



Relay



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Editorial

As this issue goes to press the impact of the recession is making itself increasingly apparent across the higher education sector and including within library and information services. Library and information services on the one hand are being required to cut costs, and on the other to provide new services and contributions to the university as a whole, whilst demonstrating real observable value and impact. A future edition of *Relay* will look at libraries' response to cuts in the sector and the wider impact of the recession. If you wish to contribute to this, please see the author guidelines at the end of this issue.

Raymond Harper, Knowledge Management Coordinator at CUREE (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education), presents work based on his dissertation whilst at the Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield, exploring the early impact of the current economic downturn on library and information services in higher education. He points out the scarcity of research in this area and using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods not only provides an initial snapshot of impacts but also indicates the way ahead for further research as the full impact of the recession and the cuts in public funding that we can expect to follow makes itself clear.

Harper describes one outcome of the current economic climate as the initiation of new projects and developments. In this issue Julie Adams and Alison Pope describe developments at Staffordshire University around the Assignment Survival Kit (ASK) (which in 2007 won the CILIP University College and Research Group Award for Innovation). The Assignment Survival Kit exists within a context of a university-wide strategic approach to information literacy which highlights the importance of embedding information literacy at the heart of the learning experience. ASK provides a web-based tool aimed at providing round the clock support for students tackling their first assignment. Adams and Pope describe the tool and its ongoing development and use across a number of institutions.

Elizabeth Malone describes another service developed to meet a specific need for a specific target audience. Kingston University had recognized a gap in information provision generally for university applicants, prospective students who have received either a firm or conditional offer of a place of study, and their specific concerns. "Getting Ready" is a portal offering applicants a one-stop shop of information about student life, incorporating information matched to the needs and concerns of this group. Malone describes both the initial phase and ongoing developments of this service in a paper based on a presentation given to the CILIP Umbrella conference.

Another Umbrella presenter Gareth Johnson, of the University of Leicester, provides his own personal reflections on the Umbrella conference, highlighting the personal value and benefits of attending this conference and sessions outside one's own sector. Differing perspectives also feature in two articles looking at international aspects of library and information services work. Lindsey Fairhurst, Directorate Office Manager/Librarian, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, continues an ongoing series of international perspectives, providing an overview of trends affecting German academic libraries, and Alan Hopkinson, Middlesex University, describes an international project creating a new masters programme on library and information science, aimed at modernising library training in the states of the former Soviet Union.

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The effects of the recent economic downturn on library and information services in higher education



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Date of study: June-September 2009

Introduction

The recent economic downturn in both the global and UK economy, coupled with the UK having recently entered recession, triggered an investigation during summer 2009 of the impact of the 'credit crunch' on library and information services (LIS) in UK higher education. The study was conducted for a dissertation as part of a Masters in Librarianship at the University of Sheffield.

Higher education is a large sector, which draws a substantial proportion of its income from public finance. Reputable sources indicate that public funding of higher education may decline in the future.¹ LIS are dependent on their parent institutions, and have faced disproportionate inflation increases on journal prices since the 1980s. This makes the effects of an economic downturn even more relevant to LIS in this sector.

Significant empirical studies on the impact of economic downturns on libraries include Goulding's² 1990 dissertation on UK public libraries, Foster's³ 2009 survey of the UK business information sector and a major longitudinal study of Canadian academic libraries by Auster and Taylor⁴. Literature in this field tends to consist of opinion pieces, aggregated data or practical guides on financial management. There is a lack of empirical studies on the effects of economic downturns on LIS within the UK higher education sector, with a particular lack of qualitative research.

Objectives and methods

This study aimed to investigate the effects of the economic downturn on LIS in higher education. The central objectives were to investigate the effects on working practices

and human resources; on information resources and collection management; on projects and developments; and on service portfolios.

The study took a mixed methods approach, using both quantitative data (generated by a questionnaire) and qualitative data (obtained from a series of semi-structured interviews). The pragmatic philosophy of the study had a strong focus on emergent enquiry, naturalistic situations and the interaction of different causes, making it particularly suited to studying this sort of topic.

A literature review was conducted, examining specialised journals and monographs, specific databases (e.g. *Library and Information Science Abstracts*) which was supplemented by more general sources (e.g. *Times Higher Education*) given the relative paucity of empirical research.

The literature review informed the design of the questionnaire, which contained 36 questions. There were 32 closed questions answered with a five-point Likert scale, indicating a respondent's agreement or disagreement with a statement followed by four open questions which were answered in a more flexible way. It was distributed to 155 delegates at the SCONUL conference in June 2009 and obtained 36 responses, giving a 23% response rate, but covering around one-third of the UK higher education institutions represented at the event. Questionnaire results were analysed mainly by calculating mean average scores for each question. This formed the basis for detailed comparison of results for different institution types and job positions.

The interview schedule was based largely on the questionnaire results. The five institutions selected as case sites were chosen to provide a spread of institutional types – two from the Russell Group of large research universities, one from the 1994 Group of medium-sized research universities and two post-1992 universities – within reasonable travelling distance for the researcher. Eight semi-structured interviews with senior LIS staff were conducted across the five institutions, involving a total of 12 participants in individual and group interviews. Interviews were analysed using cross-sectional indexing, which is a method of organising qualitative data from different cases.⁵

Findings

The study found that the most severely affected areas were information resources and human resources. There was some form of recruitment freeze at four of the five institutions, all imposed by the parent institution. This contrasted with questionnaire results which had similar numbers of respondents agreeing and disagreeing about the prevalence of frozen posts.

Working conditions were affected in some institutions with employees taking on more job roles, and in one case, suffering from low morale. The questionnaire results showed high disagreement that staff development was being reduced. Staff development was affected slightly in some institutions studied in interviews, although generally participants saw staff development as of greater importance in an economic crisis.

Information resources are being affected adversely by the falling value of the pound sterling, which is exacerbating existing problems with journal inflation rates. An overwhelming majority of questionnaire respondents (89%) agreed or strongly agreed that rising prices were being caused by the current exchange rate, this being supported by interview results. Two institutions studied in interviews had cancelled journal subscriptions, whilst the remaining three had concerns about maintaining subscriptions in the future.

Projects and developments were affected in a complex way. Questionnaire results showed particularly mixed responses on projects and developments, with high proportions of neutral results. Some institutions were commencing major refurbishments that were unaffected, largely due to the timing of these projects, with funding already secured. Some were reducing investment in projects (e.g. library management systems), with a general awareness that greater selectivity was needed in this area. At both Post-1992 universities, projects were being conducted or accelerated as a response to the economic situation, notably harnessing digital content.

Service portfolios were least affected, with questionnaire results showing strong disagreement with reduction of opening hours, information literacy activity and of new IT equipment. The interview results confirmed that service portfolios were the least affected area, with services unaffected in two institutions. There was some slowing of services at two institutions, with reduced capacity caused by reduced staff resources.

Conclusions

The effects of the economic downturn have not been fully experienced at the current time, given the long lead-in time in financial commitments and the myriad of legislative obligations governing areas like human resources. The study therefore provides an insight into the short-term effects of the economic downturn. The most significant effects have been the freezing of posts in some institutions, and the effects of the currency fluctuation on journal prices. More serious effects may be felt in the future, given the likely decline in funding for high education under the next UK government.

The study provides one of the first empirical insights into the effects of the economic downturn on this sector, and is one of the first in the field to combine qualitative and quantitative methods in investigating this topic. The findings on human resources (notably the freezing of vacant posts) and information resources (the effects on the price of content) support evidence in the literature review. A major new finding is the complex effect of economic conditions on projects and developments, which can be inhibited by, initiated due to, or unaffected by poor economic conditions.

The study highlights the importance of strong leadership which communicates clearly with the LIS workforce and external stakeholders, and the value of flexibility in responding to constrained economic conditions. There is a need for clear government policy to reduce uncertainty and allow for better planning in this area. In addition, organizations within the LIS profession (e.g. CILIP) could produce guidance on how managers should cope with less tangible effects on workforces.

The study identified four areas where further investigation would be useful, namely the nature of changing job roles in constrained periods; planning in LIS, and how this informs decisions at management level; the effects on practical budget management; and the distinctiveness of the current situation compared to past financial circumstances. It also identified other types of study which could usefully be undertaken to gain further insights, including the use of more detailed documentary analysis to enhance accuracy; using a more interpretive approach to investigate less tangible areas, such as staff morale; replicating this study (or elements of it) to aid longitudinal comparison; and examining the effects on other sectors, notably the finance and banking sector.

¹ Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). 'The IFS Green Budget 2009', Available from: <http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/4417> [Accessed 30 July 2009]

² Goulding, A. An examination of the effects of the economic climate on all levels of personnel within a library service. A study submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Librarianship at the University of Sheffield. Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1990. [Unpublished].

³ Foster, A. 'Battening down the hatches: The Business Information Survey 2009'. Business Information Review, 26 (1), 2009, pp10-27.

⁴ Auster, E. & Taylor, S. Downsizing in academic libraries: the Canadian experience. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.

⁵ Mason, J. Qualitative researching. London: Sage Publications, 1996.

Using emerging technologies to enhance the appeal and applicability of the Assignment Survival Kit



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1. Introduction

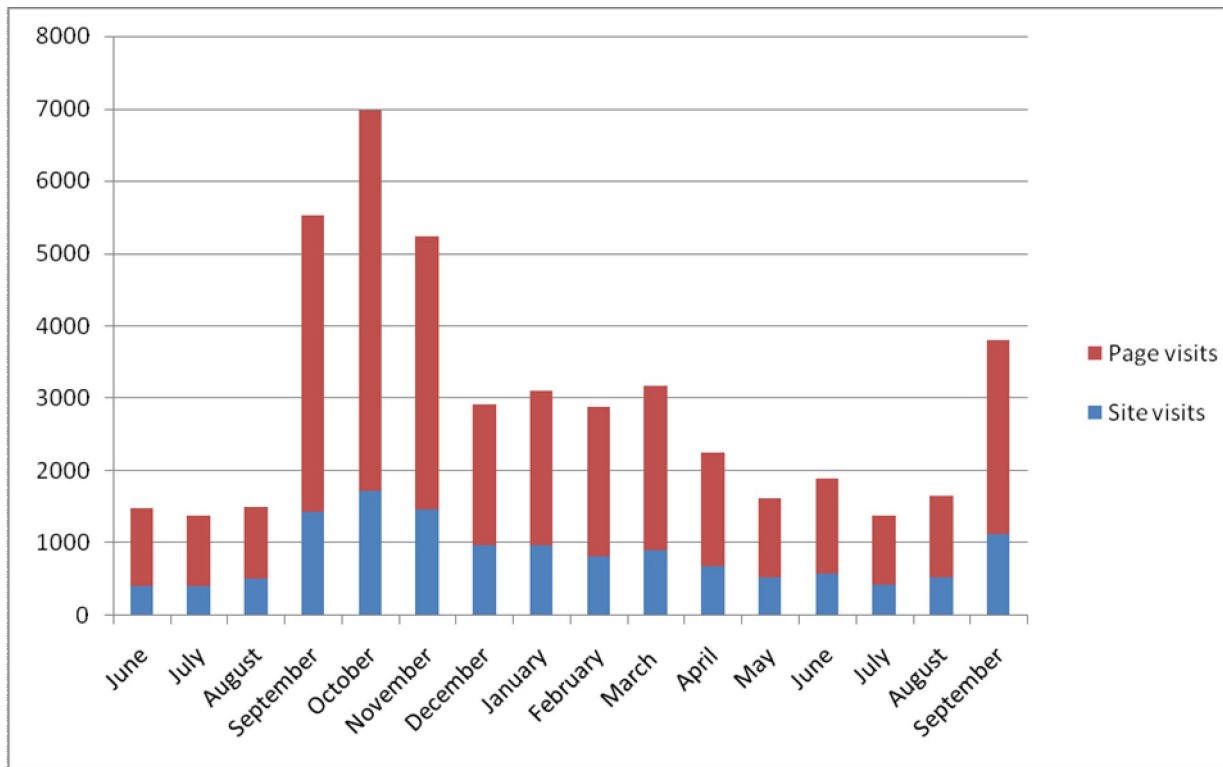
Since 2007 Staffordshire University has taken a strategic approach to information literacy and, in the context of this, has begun to develop a number of learning support products to underpin this new approach. The Assignment Survival Kit (ASK) is a key deliverable which supports the university's Statement of Good Practice on Information Literacy and the Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy. Both these documents highlight the importance of embedding information literacy at the heart of the learning experience. The Statement stresses that the inclusion of information literacy should be iterative and incremental, using a "just in time" approach where possible¹ and so time management is at the core of ASK's functionality. In addition, research has shown that the topicality or relevance of any intervention is important and, consequently, ASK revolves around the idea of a "hot topic"² of great interest and significance to the student.

To give some background, the Assignment Survival Kit is a web-based tool aimed at providing round the clock support for students tackling their first assignment whether this is an essay, a report, a poster or a portfolio. Once a student enters a deadline date, a detailed stepped schedule, mapping out key stages in the completion of the work, is created. This schedule gives a suggested timescale for activities including planning, finding and evaluating materials, citing references and presentation. The software aims to help students adapt to study at tertiary level, encouraging them to take a different approach to their work and providing a single link to the bewildering range of study support resources available. Aimed specifically at supporting first year undergraduate students, ASK underpins the University's widening participation strategy and also the

emphasis on enhancing the learning experience. ASK is the work of the Information Literacy Project Working Group within Staffordshire University Information Services. Following close collaboration with faculties, the software now links to a number of useful internal and external learning support web pages. It was created by the complete adaptation of Open Source software used by the University of Minnesota in their Assignment Calculator. Scripts were re-used and re-written to enable local relevance, for example UK date and format as well as re-writing the number of steps in the process and the proportioning of time between these steps.

In 2007 ASK won the CILIP University College and Research Group Award for Innovation. This award gave us an additional impetus for further development of ASK and meant that the software was exposed to a wider audience. ASK has also been the recipient of LearnHigher funding: money given by LearnHigher at Manchester Metropolitan University has helped to fund a series of focus group activities to glean student opinion on the software, and money made available by LearnHigher at the University of Kent at Canterbury has paid for some initial work to be done on the creation of podcasts. We have already received requests from many other institutions wishing to use the ASK software and have applied a Creative Commons licence to the software.

Since going live in October 2006 the software has been well received by both staff and students. ASK makes our services more attractive by being available 24/7. Students do not always write assignments during university opening hours and this service provides support when tutors and library staff are not available. Analysis of the data from the site hit counter indicates that the use of ASK is at a peak in the Autumn term; in October 2008 there were 1725 site visits. This corresponds to times when many students were being set, and beginning work upon, assignments. Senior faculty staff have welcomed ASK as a support tool - praising particularly the way in which it provides excellent study guidance for students. Some schools are using the tool to augment support surgeries and emphasize the continuous availability of ASK.



ASK usage statistics – June 2008-September 2009

In the 12 months from 1 September 2008 to 31 August 2009 there were a total of 11,028 visits to the ASK site, with 27, 586 separate pages being viewed.

2. Enhancing ASK's appeal and applicability

ASK is under constant review and development. Currently the development team is engaged in a new LearnHigher funded project to enhance the software by harnessing the plethora of emerging technologies that is Web 2.0 to meet the ever-changing demands of the student population.

Here we seek to report on how the development team are increasing the flexibility and inclusivity of ASK in response to the findings of a series of focus groups conducted at Staffordshire University, our own professional judgment and day-to-day assessment of use all in the context of the wider research environment. We intend to highlight our progress in the following areas;

- creating podcast/vodcasts to support a range of learning styles.

- designing an empty scaffold or core framework for ASK using a Content Management System (CMS) environment so that it can be used in an individually structured fashion.
- enabling personalization using Web 2.0 technology (RSS feeds, iCalendar) to present the content in a more individually tailored way to support all types of learners and learning opportunities.

2.1 Creating podcast/vodcasts to support a range of learning styles

Research shows that podcasts can provide an innovative mechanism to deliver information literacy material in a way that helps encourage active learning and support different learning styles. Dale³ quotes Hargis and Wilson's 2005 study which suggests that podcasting may be a way of sharing the learning experience which allows conceptual thoughts and ideas to emerge. In the context of the current higher education thrust towards widening participation, podcasts can help those students who are distance learners and work-based learners. These students may need to study in the context of their busy lives. The time-shifted learning benefits of podcasting have been acknowledged as a significant support for such learners.

“This media allows the learner to decide when and where they will engage with the content. This is a great way to reach students in remote places or who may have schedule conflicts that make it difficult for them to attend an information literacy event at the library.”⁴

We have been influenced by the work done at Nottingham University⁵. Our development of podcasts will enhance ASK's appeal to those with specific learning support needs, improving its accessibility, for example, to those with dyslexia. Dyslexic students may have a tendency to prefer an aural learning style. Podcasts can, therefore, help increase inclusivity.

Podcasts may also help students whose first language is not English. Their reading, speaking and listening skills may be at varying levels and podcasts may provide valuable support since they can be repeated many times to aid understanding.

2.2 Designing an empty scaffold or core framework for ASK using a Content Management System (CMS) environment so that it can be used in an individually structured fashion.

In developing ASK we have been aware that there are two parallel approaches to the information contained within it. One is the “learning” approach and the other is the “teaching” approach.

Let us first address the “learning” angle. The current version of ASK organizes the assignment stages starting with planning, followed by research and then write-up. However, the team is aware – from feedback gained from student focus groups at Staffordshire University and other information literacy studies⁶ – that some students do not work in this way at all. This evidence informs our development plans to use emerging technology to add the flexibility which will allow learners to re-order these stages to more actively mirror their individual learning styles. In order to do this the software designer will need to re-write the code used to present the web pages. Once this has been done, students will be able to enhance the existing schedule so that they can specifically order the stages of ASK to suit themselves. The benefits of this “smorgasbord” approach to designing individual learning tools have been highlighted by Godwin⁷.

The bespoke approach to student support will be reflected on the “teaching” side in the development of a quite separate technological enhancement. Namely, the creation of a core framework for ASK using a Content Management System (CMS) environment which can be used in an individually structured fashion. This development will pass control of the content back to the creators, allowing academics and information professionals to update content rapidly and autonomously without the need to contact the software designer. This will mean that the framework can simultaneously support many different learners and levels of learning. It will also allow us to locate learning objects in the university’s repository and then draw material from this as appropriate.

In order to achieve these two flexible elements it will be necessary to modify the database, scripting and website presentation used to develop the existing version of the tool. Currently ASK uses PHP scripts with a MySQL database and HTML and JavaScript for the web pages. The technology used will be reviewed and, where appropriate, new methods and technology employed. This will involve enhancement of the existing database, or use of newer technology such as Web Services or AJAX.

2.3 Enabling personalization using Web 2.0 technology (RSS feeds, iCalendar) to present the content in a more individually tailored way to support all types of learners and learning opportunities

At the moment students can only opt to have email reminders between each of the various ASK stages. We are aware that there are two main problems with this approach. First of all not all students use their university email regularly or even at all and there is currently no option to give a different email address. Secondly, the frequency of reminders cannot be varied and students may find the number of reminders automatically sent to be rather burdensome. This criticism was made a number of times at our focus group sessions and a review of the software log-files suggests that this feature is not being used as frequently as we had anticipated.

Consequently, we have identified a number of routes to improvement. We see three specific ways forward,

- email sent only at key stages in the assignment preparation schedule
- reminders received through other mechanisms such as RSS feeds
- allowing students to add dates to online calendars such as i-Calendar

The email improvement will be easy to effect but, admittedly, the other two ideas will present the development team with more challenges. At this stage, however, we feel that in at least identifying these needs we have made an important step forward.

3. Conclusion

Whatever technological developments are incorporated within ASK to widen its applicability and appeal we need to ensure that we do not reduce its attraction to those who have found ASK useful in its current form. We want to add useful and helpful technology to ASK not to burden it with unwanted gadgetry which we, as information professionals, may find interesting but which students may find alienating. Many of the students we have spoken to in the focus groups have praised ASK's simplicity and this is something we want to strive to preserve. Sometimes simple is effective.

We need to avoid the addition of any unduly quirky technology, especially if it proves difficult to use. Some learners could be put off if there are too many options to select from - particularly at the time when they are making the transition to tertiary level education. At this stage students seem to welcome the clear guidance that planning tools such as ASK can provide in helping them tackle their daunting first assignment. ASK has proved to be particularly attractive to, and most marketed toward, challenged level one students. We know such students are already overwhelmed by the range of resources available to support their research, as well as the potentially bewildering array of technological tools which might be able to assist them. If we overcomplicate ASK by adding too many unnecessary "bells and whistles" we may find that some students disengage completely.

We need to balance the current trend towards the development of individual learning styles with the tried and tested simplicity of ASK. The existing - in computer software terms- 'vanilla' version of ASK has been hugely popular, as the usage figures and student feedback indicate. In the 12 months from 1 September 2008 to 31 August 2009 there were a total of 11,028 visits to the ASK site, with 27,586 separate pages being viewed. Vanilla software is so-called because it is not customised from its generic "out of the box" form. We will need to ensure that this 'flavour' is still easily available to

students but that those who want to add to their version with technological chocolate chips and virtual marshmallows can do so.

Value will only be added if the application of new technology is done in such a way as to address learner needs and not just to jump on the Web 2.0 bandwagon. There is a danger in assuming that because students use Web 2.0 applications for social purposes they will want to do so to aid their learning – how do we know that this is really true?

The strong foundation of Web 2.0 technologies which can cater for easy change and enhancement will allow us to refresh and update ASK frequently so that it will remain popular with new cohorts of students - we hope in a way which will succeed in matching evolving student preferences and ever-developing learning styles. Our current objective is clear: we aim to harness the best of Web 2.0 in order to improve the appeal and applicability of ASK to the present generation of students. At the same time we must rein in our wish to embellish ASK so as not to lose our original intended audience: the time-poor and bewildered first year undergraduate

¹ Walker, H.M. & Engel, K.R. , 'Research exercise: a sequenced approach to just-in-time information literacy instruction' *Research Strategies*, 19, 2003, pp. 135-47

² Bordinaro, K. & Richardson, G., 'Scaffolding and reflection in course integrated library instruction' *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 30 (5), 2004, pp. 391-401

³ Dale, C., 'Strategies for using podcasts to support student learning' *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 6(1), 2007, pp. 49-57

⁴ Roberts, R. L., 'Podcasting for information literacy'. Presented at: World library and information congress: 73rd IFLA general conference and council "Libraries for the future: progress, development and partnerships", 19-23 August 2007, Durban, South Africa, 2007, p. 5

⁵ Nottingham University, 'Benefits of podcasting for dyslexic students' 2007, Available from <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/dyslexia/teaching/lectures/benefits020> [Accessed 24 February 2009]

⁶ M. Smith. M. & Hepworth, M., 'Motivating learners to become information literate', *Library and Information Update*, 4 (1-2), 2005, pp. 46-47; Pope, A. & Walton, G.'Information and media literacies: sharpening our vision in the twenty first century', in Leaning, M. ed., *Issues in information and media literacy: education, practice and pedagogy*, Santa Rosa, Ca: Informing Science Press, 2009, pp. 1-39.

⁷ Godwin, P., 'Information literacy in the age of amateurs: how Google and Web 2.0 affect librarians' support of information literacy', *Italics*, 5 (4), 2006, pp. 268-87

Personal services: how information services can support the university's marketing strategy through Web 2.0 and beyond

Based on a paper presented at Umbrella 2009



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Information Services departments and Marketing departments are not always natural collaborators and yet most marketing strategies are highly dependent on the organisation and use of information. The creation of a website dedicated to applicants at Kingston University developed into a collaborative project involving a range of university departments and faculties and provided interesting opportunities to review the use of new technologies in this area. As a project it embodied the theme of the Umbrella conference – *Making Connections*.

At Kingston University, our external website has a clear purpose. First and foremost it is for marketing our courses. Its secondary roles include providing the wider world with an insight into what Kingston is about and illustrating the range of activity in teaching, learning, research and enterprise. The majority of information for our current students and staff is held within our intranets and there is a dedicated alumni system. What was becoming clear to staff in our Student Services and Administration department was that there was a gap between the pure marketing recruitment information and the provision of information for current students on the intranet which was only accessible once they had enrolled. What was required was a site dedicated to our applicants, those prospective students who had received either a firm or conditional offer of a place of study, which would address their specific concerns.

This requirement was outlined at a meeting convened by our Director of Student Services and Administration who had been tasked to identify a number of key actions that would contribute overall to improving the student experience at Kingston. When this meeting was held, it was already mid-February 2008 and the Director felt quite strongly that this site needed to be in place by early June 2008. My role as Head of

Content Development in Information Services includes some responsibility for web developments and the use of information across our intranets as well as overseeing our electronic and print collections. I also have an interest in new technologies and how we can use them to exploit the information we hold. As a result, I was asked to convene a small project group to look at innovative ways of creating this website for applicants and structuring the information. The project group drew together staff from Student Services and Administration, External Affairs, both marketing and web specialists, and a representative from the Student Union.

When the project group first met, we considered what would be our key influences in how the site would be created. Web 2.0 tools were gaining considerable momentum at this point and it was felt that they could offer a degree of interaction with the site, that wasn't offered as part of the standard website. Personalisation was also a key factor. We became very aware that a degree of personalisation is almost expected on current websites. We've all become used to Amazon making recommendations for us to purchase and Ocado offering to fill our shopping baskets at the click of a mouse. Even if we like to think we're not influenced by them, it's hard to avoid reading customer reviews which have proliferated across nearly every online store.

We were already being referred to as the Applicant Portal project group but what exactly is an applicant portal? We agreed that it was:

- A website for potential students
- Information about being a student and experiencing student life
- Somewhere to meet other applicants
- A place where the University can keep in touch with applicants
- Somewhere the University can feed important information to applicants

We also agreed that it wasn't about course information. Analysis of questions raised by applicants at our open days and online events told us that the key areas of concern for applicants were:

- Making friends
- Accommodation
- Finance and funding
- Life as a student

To some degree much of this information was already present on the external website but, because the main focus of that site is on course related information, often this type of information was several clicks down. What the applicant portal could do was to bring this information to prominence by providing a different view on it.

With a relatively short timescale for delivering this project, we also wanted to keep things simple and use existing tools. We considered creating a new social networking area but acknowledged that there was probably little point as the university's existing Facebook site for applicants already had plenty of followers. However, we also didn't want to lose the opportunity to introduce a few Web 2.0 features of our own. A weekly poll was created to get informal feedback on topics such as where students would prefer to live. The Student Union were also persuaded to write a fortnightly blog. In practice, the Student Union officer concerned trawled the Facebook posts for common questions and then provided a consolidated response via the blog.

The site was branded 'Getting Ready'. It was one of the first ideas we had and seemed to reflect exactly what we were trying to deliver. It was agreed that the website should reflect the branding of the external web pages but with a more relaxed look and feel. The external website basic navigation and colours were maintained but various design devices, such as stickers and ragged edged boxes, helped give the site a different flavour. The style of language was deliberately less formal but very supportive with the emphasis being on guiding applicants step by step through what they needed to do next.

Getting Ready phase 1 was launched in early June 2008 as planned. Applicants were notified via email and the web address was also incorporated into printed literature posted out at the time. The usual printed guide was reduced to the essentials with the majority of enhanced information being provided via the website.

One of our objectives was to keep applicants engaged with the site. There was an initial surge of use but then hits did fall away until mid-August and A level results when we then used the site as a key point of online enrolment. Thereafter it continued to receive a significant number of hits on a daily basis until the start of term, featuring in the top 10 pages on the university domain throughout this period.

To meet the tight deadline, the project team had to be pragmatic in what could be achieved and a number of desirable features had to be omitted. The very personal 'Welcome Joe' approach was excluded as it was technically difficult to achieve without an early login to university services and this could not be implemented due to single sign on and licensing issues. Information from faculties was excluded at this stage. Kingston has seven faculties and it would not have been possible to collate information from all of them in the time given. This was equally true of targeting information on a course by course basis and also information for students at our partner colleges. Information for postgraduate applicants was also excluded in this phase as it was felt that they already had some experience of higher education. More significantly, the information stopped at enrolment and this provided a clear objective for phase two of the project during 2008/09.

Phase 1 of Getting Ready was regarded as a success by the university. Anecdotally, staff in Student Services reported a drop in some of the more common pre-enrolment enquiries and feedback via the first year experience survey was also very positive.

Phase 2 of the project enabled us to shape the site to reflect the full year of the recruitment cycle. The main site was re-launched with a light make-over in November, refreshed in January and again in May with more emphasis being placed on the step by step approach, reassuring applicants about what they needed to do next to ensure a smooth passage into university. Based on feedback, the refreshed site included comments and profiles of a number of our student ambassadors who were able to give their own very personal view of life as a Kingston student. We also included a jargon buster. What university doesn't have a range of terms and acronyms that can make the whole higher education experience seem daunting to the less confident applicant! And for a bit of fun, our very own student recipe book was launched, following on from one of our original pages which had focused on students' favourite meals including eggy bread and tomato fiasco!

A key objective for phase 2 was to include faculty administrative information and it became clear that this complemented the need to fill the gap between enrolment and arrival. Many of our students are 'non-standard'. They have existing family commitments and, with increasing strain on student finances, many will be working considerable hours alongside their studies. As a result, our applicants were desperate to get their hands on provisional timetables, advanced reading lists, and anything that would give them a good impression of what their first few weeks as a student would be like – information that would enable them to plan work and family life. A template approach for collating and displaying this information was used and faculties responded well to this. In turn, we were able to configure the final enrolment screens within our student information system to direct students to a faculty specific web page, thereby starting to address some of the personalisation that we had hoped to achieve.

Looking forward, more work does need to be done on the personalised aspects of the portal. Students arriving in September 2010 will be the first who based their applications on our personalised prospectus where they were able to build up a shopping basket of potential courses and receive a brochure tailored to their needs. Although previous discussions on personalisation have revolved around providing applicants with an early login to university services, other approaches to personalisation are now emerging such as the approach taken by the BBC and other websites enabling the user to select preferred colours and display their choice of information on the home page. This trend is also an important consideration in offering information to students once they have enrolled. Our new library catalogue interface (using AquaBrowser) is enabling students to tag items of importance to them and to build their own lists of key resources.

There is also concern that, as the applicants' contact with the university becomes more technologically sophisticated, can we live up to their expectations when they arrive on campus? Some of our key systems are not that flexible and there is a danger that our face-to-face services may also have a 'one size fits all' approach. That said, the university is moving towards a more co-ordinated approach to supporting students through our integrated student support project. Over the past two to three years, our 'library' helpdesk has evolved and this autumn was rebranded as a university 'Information Point'. These Information Points, now present in all Learning Resources Centres, are staffed by Information Assistants who provide first line support for all enquiries relating to library, IT and student services matters. Staff on the Information Points can resolve simple administrative requests on the spot but can also refer students to specialist support. This has, in turn, freed up the time of the real specialists who are now able to spend time providing a more targeted and personalised support service to those students who need it.

The development of the applicant portal and the Information Points are examples of how library staff can take a flexible approach to the use of information and can use this to help the university fulfil its strategic objectives in supporting students throughout the student lifecycle. From my perspective, the applicant portal project has provided an excellent opportunity for working with colleagues from a range of different departments and has given me a great insight into the world of marketing and recruitment. One of the challenges now will be embedding the collection of the information on an annual basis into normal working practice. This has to be achieved for the portal to continue to be successful in its current form but also to enable the project team to move on to develop new ideas to engage future applicants.

No penguins required: personal reflections on CILIP's Umbrella conference



Gareth J Johnson,
Document Supply & Repository Manager,
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CILIP's Umbrella biennial conference draws together librarians from every sector. Held at the University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield's De Havilland Campus the 2009 edition was slimmed down to a packed two days (July 14-15th). I've always tried to attend this event as it's an excellent opportunity to meet a broad spectrum of librarians. It does us all good to come out of our silos and Special Interest Groups (SIGs), and, for me, Umbrella is paramount among these opportunities. Tragically it's never heavily populated by higher education librarians, although with the next conference in 2011 there's plenty of time for you to give some thought to attending, especially if you've never done so before.

De Havilland is a surprisingly green campus, with some excellent conference facilities to be enjoyed by the almost 700 delegates, and compares extremely favourably to the former venue. Umbrella is a big conference, with 9 parallel tracks as well as keynote sessions, which means it's impossible for any one person to attend it all. Thankfully this year a plethora of bloggers and tweeters attended, which means a little web searching should unearth a wealth of reports.

I hope this article will provide an overview of the sessions I managed to attend and a taste of the variety on offer. Maybe it'll sway you towards attending in 2011.

Tuesday

While there was a Monday pre-conference day, featuring a CILIP council meeting, I wasn't able to get to that. My conference began with the drive down south, just in time to register for the 10am kick off. To a packed (though not full) main auditorium the conference was officially opened by the former CILIP President Ian Snowley and followed by the keynote. As a conference veteran I find conference keynotes tend to fall into two types – the inspirational but light on the practical, and the more practically focussed. Umbrella's keynote embraced both types, which was a pleasant surprise.

Charles N Brown: Learning the Way: the transformation of an American Public Library

Charles is the Director of Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County (Chicago), regarded as one of the leading public libraries in the US. His talk carried the subtitle *not evolutionary - revolutionary!* He talked about public library services and their aspirations, and how they met them in terms of improving library services. His library service was rated 5* but on joining he saw his role was to shake things up and get staff to move out of their silos. Staff engagement was a core part of the effort towards the organisational transformation and resulted in about 20% of the whole staff being directly involved in the process. Charles stressed that their buy-in to the process was critical for real transformation. It had to tap into their knowledge and experience of what had worked and what hadn't in the past, so that previous mistakes were not repeated.

Part of the process of change involved looking towards the retail sector (e.g. supermarket chain Target) for customer satisfaction, service delivery, marketing and opening new markets models. They also recognised that there was untapped organisational talent already in place. Using a process called STAR Behavioural Interviewing they found and promoted these exemplar staff into key roles, even if standard requirements for the post were not met.

Keeping the staff engaged, involved and informed with the change process resulted in many weekly updates, brown bag lunches with the director, intranet pages as well as formal meetings about what was going on. While this didn't totally defeat the rumour mill, it did minimise any confusion. He ended the talk with some personal favourite quotes "*Change should be as common as breakfast cereal*" and "*If you want to make enemies, try to change something.*" I can certainly agree with both of those aims.

Susan Tailby, Eastleigh College: Captive audiences – adding value in FE audiences (out of my silo)

This session focussed on FE students and attempts to enhance their college time experiences. Taking ideas from the retail sector surfaced again, with lessons learned from book shop operations. It examined ways to engage readers with virtual or physical discussion groups. Initially target groups for interaction were identified and then the scheme was rolled-out with a number of small groups. For reading groups the key was building reflection into engagement activities, which I thought was excellent - too much of what librarians teach is delivered without follow up. Libraries can be scary for those with poorer English but librarians can build the self-esteem of students by engaging them in these ways. Trying different things led to a need for new media equipment which wasn't available in sufficient numbers. Storage and maintenance of this equipment was also an issue. Susan admitted these groups utilise space which can

cause disruptions for other users, but in part this helped recruit others who might otherwise not have joined.

**Kathryn Harrison and Judith Robinson, Kirklees Council Library Services:
Reading takes the biscuit**

This scheme, piloted in 2006, aimed to get new readers into libraries to meet informally with the staff. The focus was on group activities and allowing natural networks to form between new readers from throughout the community. The focus wasn't solely reading but also crafts and other shared experiences perhaps outside a library's traditional remit. The watchword was adaptability to the readers' interest. Sponsorship played a part (including a local biscuit factory) for outreach and revenue generation for the scheme. This twofold approach has been time consuming, but the individual and corporate partnerships developed have been long lasting and effective. The message for higher education is that if you want to engage with the users you need to go out to them and engage at a time and place that suits them, don't always expect them to come to you.

Gareth J Johnson, University of Leicester: Weaselling your way into your student's hearts: screenwriting & movies for education and training

My workshop focussed on visual communication¹ and was a very hands-on affair for the delegates. See the Umbrella programme for a fuller description of the session².

Wednesday

Angela Horrocks & Davina Omar, Kingston University: Maltesers mean answers: a sweeter service for students based on user feedback

Kingston University talked about their annual survey run every March for many years with Maltesers for every respondent and a big prize for a few. A small incentive but effective. The survey is in addition to the National Student Survey, providing additional insight and getting students thinking about key service issues. A clear survey focus is vital, and Kingston's is on how students learn and the routes they use to access information. This helps shape how and what the students are subsequently taught. While the Priority Research software was highly adaptable most students (~90%) didn't respond. Reaching the silent majority and even non-users of the library remains a long term aim. Setting targets and quotas and then focussing marketing of the survey to those under-represented in previous returns has been useful.

Questions used are open so students are not driven to particular answers, but there is still the need for transparency and responsiveness. To this end comments and responses from the previous year's survey are included in the following year. If a

demand is visible from the survey the library needs to be able to respond. Having run this survey for so many years there is now decades of evidence, from which rising and declining trends in student demands can be charted. Focus groups and interviews are beginning to be used to augment the return, partly as outreach and partly as hypothesis testing. However, the lack of benchmarking with external comparators and potential survey fatigue for the students remain issues.

Tim Leach, BDP : The changing landscape of libraries

This session took an architectural standpoint of library refurbishment, stating that while readers' core needs of space and light to work in haven't changed for centuries, new technologies are changing their working habits. With users increasingly at a distance libraries have to be not just fit for purpose, but accessible and welcoming from the moment you enter. Architecture should promote working, although it does limit the functions of some areas. Using the rebuilding project at University College London, Tim demonstrated how technologies and architectural developments are helping both readers and libraries to work, interact and curate collections into the 21st century.

Andrew Cranfield, IFLA Library Buildings and Equipment Section: The great good place

The Library as the third place was the theme of Andrew's talk, and the links between physical structures and staff working practices. Libraries remain conservative in their design, and need to reconsider their look and feel to compete with other information and third place providers (book shops for one). Merging these functions, like the Idea Stores, of café and books is one that readers have increasingly come to expect. Readers should be almost unaware that they are entering a library. He also advocated moving away from stark corporate black and whites, as readers find them off-putting and they are hard to maintain.

James Smith (Sunderland Libraries) and Nick Stopforth (Newcastle Libraries): Building a successful library Web 2.0 service

Nick and James shared the seven lessons (five, as they overran) they learned through using Web 2.0 resources. They demonstrated an interesting mashup they had developed linking World War II bombing maps of Sunderland to eye witness accounts. Surprisingly the audience were mostly operating from a very low level awareness of Web 2.0 and how it might be exploited, three-quarters of them had not even heard of Twitter, for example.

Best of the rest

As well as the formal workshops, there were other events going on; the conference dinner, tea breaks, informal networking and the Group Annual General Meetings; as well as Web 2.0 exchanges³. All of these made for a lively and engaging, if a little exhausting, couple of days. Personal highlights would have to include my session, the networking and the updating of professional knowledge.

I would have loved an extra day post-conference to more fully digest everything that had been discussed; perhaps forming an unconference, with themes and discussions arising organically from the participants? I'm hopeful that this might be something that the organisers consider for 2011, when I would hope to attend again.

1 'Weaselling your way into your students' hearts (Umbrella intro movie)', Available from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1456tNsHYw> [Accessed 25 November 2009]

2 Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, 'Making connections: the power of people, partnerships and services, 14-15 July 2009, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield. Conference handbook', Available from: <http://tinyurl.com/yfongh4> [Accessed 25 November 2009]

3 Twitter (<http://twitter.com>) hash tags from the conference were #cilipumbrella #umb #umbrella09 #umb09

Trends taking off in German academic libraries



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Providing information competence in the digital age is currently one of the major concerns for German academic libraries. Parallel to this is the commitment to maintain and preserve the cultural heritage held in libraries and to make it accessible for continuous research. The recent loss of precious documents buried under the rubble of Cologne's city archive emphasises the pertinence of digitalisation. Despite the seemingly great divide of interest there is an awareness that we are confronted with both ancient and modern media, which has to be made accessible for our users' differing needs. The role of the ancient library has fundamentally changed to become - virtually - accessible beyond its walls of knowledge. Yet the user is not interested in the librarian's mammoth task of cataloguing according to sophisticated and rigorous rules; his concern is simple – fast and easy access to as much information as possible, particularly indices, abstracts and critical reviews at any time of day and night.

Although academic libraries in Germany tend to follow slowly in the footsteps of other European and overseas library pacemakers, progress has been made! New, innovative library buildings have appeared on the landscape over the last few years (e.g. Dresden, Cottbus, Karlsruhe and, most recently, Frankfurt!) which have given impetus to the profession to adjust practice to suit new generation users and more modern technology.

Service-orientated information, individual reference interviews and customer service exceeding the usual opening times have provided the modern user with more access to the physical and virtual library. For example, Bielefeld University Library's remit is to provide students and scholars of the University with literature and information for academic teaching and research¹. It has been a leader for many years in exploring and developing tools and systems that improve access to the increasing number of electronic resources. The one most widely known in the international community is BASE (Bielefeld Academic Search Engine). User training is high upon the list of extending information competence and regular interactive tutorials on online searching are provided. The library is integrated into the wireless local area network (WLAN) of

the university and access is provided by either users' own radio adapters or cards, or by those borrowed from the library for use within the university. In a number of faculty libraries locking devices have been installed for users to clamp their laptops to prevent theft, whilst in others the users have to carry their laptops with them whenever they leave their work-place. Discussion rooms are also fitted out with Smartboard equipment thus enabling small groups to cooperate together. Its extended opening hours until 1.00 am on weekdays and until 11.00 pm at weekends have placed it second among German university libraries.

At the university library in Karlsruhe² 24/7 access on campus and on the internet is the norm. Information and issue desks are staffed until 7.00 pm and then by security staff until 9.00 am the next day. Users comprise all members of the university as well as anyone registered with a German address. Possessing a user card is important as this provides physical access at night and at weekends. Open access to current literature is spread over four specialized reading rooms, which are equipped with fixed cable networks and wireless local area networks (WLAN), photocopiers and printers. Older literature has to be ordered from the stacks but automatic book returning equipment is widespread.

Other libraries tend to adopt more modest opening hours, for example until 9.00 pm in the University Library Stuttgart, until 9.30 pm at the University Library in Frankfurt³, or until 11.00 pm at the University Library IKMZ Cottbus⁴. Comparisons can be made with library opening hours offered by York St. John University's Fountains Learning Centre⁵ and at Sheffield Adsett's Learning Centre⁶. During examination periods libraries will tend to extend their opening hours, but these are usually reduced when attendance has shown to be slack. As in Great Britain the buildings are manned in the latter hours by security staff.

Parallel to the extension of opening hours the trend to provide facilities for eating and drinking has taken off in Germany. Library lounges have become popular points of contact and places for relaxation between periods of study⁷ and, in the case of new library buildings, they have been incorporated in the architecture of the building from the very beginning to become a feature of these buildings. Cafes, for example in the City Library of Frankfurt⁸, are open independently from the opening hours of the library which also has access to the facilities from within. Even the new campus cafes in Frankfurt are staying open at least as long as the opening hours of the libraries on site and provide the user with unrestricted opportunities to access WLAN, use a laptop, mobile phone and take refreshment at the same time.

Yet the attitude in libraries is not completely relaxed towards the use of mobile phones, despite 35% of Germans being users of mobile technology. Whilst libraries provide designated areas for mobile phone users the innovative 24/7 university library in

Karlsruhe has strict rules preventing users disturbing each other: no use of mobile phones on the premises at all and the audio on such phones and notebooks has to be turned off. Tolerance towards the use of mobile phones on the premises is going through a transition period. There is still no general acceptance for their use “anywhere at anytime”, but a delicate approach by a member of staff to a mobile phone user caught in the act in the lobby will clarify whether he or she is using his phone to check his user account or just phoning for fun.

An interesting development has arisen at the University Library in Freiburg⁹ which is undergoing renovation, to be completed in 2013. The interim period of being in a provisional state has enabled Freiburg to approach innovative ideas more freely. Thus user cardholders are compensated for the inconvenience caused by re-building by being given 24/7 access to facilities including loans until 1.00 a.m. The service is carried out by a mix of library staff, student auxiliary workers and security staff. Once RFID has been implemented this will be extended to a round-the-clock service.

Electronic books are now part of the stocks at the University Library in Frankfurt and a survey¹⁰ came up with results which show that E-books are indeed here to stay, but will be a value-added acquisition to the stocks rather than an “either/or” decision for the media department. As far as the textbook collection is concerned E-books will not replace the number of copies which have hitherto been available, but are to enhance the use of the textbooks with special online functions e.g. full-text search and permanent access. Indeed, at times when all copies are out on loan, access to content can still be maintained. This trend seems to tally with a survey undertaken for JISC referred to in *Library and Information Update*¹¹ which concluded that E-books were being used for browsing and reference purposes rather than for longer reading.

Aspects such as these have promoted a different attitude by members of staff to “service”. A more outward-going approach towards dealing with users at times which suit them is recognisable and, judging by the number of training courses dealing with “customer service”, colleagues want to be more proactive and cooperative in parting with their knowledge rather than resistant and hesitant in providing a value-added service.

University courses, which prepare future information specialists to qualify to work in learning centres and academic libraries concentrate on Bachelor and Master degrees in library management, for example, at the University of Applied Sciences (TU) in Darmstadt, Campus Dieburg or at the Berlin School of Library and Information Science. The emphasis is on becoming qualified in making digital media available, processing it and maintaining its long-term preservation. Projects might include evaluation of digital libraries, original user research, maintenance of an institutional repository,

interoperability between archiving systems and building a network for certified Open Access repositories, to name but a few.

The young user with his mobile habits and rituals has a great influence on the work processes in academic libraries but the speed of compatibility still leaves a cloud of dust behind. In Great Britain librarians seem to want to “know” their students better; in Germany librarians feel they know “better”.

¹ Universität Bielefeld 'Universitätsbibliothek' Available from: <http://www.ub.uni-bielefeld.de>. [Accessed 20 October 2009]

² Karlsruhe Institute of Technology 'KIT-Bibliothek', Available from: http://www.ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de/index_engl.html [Accessed 20 October 2009]

³ Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main 'Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg', Available from: <http://www.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/> [Accessed 20 October 2009]

⁴ Brandenburgische Technische Universität IKMZ 'Willkommen an der Universitätsbibliothek Cottbus', Available from: <http://www.tu-cottbus.de/einrichtungen/de/ikmz/servicebereiche/bibliothek.html> [Accessed 20 October 2009]

⁵ York St John University 'Library and Information Services', Available from <http://www.yorks.ac.uk/library/index.aspx> [Accessed 20 October 2009]

⁶ Sheffield Hallam University 'shuspace', Available from <http://shuspace.shu.ac.uk/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp> [Accessed 20 October 2009]

⁷ Studentenwerk Dresden 'Mensen und Cafeterien', Available from http://www.studentenwerk-dresden.de/mensen/mensen_details-15.html [Accessed 20 October 2009]

⁸ 'Cafe Libretto', Available from <http://www.cafe-libretto.de> [Accessed 20 October 2009]

⁹ Universitätsbibliothek Freiburg 'Herzlich Willkommen in der 24-Stunden-Bibliothek', Available from: <http://www3.ub.uni-freiburg.de> [Accessed 23 October 2009]

¹⁰ Zelch, U. & Junkes-Kirchen, K. 'E-Books an der UB Frankfurt: Ergebnisse der Umfrage 2009'. Available from: http://www.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/ebook_umfrage.pdf [Accessed 21 October 2009]

¹¹ Mezey, M. 'When e-books really arrive will users depart en masse?' Library & Information Update, July/Aug., 2009, p.18

New masters programme on library and information science: experience of a TEMPUS project to modernize library training in the former Soviet Union



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Background to the Project

From 2004-2006, Middlesex University led a TEMPUS project¹ 'Building Digital Educational Services and Content Creation Centre in Yerevan State University library', whose aim was to improve access to and use of electronic resources and set up a Virtual Learning Environment in Yerevan State University. It became clear during the life of this project that the main impediment to modernization of libraries was the backwardness of library training. The outcome of educational reforms, the main objective of TEMPUS, depends very much on the curricula being taught in the universities for Library and Information Science studies, which are still antiquated. The subject is not in demand amongst high school graduates, and those who do undertake bachelors courses are dissatisfied; moreover most of the graduates do not get appropriate jobs. There are several problems in teaching library, information and archives courses that are common to other countries formerly in the Soviet Union:

(a) after the collapse of the Soviet Union, librarianship was not a priority for the governments;

(b) courses are focused on often outdated techniques and technical processes, undervaluing the need for the wider knowledge of social processes, science, and technology, etc, required to enable library, archive and information services to respond to contemporary demands;

(c) courses have not yet fully incorporated the new areas of the disciplines that are common in Western Europe;

(d) there is a shortage of modern LIS and archive teaching materials (electronic resources, sample PC applications);

(e) pedagogical skills of the LIS and archive teachers and trainers tend to be didactic;

(f) familiarity with quality standards is low;

(g) these factors contribute to low levels of interest from potential students;

(h) there is a shortage of relevant materials in the national languages;

(i) no programmes offer lifelong learning or support career advancement for the existing large LIS workforce.

The rationale behind the current TEMPUS² project was that the introduction of a new curriculum for Library, Information and Archives Studies based on the EU experience was the ideal solution to make this profession prestigious and to attract talented and motivated students, thus enabling libraries to improve to the benefit of faculties in universities in those countries across the board

The European Union TEMPUS scheme, in the meantime, had begun to prioritise those projects which were based in more than one country on the grounds that projects could benefit many partner countries simultaneously leading to economies of scale. In line with this, Tigran Zargaryan, partner country coordinator of the proposed project, recruited institutions in Georgia and Uzbekistan through contacts he had through eIFL, the Electronic Information for Libraries organisation which helps countries negotiate deals for electronic resources with the owners of the data.

Main features of the Project

The project was successful in obtaining a good part of the funding requested. In order to improve the situation with LIS training, library and information and archives studies will be taught as a professional Masters degree, enabling students with degrees in other subject specialisms to train to work in the field. Modernization and development of these curricula will benefit university administration, research and teaching, as well as civil society (which is also an EU priority) as the students trained will be able to work in public libraries as well as academic and special libraries. Lecturers from Armenia, Georgia and Uzbekistan will participate as students in a normal course at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen. Destinations in other countries were offered in line with EU principles, but considerations of language meant that RGU was favoured by the majority of potential participants, and there was an advantage in all students going to the same institution. The objective is not for the 'students' to gain masters in LIS; rather

they will experience first hand the curriculum and teaching methodologies and return home to apply these. The students can participate in the course for only 12 weeks (the maximum allowed under this scheme), but by a combination of distance learning and additional sessions, they should reach diploma level. If they wish they will be able to complete the courses to Masters level outside the scope of the funding from the project. In addition, staff (both lecturers and practising librarians) from the other EU Universities in the project, Parma, Barcelona, Rezekne in Latvia (for archives) and Middlesex will teach masters courses in the partner countries' universities. As part of the project, Library and Archive students will undergo placements in the EU universities. A classroom will also be provided in each partner country furnished with state-of-the-art equipment and servers will host course materials in virtual learning environments and institutional repositories.

Long-term perspectives

Through the development of core skills, competencies and abilities of staff, the project will transform the partner country LIS faculties into first class learning centres and a sustainable source of further development of human capacity for the global labour market. By encouraging interest from the world of commerce, the project's legacy will be to generate additional financial income streams to support the development of new academic programmes. Through the Virtual Learning Environment platform, established in partner country LIS faculties, the project will serve the needs of students from other Universities and other lifelong learners. Additionally, the project will share courses between partner country LIS faculties, through the common languages of English and Russian, thereby saving financial and human resources.

Progress so far

The project is not one quarter of its way through, as of October 2009. Eleven future lecturers in a revised curriculum arrived in Aberdeen for their first 6 weeks' experience of an RGU masters course in October 2009. One thing has become clear: the situation of Masters and the expected outcomes of studying for them varies in the different countries. This has emerged through the participation of the University of Parma who lead an advanced international masters in digital librarianship intended to update qualified librarians and who are also very familiar with pan-European trends. There is a feeling among some of the partner countries (TEMPUS terminology for the recipient countries) that traditional librarianship courses should cease and be replaced by courses based on the digital library. One challenge is to see how the experience from Parma can be incorporated into the curriculum development. Another is how to include

archives alongside librarianship given the limited funding and time period in a three-year project. Other challenges will be to include life long learning and quality assurance which are set for later in the project.

Partner institutions

International Scientific Educational Centre of the National Academy of Sciences (Yerevan, Armenia)

Fundamental Scientific Library of the National Academy of Sciences (Yerevan, Armenia)

Ilia Chavchavadze State University (Tbilisi, Georgia)

Georgian Library Association (Georgia)

Tashkent Institute of Culture (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

Tashkent University of Information Technologies (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

¹Tempus 'Tempus: modernisation of higher education in countries surrounding the EU', Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc70_en.htm [Accessed 23 October 2009]

² 'Project Website for TEMPUS JEP', Available from: <http://www.flib.sci.am/eng/Tempus/> [Accessed 25 November 2009]

Article submission to *Relay*

Relay is the journal of the CILIP University College and Research Group. The CILIP UC&R Group aims to provide a focus and a forum for the professional concerns and interests of everyone working in national, research or academic libraries, linking those with current and emerging issues and developments.

Relay aims to bring together articles and reports from practitioners and researchers in order to generate debate and promote good practice in the national, research and academic libraries sector. Contributions are welcomed from colleagues in all fields and at all levels: we merely request that the items contributed are concise, informative, practical and (above all!) worth reading.

Manuscripts should be original and main articles should be ideally between 1000-1500 words in length. Items designated "Hot topics" can be shorter. We recommend authors to consult a recent issue of *Relay* to see if their approach seems in keeping with other published pieces. The editors reserve the right to edit or make appropriate revisions in material selected for publication to standardise style and to improve clarity.

Relay is published in electronic format only and is available to members of the CILIP UC&R group via the CILIP web site.

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Items should be submitted (preferably) via e-mail or on disk in MS Word or .txt format to

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Helen Westmancoat, York St John University h.westmancoat@yorks.ac.uk

As well as text, we are also keen to publish images and would especially like to include author photos where possible. Please either send prints or digital photographs (resolution 300 dpi or above) with your submission.

It is helpful if authors follow our house style when submitting their articles:

- Spelling '-ise' etc. is preferred to '-ize'.

- Minimal use of capitalisation. In individual libraries it is usual to refer to 'the Library', 'the University', 'the College' etc. Please resist this unless there is any ambiguity, use 'the library' etc.
- Spell out acronyms at their first occurrence. Avoid 'HE' for 'higher education', which we prefer to write in full (the UK is the only country in the world to use the term, and our overseas readers are unfamiliar with the abbreviation HE).
- Please use single quotation marks, not double.
- Web addresses should be written in full (including http://) and –where possible- be underlined for purposes of clarity.
- References should appear as footnotes at the end of the article, in the following forms

1 Author, A.N. Title of book, Place: Publisher, 2000, pp 23-6

2 Writer, P.B. 'Title of chapter or article', in Editor, Q.V. ed., Interesting articles about libraries, Place: Publisher, 2000, pp 262-3

3 Researcher, B.M. 'Title of article', Journal of pseudodocumentalism, 70 (2), 1989, pp 117-20

4 Hypertext, M.L. 'Title of page', Available from: <http://www.anywebaddress.com/> [Accessed 5 March 2008]

Anyone wishing to discuss possible articles or needing more information should contact either of the co-editors:

We look forward to hearing from you.

David Clover, University of London Research Library Services
Helen Westmancoat, York St John University