

Research Support Libraries Group

Minutes of the third meeting of the Research Support Libraries Group held on Tuesday 27 November 2001 at the British Library, St Pancras, Euston Road, London.

Attendees:	Brian Follett (Chair) Prof. Michael Anderson Mr Bahram Bekhradnia Prof. Robert Burgess Dr Reg Carr Prof. David Eastwood Mr Andrew Green Ms Mary Heaney Prof. Arthur Lucas	Apologies:	Ms Lynne Brindley Prof. Ian Halliday Mr Will Naylor Ms Karen Stanton Sheila Rodgers (DEL NI) Emma Morris (ELWa)
Guests:	Mr Lorcan Dempsey Mr Ronald Milne		
Secretariat:	Ms Vanessa Conte Mr Mike Crump Mr Paul Hubbard		

Introduction

1. The Chair opened by welcoming two guests, Ronald Milne and Lorcan Dempsey, invited to give presentations on the national union catalogue and the electronic library respectively.

Report on the UK National Union Catalogue

2. Ronald Milne presented the findings and recommendations of the recent feasibility study into the issues and options relating to the desirability of having a national union catalogue (NUC). He updated the group on progress made against those recommendations, most notably the scoping study now underway for a serials union catalogue, SUNCAT.

3. The group discussed the merits of a UK national union catalogue and the relative cost of creation and maintenance. Potential barriers, including coverage and technical difficulties were noted but considered negotiable in view of the benefits of a NUC to UK academic users and as a foundation for the creation of a distributed national collection. Members agreed further discuss these issues after the receiving the report of the serials scoping study in March 2002.

Report on the DNER

4. Reg Carr introduced this paper with an emphasis on how thoughts on the DNER had moved forward to discussions around a JISC information environment. The group discussed the evolution of DNER and how it might become a platform for the RSLG vision of the national hybrid library. It was agreed that there was insufficient time to properly discuss the paper but that it contained a number of issues the group would wish to return to, including the relationship with the national libraries and e-science grids.

Presentation on the Electronic Library

5. The group received a presentation from Lorcan Dempsey on electronic library issues. This included:

- a. the idea of shared resources and shared space and the advantages to creating and managing a collective resource
- b. how libraries can work together and challenges posed by working alongside centralised services provided by the national structures of JISC and DNER
- c. the distinction between unique and non-unique materials and implications this presented to collection and retention policies
- d. the importance of understanding user behaviour and its implications on the DNER architecture
- e. a consistent and co-ordinated approach to collection provision and the development of standards
- f. the responsibility to the national intellectual record

Research studies progress reports

Researchers' Use of Libraries and other Information Sources

6. Bob Burgess updated the group on progress made with the library use study. The literature review and initial three focus groups had been completed and reports received. These had helped design the questionnaire which was now being piloted with a sample group of researchers. Based on the pilot findings, the questionnaire will be amended and the main survey despatched in January 2002.

7. The steering group was pleased with the progress of the research team but Bob Burgess continued to stress to them the importance of the survey yielding defined research discipline information. More sophisticated data needed to be drawn out to enable valuable disciplinary analysis and conclusions.

Collaboration in research library provision: international comparisons

8. The group did not feel sufficiently informed about the finding of the international study to allow a formal decision to be made about visiting any of the models of collaboration identified overseas. Members requested more information on the case studies shortlisted and the reasons for their applicability to the work of the RSLG.

Research Library costing study – update

9. Paul Hubbard updated the group on the proposal to commission a study to cost a university library. On the chair's recommendation the proposal had been discussed with David Westbury, chair of the Committee which managed the Transparency Review, and in particular about its feasibility. Members restated their interest in such a study being completed and agreed that Paul should continue discussion with David about how to take this forward.

Sub-group progress reports: E-science and JISC Scholarly Communications Group

10. The group was assured that work had been progressing with both sub-groups though the reports submitted did not warrant much discussion at this stage. As agreed the scholarly communication group would report to the RSLG in January and e-science in May.

Next Steps and Date of next meeting

11. The chair informed members that the secretariat had begun to give thought to the structure and content of the RSLG's final report to its sponsoring bodies. It was anticipated that writing would continue in the New Year and the report formally discussed at the group's residential meeting in June.

12. The next meeting of the RSLG is confirmed for **Friday 25 January 2002** at the HEFCE offices, Centre Point, London.