



## RIN Consultative Group for Physical Sciences, Technology & Engineering NOTE FROM THE SECOND MEETING – 22 SEPTEMBER 2006

### Action points in red italics

#### Present:

Elaine Martin (Chair) (University of Newcastle)  
James Brown (Research Information Network)  
Simon Coles (University of Southampton)  
Robin Hankin (University of Southampton)  
Roger Hines (Sheffield Hallam University)  
Michael Jubb (Research Information Network)  
Suresh Thennadil (University of Newcastle)  
Jackie Van Bueren (Research Information Network)

#### Apologies

David Gavaghan (Oxford University)  
Stéphane Goldstein (Research Information Network)  
Keith Westhead (British Geological Survey)  
Tong Sun (City University)

### 1. Welcome

<p>1.1 Elaine Martin welcomed members to the second meeting of the Group. Members were reminded to please fill in a short introduction about themselves and their role in the research community, if they have not already done so. Elaine proposed that the meeting's focus should be on identifying two key initiatives for the Consultative Group and the RIN to work on.</p>	<p>▶ <b>All Group Members</b> (if they haven't already), to write a short introduction and email to Stéphane Goldstein<sup>1</sup></p>
<p>1.2 <u>Group membership</u>: as noted at the last meeting, the group should necessarily expand to encompass all themes. However, suggestions were to wait until after the meeting, so that more informed suggestions could be made.</p>	

### 2. RIN Consultative Groups: what next? (*paper RIN/PTE/06/06*)

<p>2.1. Michael Jubb explained that there are two areas of activity that the consultative groups have and can be engaged with, with particular reference to the PTE group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ As a channel for advocacy and two-way communication between the RIN and the research community</li><li>▶ As mechanism for making proposals for specific areas of the landscape that the RIN should seek to address, or projects that it should undertake</li></ul> <p>The group was invited to discuss any pressing issues which could become RIN projects.</p>	<p>▶ <b>Within the next month, All Group Members</b> to undertake "intelligence gathering" for an RIN software project – providing the RIN with forms of best practice, key issues, and initiatives currently being developed.</p> <p>▶ <b>With this information, RIN</b> to begin to define the project scope in time for</p>
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<sup>1</sup> Stephane.Goldstein@rin.ac.uk

2.2 Software: The group agreed that this was an appropriate issue to be discussed in this group, considering the relevant expertise of members. Numerous issues were raised and comments made with regard to this area:

- ▶ the difficulty of locating software that goes hand-in-hand with a research project;
- ▶ making associated meta-data accessible and machine-readable;
- ▶ storage, curation, indexing and subsequent access;
- ▶ using common techniques to note versions of software;
- ▶ the possibility of using kitemark standards or accreditation as a way of encouraging best practice and maintaining standards;
- ▶ creating incentives for researchers to think about these issues before and during their research (rather than storing and cataloguing it post-hoc, which is an alternative perspective being discussed by the LIS Consultative Group) – “futureproofing” research;
- ▶ anticipating and overcoming resistance in the research community to a perceived threat to their academic freedom – a significant cultural change may be required;
- ▶ Where should pressure for best practice come from – journal publishers? Funding bodies? Government?
- ▶ There are some disciplines, such as crystallography, who are leading the way in this arena, where expertise and lessons can be learnt.

2.3 Persistent DOI's: Michael Jubb explained that the persistent identifiers were an issue being discussed by the LIS Consultative Group. Perhaps this was something that the PTE Group would also like to look at? The group expressed an interest in the subject but agreed that due to the size of the previous project in software, it would be best to stay informed of the LIS Group's activities rather than get actively involved.

next group meeting.

### **3. Towards an RIN Communications Strategy (paper RIN/PTE/06/07)**

3.1 The Group noted that RIN's current communications activities with regard to the website, events, printed publications and with the specialist media. James Brown explained that Aim 2 of the RIN's Strategic Plan necessitates a 2-way level of communication with the research community it seeks to represent, and as such the RIN should look to develop new and interesting ways to engage in a dialogue with stakeholders. The development of the RIN's website plays a significant part in a communications strategy to initiate and sustain this dialogue.

3.2 Members exchanged views on the utility of new online technologies such as blogs and wikis, which currently are used in

- ▶ **James Brown to continue to develop interesting and new ways to communicate with key stakeholders – specifically through the RIN website with blogs and wikis – with a view to trialling ideas with the Consultative Group.**

**Paper RIN/PTE/07/01**

small numbers. There is also the problem of “information overload;” and the concern that these new technologies might simply be an extra addition. However, the group agreed that if the information is interesting and relevant, and made available in an accessible and user-friendly manner, then it can be fruitful. It is also a symbolic show of solidarity for other technical information specialists who use similar tools. The group suggested that they would be happy to be used as a trial audience.

3.3 In addition to engaging within the circles of RIN Standing Committees, the group commented on communicating to the wider community. One idea was cross-links to the websites with various relevant bodies. Another idea was issuing a survey on the RIN website asking for views on various topics.

**4. RIN Scholarly Communications Activities (paper RIN/PTE/06/08)**

4.1 The group noted the recent activities that the RIN has undertaken in this area: The Scholarly Journals Baseline Report, which has as its unique selling point an authoritative methodology accepted by all the relevant stakeholders; Continuing work on the Key Strategic Goals of Public Policy in Scholarly Communications statement, which has been endorsed by the Publishers’ Association and will be discussed by the RIN’s Scholarly Communications Group; and the possibility of a workshop on digital data which has a broad focus beyond simply online journals but its place in the scholarly communications process more generally.

4.2 It was suggested that the subject of education was absent from the public policy statement – was this something the document needed to address?

4.3 Group members were invited to submit themselves as members for the RIN’s Scholarly Communication Group.

- ▶ **Group Members** to email Stéphane Goldstein if they wish to nominate themselves for membership of the RIN’s Scholarly Communications Group (or wish to suggest any other suitable person).

**5. Joint RIN/RCUK/DTI survey of scholarly journals (paper RIN/PTE/06/09)**

5.1 Michael Jubb noted the main findings from the draft executive summary of the report from the analysis, emphasising the gaps in knowledge, and how the document could be used for prioritising further work.

5.2 The group noted that for the workshop on 14<sup>th</sup> November to present the full results of the report, the RIN should try to recruit attendees from the research community as well as librarians and publishers.

- ▶ **Group Members** to try and attend RIN workshop on Scholarly Journals (14<sup>th</sup> November); and suggest/find relevant people who could also attend.
- ▶ **RIN** to send out more information on the event when it becomes available.

**6. Digital Data Management (paper RIN/PTE/06/10)**

6.1 The group commented on the latest version of the RIN's draft principles and guidelines on stewardship of digital research data. The group agreed that there were a number of tricky issues:

- ▶ Addressing the resistance from researchers by finding the balance between over-prescription and finding a commonly accepted framework. It is too early to tell if the RIN's document has struck the balance correctly, need to wait for the reaction.
- ▶ Directing the focus onto institutions and funders - was an onus on institutions to provide storage for their researchers' outputs? The relative costs and benefits of the appraisal process as opposed to simply storing everything
- ▶ If the former, how to decide what data has long-term value?
- ▶ The internet and technology as a backward step: although data can be made more readily available, control and restricted access are much easier to implement.
- ▶ The problem of dynamic data, and keeping track of versions.
- ▶ Finding best practice – there are guidelines in the IT software industry, for example “The UNIX Way”

6.2 The group suggested a number of individuals and institutions who could speak at the RIN's associated workshop, from the perspective of funders, curators, researchers and institutions.

▶ **Roger Hankin** to find IT guidelines about managing data “The UNIX Way”

▶ **Group Members** to circulate publicity to colleagues about RIN workshop (5<sup>th</sup> December), when it has been sent out.

▶ **Group Members** to try and attend RIN workshop on Digital Data Management (5<sup>th</sup> December); and suggest/find relevant people who could also attend or speak.

▶ **RIN** to investigate the possibility of EBANK, UKOLN, University of Southampton Library, Grid Science and FDA as speakers.

**7. Research funders' policy and practice (paper RIN/PTE/06/11)**

7.1 The group noted that this report is due to be completed shortly, and that an associated event is planned to launch and discuss the report's findings, and future actions.

**8. Any other business**

8.1 There was none.