
Update from the SCONUL Chair

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It's good to say that there's a lot going on in terms of the SCONUL agenda at the moment.

The hard work of the last few years – when we reviewed SCONUL's priorities, structures, working practices and financial strategy – is really beginning to pay dividends.

One outcome is that SCONUL is now developing its role as a commissioning body, sometimes working independently and sometimes working collaboratively with others. This commissioning of projects is enabling us to increase SCONUL's capacity to support members through targeted interventions.

Current projects include:-

VAMP (VALUE AND IMPACT MEASUREMENT PROJECT)

This project work continues and it is on course to be launched at the SCONUL residential conference in Birmingham, 20-22 June 2007. The project's objectives are to support library directors to demonstrate the value and contribution made by academic libraries by providing a toolkit of data, measurement techniques and instruments. Stephen Town, the Project Manager, gives a useful update on the project elsewhere in this issue.

In addition to the content that will be delivered following completion of the project, Stephen's team are experimenting with Web 2.0 technologies to extend the usefulness of the website being developed to support members.

The project has already attracted considerable interest from a number of international bodies and there could be potential for the website to be developed over time as a worldwide Community of Practice in library performance measurement.

HAERVI (HE ACCESS TO E-RESOURCES IN VISITED INSTITUTIONS)

Restrictions on access to institutional networks exist to support network security and to comply with any content licensing access restrictions. However, this frequently means that *bona fide* academic visitors who wish to access digital resources at a visited institution are not able to do so. The HAERVI project, which is due to end in May 2007, is a joint project with UCISA (Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association) and is funded by the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee). The project seeks to effect progress in this complex area by focusing on a range of administrative, legal and technical issues to deliver the project's objectives which are:-

- to clarify the circumstances under which Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can lawfully allow visiting staff and students from other HEIs to access electronic information resources;
- to raise awareness among Higher Education (HE) librarians and IT managers of their rights and responsibilities in this area;
- to encourage HE librarians and IT managers to work together to allow an appropriate level of visitor access to appropriately-licensed e-resources, especially now that many publishers have signed up to the "walk-in user" clause incorporated within the JISC and Eduserve Chest model licenses;
- to work with JISC and Eduserve Chest to create, promote and maintain an easily-accessible master list of resources licensed for walk-in use;
- to increase the number of HE libraries in which staff and students visiting from other HEIs may have access to appropriately licensed resources.

The project will present a good starting point for library and information systems team staff who have hitherto been unsure where to begin with this issue, let alone solve the problems. A project public consultation event was held in March. This brought together a wide range of stakeholders including JISC, UCISA and UKERNA (United Kingdom Education and Research Networking Association) as well as SCONUL members. Discussion there made clear that there has not previously been a common understanding of (a) the issues and barriers to access which the project is seeking to address nor (b) the challenges of identity management.

SCONUL WEBSITE PROJECT

The new look SCONUL website was launched last October and is ready to be developed as a source of news and updates for members. Work is currently proceeding to launch a new integrated database of members. A third web project will improve the presentation of the various SCONUL schemes for access to libraries, and the potential to manage the whole range of schemes via the web is also being explored.

WHAT ELSE IS ON THE HORIZON?

Another outcome of the review work undertaken over the last couple of years is that Executive Board members are also focusing on new areas of SCONUL's work. Two current examples include:-

INTERNATIONAL AGENDA

Michael Breaks has been working recently to help the Executive Board develop SCONUL's international strategy. The intention is to embed an international perspective into all aspects of SCONUL's work, wherever appropriate. A group from CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries), for example, are visiting in December 2007 to coincide with the SCONUL Autumn Conference, thereby providing a ready opportunity for SCONUL members to find out more about developments in Canada.

A future issue of *Focus* will include an article by Michael to give a fuller sense of how this agenda will be developed over time.

LEARNING AND TEACHING AGENDA

A meeting of various interested parties was convened at the end of January to assist SCONUL identify how it might develop a more strategic focus to support members in relation to their institutional learning and teaching agenda. Feedback from the meeting has been presented to SCONUL Executive Board which has agreed to the establishment of a Task and Finish group, led by Vanessa Crane, to determine how best to take this agenda forward on behalf of members. The agenda for the group is to:-

- develop an authoritative SCONUL vision for the role of libraries in supporting learning and teaching;
- propose means by which SCONUL might extend its horizon scanning activity in learning and teaching in HE;

- propose means by which SCONUL might extend its strategic advocacy role in learning and teaching in HE;
- develop thinking on how SCONUL can encourage future practitioner work e.g. through partnership working with other relevant groups;
- develop key strategic objectives for SCONUL in this area.

The above hopefully gives a sense of some of the key issues that that Executive Board is focusing on at present. Feedback and proposals for future consideration are always welcome and should be addressed either to the Chair (anne.bell@warwick.ac.uk) or the SCONUL Secretary (toby.bainton@scnul.ac.uk).