



RIN Consultative Group for Life Sciences and Medicine NOTE FROM THE FOURTH MEETING – 19 SEPTEMBER 2007

Action points in italics

Present:

John Coggins (Chair) (University of Glasgow)
James Brown (RIN)
Stéphane Goldstein (RIN)
Vince Smith (Natural History Museum)
Patricia Spoor (University of Leeds)

Apologies:

George Banting (University of Bristol)
Kevin Hiom (MRC Lab of Molecular Biology)
Michael Jubb (RIN)
Howard Meltzer (University of Leicester)
Oliver de Peyer (MRC National Institute for Medical Research)
Emily Quinton (University of Birmingham)
David Shotton (University of Oxford)
Nicola Seare (Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Strategic Health Authority)

1. Minutes of the meeting of 25 April 2007 and welcome (*paper RIN/LSM/07/01*)

The minutes were approved. The group noted the recent resignation of Stephen Kennedy.

2. Matters arising

[from item 2] Workshop on unique identifiers

The group reached the conclusion that, on reflection, it may not be timely for RIN to sponsor such a workshop in the near future. There was a view that this is an area in a great state of flux, characterised by significant technical complexity and lack of consensus about methodology. It was therefore not clear what a workshop might contribute.

Members suggested that this might be an area of activity more relevant for JISC than RIN. However, there could be a role for RIN in getting players together, and driving agendas for positive change. Some members of the RIN Funders Group may be interested in this topic, since significant investment may be involved with the purchasing of technical or commercial solutions. A small expert meeting rather than a large workshop could be the best way to move forward, and possible organisations to approach include the Linnean Society, Kew Gardens, the National History Museum (via Vince Smith), JISC, the DCC and the Biosciences Federation.

[from item 4] Workshop with learned societies in life sciences and biomedicine

Members agreed that it would be interesting and beneficial to organise the workshop on the same day as the next meeting of the Consultative Group, on 11 December, and to invite the Group to take part – using the precedent of the meeting arranged

- *RIN Executive Team to explore what work JISC and DCC are doing in this area.*
- *John Coggins to approach the Biosciences Federation.*

- *John Coggins to approach the Biosciences Federation and Academy of Medical Sciences to gauge their interest in the workshop.*

with the physical sciences learned societies last June.

[from item 7] [RIN website](#)

Members noted that the website is making good progress, with the RIN team blog getting some impressive viewing figures under a number of headings.

[from item 9] [RIN review](#)

The Group noted that RIN is expecting to receive another three-year tranche of funding, but is waiting a formal confirmation of its level of resourcing.

3. **Group membership** (*oral*)

The group noted that the size of the group has shrunk. Moreover, as evidenced by the number of members present on this occasion, attendance at meetings can be worryingly low. It was agreed that a larger pool of members would help to address these problems, and that RIN could usefully look to recruit another 5-6 individuals. Possible areas and organisations to draw from include:

- a practicing clinician, to provide an NHS perspective;
- a large project such as UK Biobank and/or the European Bioinformatics Institute (e.g. Janet Thornton);
- Kew Gardens (e.g. Sally Hinchcliffe);
- National Cancer Research Institute;
- National Library for Health; advice could be sought from those taking part in the RIN workshop with medical librarians in June.

- *All to identify individuals for RIN to approach*

4. **RIN workshop with medical librarians** (*paper RIN/LSM/07/08*)

The Group noted that RIN had found this a useful meeting, not least for making contacts; much interest had been expressed in RIN's proposed case studies.

The Group used the opportunity to underline the difficulty in securing single sign-on for researchers working in HE and the NHS; is this an area that RIN might usefully investigate? The group agreed that although technical aspects of this issue were part of JISC's remit, RIN could play a role in bringing together large institutions and advocating for a collaborative approach and acceptance of common standards. Malcolm Teague might be a useful contact regarding the complexities of the HE/NHS interface.

The Group noted that workshop participants had suggested that RIN undertake a mapping exercise to assess who is doing what with regard to research information issues in the health sector. Although David Ingram, from RIN's Advisory Board, had been sceptical about the usefulness of such a project (akin, in his terms, to 'mapping chaos'), the Group felt that even a small and quick survey of the landscape could draw attention to the issues in a positive manner.

- *RIN to further consider the possibility of a mapping exercise.*
- *Pat Spoor to advise how best to approach Malcolm Teague.*

5. Data stewardship and access to clinical research data (*paper RIN/LSM/07/09*)

Members noted that the RIN's consultation draft received a healthy level of response from universities and specialist bodies. The responses were generally positive and welcoming of RIN's high-level approach – although some on the Group felt that the more specific approach in UKOLN's set of recommendations is of more practical use for researchers. However, it was also felt that senior institutional managers could benefit from the RIN principles. Members suggested that these might be moved forward in the following ways:

- A collaborative approach is needed; there is a clear need to discuss the implications notably with Research Councils, JISC, the Digital Curation Centre and universities.
- There should be encouragement of the effective management of data as it is being created rather than after the research has been completed.
- There was strong support for the identification of case studies to point to best practice in data stewardship.

6. Proposal for first round of RIN case studies (*paper RIN/LSM/07/10*)

Members noted the rationale for RIN's proposed programme of case studies, which would probe more deeply than the surveys that have formed part of previous RIN projects, and will investigate in a focused and intelligent way at researchers' broad information behaviour as a basis of informing policy making. There is an initial challenge in deciding which areas/disciplines might be covered. Ideas and advice from the Group included:

- The Natural History Museum had commissioned case studies relating to its own records and information.
- Joyce Tate (University of Edinburgh) is a social scientist interested in how researchers collect information and get it to the public – she may be worth approaching.
- Some graduate schools, which run courses on research management, might be a useful source of advice.
- Members agreed that clinical research in general is too broad an area to investigate. Sub-disciplines such as cancer research could be worthy of investigation (perhaps working jointly with such organisations as NCRI, Cancer Research UK, MRC, Wellcome Trust, UK Biobank...). It would be useful to identify specific areas that have developed bespoke approaches to research information.
- The genetics of biodiversity is potentially a non-clinical area that could form the basis of a further case.

- *Vince Smith to send to RIN the Natural History Museum's case study report [now received]*

7. RIN study on usage of journals (*paper RIN/LSM/07/11*)

This was noted. Members expressed the hope that data would provide for interesting information despite differences between usage logs.

8. Update on RIN study on cost and information flows in the scholarly communications process (paper RIN/LSM/07/12)

This was noted for information. It was pointed out that Carl Bergstrom, in the USA, had developed approaches to look at impact factors as set against journal costs into account.

It was suggested that Group member George Banting might be interested in this project.

■ *Vince Smith to send to RIN details of Carl Bergstrom's work [now received]*

9. RIN Update

This was noted without discussion.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 11 December, 13:00 15:30 – subject to confirmation, meeting with life sciences and biomedical learned societies to take place on the morning of the same days; Consultative Group members are welcome to take part.