, should be addressed as three parallel sessions rather than in a plenary;
- ❑ storage/preservation issues are not really covered at the meeting – but this is deliberate, as it is a huge subject which could not adequately be addressed in the context of a broad-ranging, one-day meeting;
- ❑ university IT managers might be interested in taking part; to this effect, the meeting could be publicised though UCISA;
- ❑ the [UK Cochrane Centre](#), rather than the Cochrane Library,

- ❑ *All to suggest names of individuals and/or organisations to invite to the event.*

should also be invited;

- other organisations to contact might include the [Current Controlled Trials register](#) and the [Environment Agency](#).

7. RIN scholarly communications activities (paper RIN/LIS/06/17)

Noted the latest developments with the work overseen by the scholarly communications group.

- *All to suggest the names of researchers to approach as potential members of the scholarly comms group.*

8. Joint RIN/RCUK/DTI survey of scholarly journals (paper RIN/LIS/06/18)

The Group noted the two key issues stemming from the study: the provision of a baseline of reliable evidence, and the conclusion that data is scarce or not available in a number of crucial areas such cost/income streams, non-HEI subscriptions, usage other than log analyses, impact of open access...

9. Reporting back from members on issues of relevance to RIN

Members were told about the [CASPAR](#) project, an EU Framework Programme 6 initiative to develop digital preservation solutions for cultural, artistic and scientific content.

- *JP to keep the Group informed of developments relating to CASPAR.*

10. Other business

There was none.

Next meeting: date to be identified in February 2006