



RIN Consultative Group for Life Sciences and Medicine
NOTE FROM THE EIGHTH MEETING – 18 DECEMBER 2008

Action points in italics

Present:

John Coggins (Chair) (University of Glasgow)
Charlotte Briggs (RIN)
Oliver De Peyer (MRC National Institute for Medical Research)
Stéphane Goldstein (RIN)
Branwen Hide (RIN)
Michael Jubb (RIN)
Dorothy McCaughan (University of York)
Andrew Pitt (University of Glasgow)
Tim Rapley (University of Newcastle)
Vince Smith (Natural History Museum)

Apologies:

George Banting (University of Bristol)
Nathalie Cornee (MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology)
Chris Garforth (University of Reading)
Chris Hyde (University of Birmingham)
Howard Meltzer (University of Leicester)
Patricia Spoor (University of Leeds)
Chris Taylor (European Bioinformatics Institute)

1. Minutes of the meeting of 25 April 2008 (paper RIN/LSM/08/05)

These were approved.

2. Matters arising (oral)

[from item 3] Prospective new members still to be approached

[from item 3] A list of all group members was requested, detailing their expertise.

[from item 6] At the previous meeting, Chris Taylor had suggested that he could draft a discussion paper on validation of data, but this had not yet been done. The Group remained interested in using such a paper as a basis for discussion.

SG to pursue enquires with suggested individuals and organisations

SG to circulate a list of LSM Group members, detailing their expertise.

SG to liaise with Chris Taylor about producing paper on validation of data; this could be circulated offline

3. The Value of Research Information Services (paper RIN/LSM/08/12):

This paper was presented to the Group, and opinions were sought. In the context of the current financial climate, issues of value for money are ever more relevant for

research funders and users. There is a likelihood of a tight funding round at the next spending review; Research Councils are unlikely to get a favourable increase in funding in next review, if any at all. It is important therefore to sustain current levels of investment in existing information services. But what might be expected from funders to better recognise the value of such services? RIN's work thus far has shown that there is no single approach that will provide 'the answer' to this question. RIN alone cannot address the issues raised in paper, but can work in tandem with other organisations to develop relevant strategies. Advice from group solicited.

There is currently a crisis in library funding due to currency fluctuations and VAT. This may well cause the gulf between well founded university libraries and others to widen.

Section 10 of the report was noted, and members raised that many universities are getting rid of back holdings of journals, as the British Library has a good central holding system.

There are considerable variations in prices of data – often e-books cost more than printed versions. A need for a trusted, central repository was identified, along with an agency for journals, similar in form to DoH's NICE. An additional problem for many organisations is that publishers don't allow back access for those who don't have a current subscription.

RIN is working with SCONUL to gather evidence on subscriptions budgets in £, \$, € The Natural History Museum is engaging with societies to try and free up rights for post 1923 work. Pre-1923 work is already freely accessible.

RIN is monitoring closely growth in open access (both via the repository and the payment to publish routes), and the implications for institutions in terms of how publishing fees are paid.

Some members felt that the King and Tenopir study cited was perhaps open to criticism.

A consortium of Scottish universities is about to launch a Scotland-wide subscription to a couple of publications. Librarians are looking closely at this initiative, and looks like there will be variations of such initiatives in next year. Initiatives of this kind can be controversial – a lot of organisations may feel they're being 'taxed' for periodicals they don't subscribe to (e.g. unis without medical schools). Such deals might be better with 'opt out' pricing categories (e.g. those that don't include medical journals).

LSM GroupMembers to offer views on how paper's recommendations can be taken forward

There was discussion regarding data and databases. Data standards are being hindered by ongoing discussion as to what constitutes 'the standard'. Value needs to be put on data that is made available. And 'value' needs to be agreed upon. These issues can result in fragmented projects and patchy levels of excellence across institutions. It was also noted that international databases are important in LSM., and that linking up international collaboration can be difficult. Sometimes funding is pulled from infrastructure over grants. Advice is required on how RIN should be talking to its funders etc.

A lot of young researchers use services such as PubMed, even those who have grown up with web of science and ATHENS, which cater for more niche sets of information. It was felt that it will be necessary to obtain continuity of support so databases are preserved going forward.

A key issue is *how* we assess the value of different information resources. What kinds of services and resources add value, and in what kind of ways? Levels of usage need to be assessed. It was noted that it is difficult to predict how data may be used in the future; Certain data might well be used a lot more in the future than it is at present, so there is a need to be careful how you evaluate usage of data and how it is applied to 'measuring value'.

4. OPTIONS FOR FUTURE RIN PROJECTS (RIN/LSM/08/13)

RIN has developed a fair body of reports over past 2-3 years, and plan to build on this work in 2009, with emphasis on those studies which address gathering and assessing evidence of value. The Group's opinions as to where priorities might lie were sought.

Discussions are ongoing with a range of bodies on how the To Share or Not To Share report can be taken forward. There is a large JISC programme going on, building and populating the infrastructure of institutional repositories, an area on the whole where RIN has tended to leave work to the JISC programme.

RIN working with SHERPA to organise a workshop on 11th February to look at extent of compliance of funders on deposit in repositories. May also look at barriers to deposit also, so some answers may be provided thereafter. SG to circulate details to group.

The role of social networking was discussed. (e.g. discipline-specific Facebook). It was felt that a lot of institutional repositories are under-used. Most researchers look outward, so by nature data going into an institution's internal repository, then not of value. If Google crawling

LSM Group Members to consider and offer opinions on where RIN's priorities might lie when planning projects for 2009-10

SG to circulate details of SHERPA workshop to Group

manages to pick the contents of a repository up, then the landscape of repositories will have a broader value, which would be a way to open access. The value lies in shepherding information.

Repositories are seen in different ways by different groups. Some are seen as marketing tools, some are seen as a window to scholarly communications. Unless the purposes are commonly agreed, it will be hard to develop effective policies for taking forward development of repository. Without clarity of what constitutes a repository's 'audience' things will be hard.

Comments on how to take forward be should be emailed to SG. Information on the 11th Feb workshop will be circulated before Christmas

5. JOINT MEETING OF CONS GROUPS – 7th – 8th May 2009 (RIN/LSM/08/14)

Outlined in paper RIN/LSM/14. Aims to get interesting synergies and interactions between the groups.

This will be an. Overnight event, starting with reception dinner. Would like from Group ideas on what can be discussed, and what may be 3-4 main 'themes' of meeting.

It was felt that the Group should only meet prior to the Away Day if there is significant new information to be addressed. A decision on whether to hold such a meeting should be taken in early Spring.

6. COMMS STRATEGY (RIN/LSM/08/15)

This paper was noted.

An issue for RIN is engaging with members of research community in taking RIN projects forward. Relatively easy to engage those in information community; more difficult to engage research comm., and senior management in universities. RIN is keen to find ways of enhancing engagement. One mechanism is by working with learner societies, and work in this area is ongoing.

Some members were unaware of RIN until they received an invitation to the Group. It has been found a lot of people hadn't heard of it, and who subsequently have found RIN of use, and disseminated info to research community at seminars etc.

A lot of work been done on website, and need to encourage use. E.g. putting slides onto website. Views on the RIN website from Group members are welcomed.

Issue is how efficiently info is cascaded to colleagues in

LSM Group Members to forward any views on RIN website to Executive Team

institutions, and is of importance to RIN.

RIN doesn't typically publish in peer review journals, and publishing 'on behalf of RIN' would raise the profile.

Having a presence on www.academia.edu was suggested. This is a useful portal that makes those involved move higher up Google ranks. Inclusion in some in house newsletters would also be of value.

The 2010 International Conference in Advances in Online Publication will be a good opportunity for RIN to raise its presence.

7. RIN UPDATE & OPERATING PLAN

This was noted.

Team from Manchester and Edinburgh to be producing open access report.

8. UPDATE ON UKRDS FEASIBILITY STUDY (Additional paper tabled at meeting)

RIN is participating in this study, which is led by John Wood at Imperial. A 'path finder' project has been proposed for mini UK data service. The International UKRDS conference is on 26th February at the Royal Society.

UKRDS aims to act as a central hub facilitating deposit of data and sharing throughout a variety of service providers. Something tangible needs to be developed to show this is what the wider research community needs, and that it will be used (to ensure post-year 2 funding and taking it on from 'pathfinder'). Pathfinder will look at Case Studies, Oxford being one of the case study institutions.

Versions of reports that have been produced are available at www.ukrds.ac.uk and the Group's comments are invited.

9. Any Other Business

Members agreed to the minutes being placed on the RIN website

Date of next meeting: Monday 6th July 2009, 13h30 – 16h00