

story' of how services impact on individuals (the personal dimension) can be the most convincing way of demonstrating that we are making a difference.

**Difficulty of measuring impact.** Assessing impact is not easy and it is not an exact science. We are dealing with a changing environment where people, services, and needs are constantly evolving. Any research will inevitably provide a snapshot of what is happening at a particular point in time. It is very difficult to prove that the actions taken by library management have led to improvements in learning, teaching, and research. This is particularly the case as we deal with the extent of integration between our resources/ services and learning, teaching, and research. As we achieve more integration, it is going to be intrinsically more difficult to identify our specific contribution to students' learning or to the research of a member of staff.

In summary, the seminar was a stimulating and enjoyable day. However, it is clear that academic libraries still have some considerable way to go before impact measurement does become an integral part of the quality improvement agenda.

#### REFERENCE

Hart, L. 'Comparing ourselves: using benchmarking techniques to measure performance amongst academic libraries: report of the LIRG seminar, the effective academic library held in June 2001', *Library and information research news*, 25 (80), Autumn 2001, pp 23-34

## News from SCONUL

### WHAT DOES SCONUL DO?

This might sound like a strange question -especially for the *SCONUL Newsletter* to be posing- but it is a pertinent one.

One of the problems with librarians (and the organisations that support librarians!) is that we do not always get the message across of the brilliant job that we are actually doing.

So what is SCONUL doing at the moment? This new section of the *SCONUL Newsletter* aims to give readers a flavour of our current activities: conferences, staff development initiatives and statistical support ...not to mention the Secretary's late night lobbying of MEPs.

So what does SCONUL do? Read on!

Antony Brewerton  
*SCONUL Newsletter* Editorial Team

## Supporting off-campus learning and ensuring service quality

**SCONUL Autumn Conference, Tuesday 20 November 2001, British Library: the Conference Centre**

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This year's SCONUL Autumn conference focused on electronic delivery and the service quality aspect of supporting off-campus learning. The papers are summarised individually here, but the presentations are also available online at <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/Conference/presegm01/index.htm>

### VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS, BY SUE ROBERTS, HEAD OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES, EDGE HILL

Sue Roberts set the scene for the day by looking at Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs). She distin-

guished VLEs, which have learning content, from Managed Learning Environments, which aim to integrate VLEs into wider administrative systems in colleges and universities. A show of hands in the audience illustrated that about 90% of those present were involved in VLEs, so the subject is clearly topical.

The recent UCISA survey on VLEs, about to be published, shows that institutions are adopting VLEs to improve teaching and learning quality and widen participation in learning systems, as much as to serve distance learners. Use within institutions in the UK is still small scale, but with evidence of collaborative activity involving many different units across campus. Edge Hill have been users of WebCT for over two years, and Sue used this experience to identify key issues. VLE users are not just distance learners, but can be students on any course where flexible learning modes are used, and VLEs are also useful for internal staff training. We are all off-campus learners now! The student expectation is not only for 24x7 seamless access to learning systems, but also for 24x7 learning support – a challenge for the traditional institutional support model.

Library and information services, used to extended support hours and a service culture, are in a good position to take an active part in VLEs and deliver on student expectations, but they need to have top down direction and support from management, and have to be prepared to work across traditional boundaries to be effective. LIS can be an agent of change, and might provide leads in areas such as project management, developing new services for the new medium, embedding the hybrid/digital library, technical support, or skills development and student learning support.

Sue used case studies to illustrate the variety of institutional approaches to developing VLEs. The University of the West of England is a HEFCE Good Management Practice Project in Network Learning, and a Blackboard user. That there is top-down ownership of the initiative is critical, and institutions must ensure that the VLE project is part of a coherent forward thinking strategy. It is easy to polarise academics between the enthusiasts for change and the traditionalists, so VLEs must be based on a sound pedagogy that embraces existing teachers and designers and learning technologists. It is important to recognise and include all institutional stakeholders at an early stage. At Leeds Metropolitan University the VLE is a partnership of Learning Support Services

(responsible for the Student Information Portal), Learning Technology Services (running WebCT), and Computing Systems (responsible for the hardware). The role of the learning adviser/subject liaison plays a vital part in supporting the off-campus learner. At Edge Hill there have been particular efforts devoted to awareness raising among all support staff of issues surrounding online learning. Specific WebCT development workshops for staff include a 3-week WebCT module on 'Supporting online learning' and a 6-week module of 'Developing and delivering online learning'.

Sue concluded with Foster's quote from a recent Ariadne article 'The development of virtual education is an intrinsically collaborative problem'. The 'burning issues' centre around achieving a coherent strategic direction for VLEs, ensuring that all staff can use them, and involving all stakeholders to ensure that services are integrated to provide quality support for student learning.

#### **SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP SKILLS THROUGH THE ONLINE DIGITAL LIBRARY – DIANA LAURILLARD, PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR, OPEN UNIVERSITY**

Diana Laurillard, author of *Rethinking university teaching* (Routledge, 2nd ed. 2001, ISBN: 041525678X), widened the day's theme by looking at the pedagogical basis for online learning. She described the 'Reflective practicum' – a community of learning that accepts there are no right answers, where scholars are prepared to go beyond the rules and where practitioners aim to make sense of uncertainty through 'reflection in action'. The learning community is concerned with both acquisition and creation of knowledge, exploring radical new insights, and giving newcomers (learners) both a personal experience of knowledge and access to existing competencies in the community. In this model research and teaching are not viewed as separate, but are both activities where individuals and groups negotiate meanings, building knowledge within a social context. Students and teachers do not have separate roles, but are both participants in an academic community of practice. The environment should be one where learners challenge, and academics call on the full range of activities, media and technologies to facilitate learning. The learner has control over the method and speed of learning, using new technology in much the same way as libraries have been traditionally used to pace one's own learning.

With this pedagogical model in mind, Diana illustrated practice using various examples of Open University courses. Generically each course can

**Week 1**  
1 Activities

0 100  
% of work completed

- 1 Compare the mortal characters in the Iliad and the Odyssey.
- 2 What is the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles about?
- 3 Investigate the values of the society represented in the Iliad.
- 4 Investigate the evidence for what kind of society existed at Mycenae.
- 5 What does the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon tell us about the society?

Activity 4

be conceived as having a learning objective, an activity and a set of support tools. For example, in a course on Homer the classics texts are analysed alongside archaeological evidence. The students have e-resources in the form of the searchable texts, maps and videoclips. Their initial task is to analyse these resources and take their own notes using Notepad. Then, and only then, are they granted access to commentaries. Having consulted these, they can then re-edit their notes and produce an essay. The learning is based around investigation activities, supported by selected resources, with conditional access to model answers.

Other learning models may use asynchronous discussion, with students working on a hyper-linked text, adding comments and then taking part in a structured discussion with themes defined by the academic. Synchronous discussion, with real-time audio and visual information is also possible, with students looking at a common web page and using construction tools, such as drawing package, in a shared space to build an 'object' collectively.

Within these learning environments Diana saw librarians as a key driver. The e-library is a vital component in the delivery system, but help, support and training are also essential elements in the learning package, and these fall within the provenance of information professionals. The Open

University has developed the ROUTES package for students, aiming to improve their information skills within the digital environment. A similar package called SAFARI supports the development of research skills and there is also a specific 100 hour study course on information literacy. These are examples of library staff being a resource for the academic, providing them with opportunities to enhance course materials, encouraging the development of research and information skills in their students and helping to prepare their students for lifelong learning.

Diana concluded with a rallying call for librarians to become involved with academics at the heart of pedagogy, and to use their skills with serving users to ensure that learning systems were effective in design and delivery.

The day continued with five parallel sessions:

**SHAPING A STRATEGY FOR E-BOOKS: A PAPER BY LOUISE EDWARDS, COLLECTIONS MANAGER, DNER, CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY**

Louise Edwards, the JISC Collections Manager specialising in e-book services, presented a paper giving an overview of current e-book services and their relevance to UK students and libraries. The presentation was based on the e-book issues paper which Louise and Hazel Woodward published in September 2001 ([www.jisc.ac.uk/dner/ebooks](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/dner/ebooks)).

Despite the hype, academic e-books are still in their infancy, and the UK academic market is not well-served as yet. Louise outlined three phases in e-book development. Phase 1 (late 1990s to 2000) was characterised by a great deal of entrepreneurial activity in the US, with aggregators such as NetLibrary, Questia and Ebrary being founded, and devices such as Rocketbook and retailers such as Swotbooks emerging. This initial entrepreneurial enthusiasm was hit by the dot-com bust last year, with funding drying up and sales not meeting expectations. The latest victim of this is NetLibrary, now acquired by OCLC, demonstrating the current phase of consolidation, the entry of new players and the offerings of e-books to universities direct from publishers.

The recent publisher survey by the Bookseller (Publishing 2001) indicated that the response of publishers to e-book technology is very varied. Some publishers have all their current content in digital form, but others have none. Among academic publishers less than 10% of the front and back-lists are digitised, and publishers do not expect this to increase beyond 50% within the next five years. Publishers do expect digital format to be a natural part of the publication format in future, but the jury is still out on print on demand and production of excerpts, which they do not see as generating a significant income stream. Examples such as Cavendish law publishers, who provide a 'slice and dice' approach to their material, may therefore only develop in certain specialised fields of study. Academic publishers are also divided on whether the supply chain will change significantly in the coming years, but about half think that direct publisher-customer relationships will become important. An example of this, recently trialled at Cranfield with a multi-media marketing textbook, is MarketingOnline.co.uk, an initiative by Butterworth-Heinemann which is using an institutional subscription textbook model with libraries. Thankfully, publishers do expect academic e-book prices, currently much higher than print, will decline in the next five years.

For libraries, NetLibrary has been the aggregator most obviously targeted at their market segment, but Questia, with 65,000 items in the humanities and social sciences will also deal with libraries. The problem with all these aggregators is that they still do not have a critical mass of good UK-orientated academic textbooks, since they have emerged and are dominated by US books aimed at undergraduate term paper completion, or are

populated by out of copyright or low use material in the arts and social sciences.

Louise recommended that for the UK a way forward was to adapt the NESLI periodicals model. The JISC e-books Working Group aims to provide leadership in establishing a strategy to develop electronic books for the UK academic community. It seeks to monitor and influence the e-book industry, to acquire e-book content for the DNER, and to develop a sustainable economic model. Issues such as whether e-books can be loaned, copied for personal use, and ownership versus access are still to be resolved. There is a need to engage with academics as authors, to nurture multi-media authoring skills and to redefine the relationship between author, publisher, library and user. Louise's conclusions are that we:

- Need to consult the community extensively
- Prioritise on specific content
- Conduct market research to map UK requirements
- Find the appropriate economic models
- Undertake user studies
- Engage with stakeholders, including publishers and faculty

And a final plea – the JISC E-books Working Group is forming an email list of the key contact for e-books in each SCOUNL institution. If your library has not yet sent in a contact name, please email Louise (l.edwards@cranfield.ac.uk) with the name of your volunteer.

**E-JOURNAL ISSUES: ACCESS, PRICING, FUTURE DIRECTIONS; A WORKSHOP LED BY ALISON McNABB, DNER COLLECTIONS MANAGER, JOURNALS & DISCOVERY TOOLS.**

This well-attended workshop involved a presentation from Alison followed by discussion groups who reported back. A range of issues were discussed including access, pricing and the technological infrastructure needed to support access and usage.

Access and the difficulties of providing users with a clear and understandable authentication system, when the supplier requires IP authentication and/or Athens passwords. How should access be managed by the library, should it be through the OPAC, through a commercial journals management package, through web lists, by linking from abstracting and indexing services, and how could seamless document delivery fit with access to subscribed journals? A wide range of technical issues are involved in managing access to electronic journals, including efficient ways of

generating web lists from databases, though it appears that some libraries are fully cataloguing each electronic journal included in publisher bundles. The move towards stable URLs is of course now helping libraries point to the exact title rather than to the entry page of the supplier.

The various pricing models for e-journals – bundling of print with electronic, electronic only, linking the price to the library spend, pricing based on usage or number of users, ‘all-you-can eat’ pricing – cause difficulties for libraries. The issue of having to pay VAT on electronic products is a problem area, as is the relentless price inflation of journals, both print and electronic. In addition, many libraries would like to select subject collections of e-journals rather than be dependent on the full output of the publisher. There is an increasing call to provide all institutions with a ‘top-sliced’, free at the point of use, collection of essential journals for their users, and this concept will become more important if mutual access to libraries by students becomes the norm.

What are the future directions for e-journals? JISC is contacting all sites to compile a list of requirements in order to focus its discussions with publishers, a new charging model has been introduced in order to be more sensitive to the situation of individual libraries and their abilities to pay, the model for negotiations has changed and JISC is taking on this role with the establishment of a central negotiating team, the developing Information Environment is already having a positive impact on e-journal access and use, linking technologies are maturing, and the JISC Subject Portal Programme will attempt to provide integrated access to e-journals and other information resources.

*Rapporteur: Michael Breaks, Heriot Watt University*

**PROVIDING REMOTE ACCESS TO INFORMATION 24/7:  
A WORKSHOP DIRECTED BY IAN WINSHIP, PRINCIPAL  
OFFICER, ELECTRONIC SERVICES MANAGER, UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHUMBRIA**

Ian introduced this session by focusing our attention on the two keywords in the title: **Remote** (whether 5 miles or 5000 miles away) and **24/7** (however that might be defined) and reminding us that the service issues were much the same as for the parameters within which we normally operate (**Local** and **8/5** – if you’re very lucky!). He then took us through these service issues in more detail – delivery issues; technical issues; training & support issues; support methods; and, finally, management issues.

We were then asked to split into four groups to consider the following topic:

**Your VC says that by September 2003 there will be 2500 students based wholly off-campus and asks what services you are going to provide. He assumes services to on-campus students will not suffer. There is no mention of extra money. What strategies do you propose?**

The subsequent debate, both in the groups and the plenary, was instructive and humorous. Some wag suggested that the best strategy would be to seek early retirement – either the VC’s or, failing that, your own – a strategy that evoked a degree of approval amongst certain members of the audience. More seriously, though, lots of constructive suggestions did emerge, such as collaborating with local academic institutions or public libraries, or employing local agents, to help support the students locally, or outsourcing the technical support functions for 24/7, or 18/6, or whatever might be the appropriate combination of hours/days. It was emphasised that it might be necessary to charge for some services, if no additional funds were made available, so that additional resources could be bought in. Several participants also stressed the importance of first consulting with the lecturers and students, about what was really needed, and when, rather than trying to replicate all of the local services at a distance. One interesting (but probably utopian!) suggestion was that we should all stop trying to reinvent the wheel and instead set up some kind of SCONUL Call Centre to provide a uniform support service (presumably mainly for technical support). I’m not sure that any of the groups came up with a coherent strategy, as such, for coping with this particular problem statement, but there were plenty of useful ideas generated.

With any luck, most of us will not be faced with such an extreme step-change as the one that Ian presented to us, but it’s certain that we will all have to pay more attention to supporting increasing numbers of students who are based off-campus for most of the time. Ian’s workshop provided us with food for thought and tied in nicely with Elizabeth Heap’s talk, later on that afternoon, about the work of the SCONUL Task Force on Distance Learners and the report that they had published. But for me, the abiding image in my mind, as I left the meeting room, was that of the new SCONUL Call-Centre, staffed on a rota basis of three eight-hour shifts by Toby, Gail, and SitMui.

*Rapporteur: Nick Smith, Aston University*

**FILLING THE EMPTY CHAIR: ISSUES IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT RECRUITMENT; BRIEFING AND UPDATE ON THE HIMSS PROJECT BY CHRISTINE ABBOTT, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM**

As Project Director, Christine Abbott set out to provide an update on the HIMSS Project (Hybrid Information Management: Skills for Senior Staff). The project began in September 1999 and is due for completion in February/March 2002. The research phase of the project has indicated the existence of a recruitment problem at senior management level, particularly in converged and computing services. As well as noting that some organisations are 'risk averse' and that there is 'comprehensive under-utilisation of human resources', Christine also pointed out that there is a management perception that the people with the right skills simply don't exist.

A number of solutions have been proposed including:

- Increasing salaries, particularly for IT function and converged service heads
- Recruiting from beyond the HE sector
- Implementing succession planning strategies
- Producing a diagnostic tool to define the skills, knowledge and experience required.

The key skills that have been identified for all posts at this level are as follows:

- Generic management and personal qualities are the most important attributes
- Generic management and personal qualities constitute the most pressing development needs
- Strategic technical knowledge and skills are also necessary.

A number of methods for developing these skills already exist (management skills development programmes; secondments; conferences; shadowing etc.) but it is felt that a more structured approach would be beneficial. The next step is to map the research findings into a 'learning framework' which would enable individuals to profile themselves against the skills needed.

Website: <http://www.himss.bham.ac.uk>

*Rapporteur: Julie Parry, Bath Spa University College*

**COPYRIGHT ISSUES: AN UPDATE: A BRIEFING BY TOBY BAINTON, SCONUL SECRETARY**

The workshop on copyright issues led by Toby Bainton focused mainly on the European Copy-

right Directive, though some account was also given of the state of play of the Copyright Tribunal which is resolving the conflict surrounding the next CLA licence. As usual, Toby spoke with an enviable grasp of detail, nuance and hidden motive.

Adopted in May, the Directive is required to be implemented by member states by late December 2002. As well as covering the familiar categories of reproduction and distribution rights, it incorporates articles dealing with e-rights and with legal rights regarding encryption and encoding. Toby went through the more significant articles, beginning with the matter of exceptions which were desirable in all copyright law but which had only been salvaged by energetic canvassing in the face of some discouragement from the EC.

The exceptions only apply in certain special cases 'which do not conflict with a normal exploitation of the work', and are almost all optional within the legal systems of member states – the compulsory exception being temporary transient storage such as within a PC or a cache. The optional exceptions lie in familiar areas such as photocopying for individual use, and condition the meaning of the phrase 'fair compensation' which appears in the document – the emphasis being on 'fair'. Certainly Toby believes that the Government wishes to make the minimum change to English law, through secondary legislation.

Some other exceptions need thinking through in terms of the phrase 'for non-commercial ends'. Is material supplied to distance learners part of a non-commercial process? Does allowed photocopying by a library 'not for economic/commercial advantage' break down when services to the private sector are involved? Other exceptions clear up anomalies – for example allowing copyright libraries to display on dedicated terminals e-resources they haven't actually bought licences for, facilitating on-demand video, etc. Overall though, it appears that SCONUL copyright gurus (some of whom were present) need not anticipate rusting unburnished from 2003 onwards.

Toby's account of the UUK/CLA Copyright Tribunal (not least the very severe grillings dished out by counsel) was riveting and opened the door on some of the unreconstructed thinking and the disorganisation that have made the process of licence negotiation and the experience of licence-holding so unsatisfactory. He felt that the argument from the university side had usefully developed from 'too costly' to 'bad value for money', and in the

light of the apparent persuasiveness of this the most likely outcome would be not a reduction in present prices, but a revision of what is being purchased, principally through an adjustment of the status of course packs within the licence.

In answers to questions Toby revealed that DACS had not, by the time of the Tribunal hearing, collected any money from CLARCS and had not yet distributed what had been received from the CLA protocol. Which raised the question: have artists received anything at all from these licences? But answer came there none.

*Rapporteur: Alasdair Paterson, University of Exeter*

**ACCESS FOR DISTANCE LEARNERS, BY ELIZABETH HEAPS,  
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN, UNIVERSITY OF YORK**

Elizabeth outlined the findings of the SCONUL Taskforce for Access for Distance Learners, whose report (October 2001) is available in full from the SCONUL office or website <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/Conference/presegm01/distancelearners>

The background for the Taskforce was an academic landscape with growing student numbers; widening of access; expansion of work-based learning and continuing professional development; constantly changing and expanding C&IT opportunities; and diminution of student funding support. The Taskforce took a wide definition of distance learners as 'those who are separated by distance or available time from the institution at which they are registered for a course of study'. Elizabeth pointed out that with many full-time students now working to support their studies, access to facilities such as libraries was difficult even for on-campus students at the times they were able to study, and that they could therefore require distance learning type support because of this time-shifted learning. There are no statistics counting distance learning students, but we can all now be viewed as distance learners.

The Taskforce worked to the principle of institutional responsibility for distance learning. Each institution needs to consider the educational and pedagogic value of its courses, make adequate provision for information provision and ensure that there is equity (but not necessarily equality) of provision from support services between different modes of learning. The organisation and management of distance learning needs to encompass course planning and evaluation; funding; staffing; policies and procedures; legislation and codes of practice; collaborative provision; communication

issues with students and the vital element of quality assurance.

In terms of user expectations for support services, institutions need to review a range of access arrangements – to space, information, help, equipment and specialised services such as group study. Consideration needs to be given to expanding the range of traditional library reader services to embrace remote registration, flexible loans, online reservations, document delivery (including postal loans); course packs and individual authorisation to allow remote access to electronic services. Help services increasingly need to be 24x7, and need planning to include advice on using IT hardware and software, information and advice on learning, and a wider range of information skills training dealing with remote searching, retrieval, evaluation and management of documents.

The context of information service delivery can be via the home library – remote or onsite – via the department or in collaboration with external libraries and information services acting as an agent. Collaboration between higher education institutions, across sectors and with other agencies are therefore important in service delivery to distance learners. Examples of cross-sectoral schemes such as Sheffield's ALL, and similar schemes in the West Midlands and Sunderland are encouraging developments. Nationally within higher education the emergence of the UK Libraries Plus scheme, now with over 100 members, is another example of best practice. The scheme is based on a mutual benefit principle, with the home library continuing to take responsibility for its own users. The scheme gives access to all users for reference, and extends borrowing to distance learners, part-timers and placement students, based on lending policies determined by the host library.

Whilst there has been progress in improving access for distance learners to traditional library services, there are still barriers with access to electronic resources. The Task Force would like to see a UK Computers Plus scheme developed by UCISA, so that students have reciprocal access to hardware and networks. Supplier licences, despite the provision in some cases for drop-in access, are still too restrictive and use may be defeated by campus network security requirements. Authentication and authorisation issues therefore need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

One recent development has been the government's promotion of the e-University. £60m has been set aside for the development of online learn-

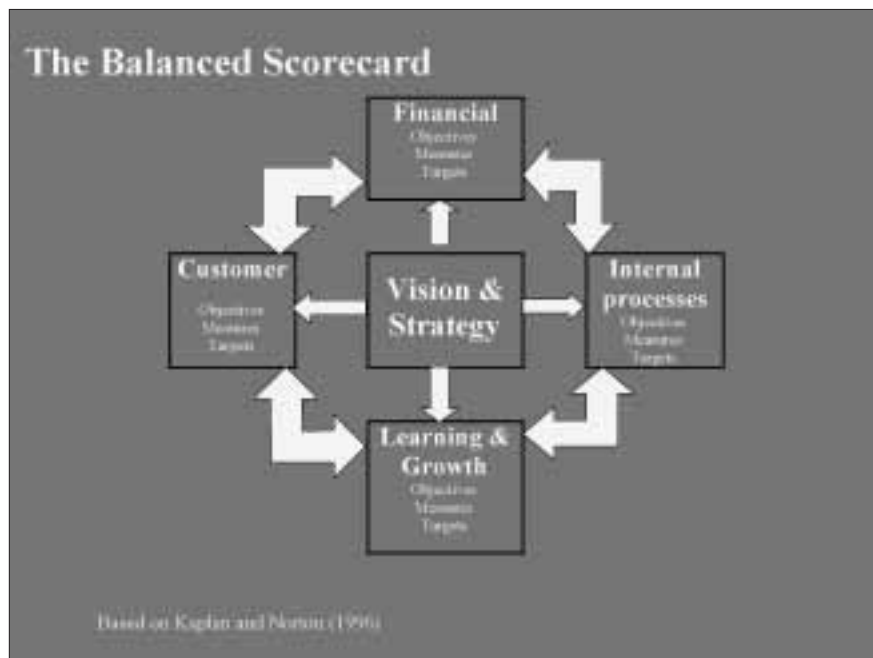
ing and three pilots have been set up, involving York, Sheffield Hallam, Cambridge and the Open Universities. New partnerships may also develop with corporate universities and the emerging NHS University.

Summarising the recommendations of the Task Force, we need to progress distance learning support by concentrating on:

- Funding implications
- Quality Assurance issues
- Cross-sectoral partnerships
- Sustaining UK Libraries Plus, and developing a parallel UK Computers Plus scheme
- SCONUL/UCISA collaboration with the emerging e-University

At KIAD they had developed a balanced scorecard model approach to quality, a systematic model focusing on client satisfaction and embracing 'soft' factors such as staff turnover, sickness and morale, as well as analysing key facts such as a range performance indicators and service level agreements, and using comparative data to allow benchmarking. This model, whilst still in its early stages, was now being used beyond Library and Learning Resources in departments such as Personnel.

**ENSURING QUALITY OF SUPPORT IN SMALLER ACADEMIC LIBRARIES BY VANESSA CRANE, HEAD OF LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES, KENT INSTITUTE OF ART AND DESIGN**



Vanessa rounded off the day by focussing on the quality aspects of service delivery, using a case study of Kent Institute of Art and Design (KIAD). Though small, with some 2,500 students and 25 full-time equivalent library staff, and a specialist college, Vanessa concluded that in matters of quality size and specialism do not detract from the need to comply with all the main principles of quality assurance.

She outlined the four stage model of quality – inspection, control, quality assurance and total quality management – and emphasised the need to identify stakeholders who can help with quality issues.