
News from SCONUL

The JISC national e-books observatory project concluded last September and has granted free two year access to 36 of the most popular e-books as selected by librarians in Business Studies and Management, Medicine, Engineering and Media Studies, selected by librarians. For the complete list of e-books go to <http://www.jiscebook-project.org/wp-content/full-list-of-e-books.doc>

Warwick University unveiled its plan to become the first British campus to open an international quarter, hosting three or four overseas research universities

The National Library of Scotland suffered a flood in 2007. However there was no major damage to the collections and damaged material has received conservation treatment.

An Observer article by British Library chief executive Lynne Brindley said that the prospect of funding cuts in the next government spending round could restrict access to collections at the British Library and lead to charges for services currently free.

A report published by the British Academy promoted the importance of peer reviewing and recommended a greater reflection in the research assessment exercise. The report warned government plans to overhaul the way research is assessed will change peer review for the worse, especially in humanities. More info

A survey of 16-18 year olds hoping to go to university found most are 'digital natives' expecting unrestricted access to the internet. 79% felt IT at university would enhance their learning but many felt it should support, not replace, traditional teaching methods.

The ticTOCs project was launched recently. It aims to develop a free service to enable easy access to the contents of the latest journal publications for libraries, academics and the wider community. A prototype service is expected in April 2008.

JISC released two videos to explain how its Virtual Research Environments programmes help disparate researchers work together. JISC also released a new publication on the benefits and challenges of e-learning from the perspective of the learner entitled *In Their Own Words* (http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning_pedagogy/intheirownwords)

The idea of a 'European Digital Library' was discussed at a major conference in Copenhagen in October 2007. A SCONUL representative was present to report on the legal challenges involved in digitisation and specifically the question of intellectual property rights. <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/stories/2007/10/digi.aspx>

Durham University Library received an award for 'Care of Collections', at the national Conservation Awards supported by Sir Paul McCartney. The prize comes for Durham's innovative project to help other bodies help themselves in caring for their collections.

The UK Government published its Comprehensive Spending Review in 2007. It included extra money for higher education and confirmed funding for the fourth round of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF).

The Western Mail featured a robust letter from the University of Glamorgan that re-iterated the importance for academic libraries of adapting to the new generation of students. Including offering services outside the library building itself.

JISC will sit on the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Sustainable Digital Preservation and Access. The new Task Force will address the issue of economic sustainability in digital preservation and run for two years.

UK universities are the best in the world for teaching and support of international students says a THES survey.

Hold the Front Page – the British Library in partnership with JISC has launched a major new website allowing free access to digitised copies of nineteenth century British newspapers. The service is free for all further and higher education UK institutions.

The new £32m David Wilson Library at the University of Leicester will have a seat dedicated to locally-born pop star Engelbert Humperdinck.

The Council of the European Union agreed to look at the issue of VAT on electronic journals. An official statement said the Council would assess issues, 'such as refunding VAT for digital journal subscriptions to libraries'.

SCONUL Space Planning Group has joined forces with web portal 'Designing Libraries' to develop an updated and interactive database of information about members' libraries. The data is expected to go live early next year.

A letter from SCONUL secretary Toby Bainton appeared in the THES pointing out that library bookstock per student has remained constant for the past ten years. The letter came in response to a misleading article on disposals which failed to distinguish between books 'thrown away' by libraries and those transferred to other libraries, sold or donated to charitable causes.

A RIN report estimated that 50% of research collections are now covered by online catalogues, compared with 31% five years ago. The report concluded UK librarians have made 'huge efforts' in digitising the backlog of material in their collections.

The new £9.2M Beacons for Public Engagement scheme will 'lead efforts to foster a change of culture in universities, assisting staff to engage with the public'. Beacon centres established in Bristol, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich, London, Cardiff & Edinburgh. More info

A survey found strong support for the Irish Research eLibrary. http://library.nuim.ie/resources/documents/IRELSurveyReport_07.pdf

More theses will be available online thanks to the EThOSnet project. http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/publications/pub_ethosbp.aspx

JISC: published the Academic Database Assessment Tool to inform libraries future subscriptions to bibliographic and full text databases. JISC are also running eleven free workshops across the UK to discuss the national e-books observatory project. Finally, they are offering funding for projects to improve repositories and support the data audits

Our Canadian counterparts ended their week's study tour of UK libraries with a lively conference on 3 December 2007, with 40 SCONUL library directors in attendance. Some fascinating plenary talks preceded informal discussions.

Lynne Brindley, CEO of the British Library called for an overhaul of intellectual property legislation to become 'fit-for-purpose' for the digital age and said debates about IP were too focused on 'teenagers, music and consumer industries.' <http://www.bl.uk/news/2007/pressrelease20071130a.html>

A major article in the Guardian newspaper examined the difficult issues around book repositories and focused on the British Library's new complex being built in Yorkshire.

Aberdeen City Council has approved plans for a new £57M library at Aberdeen University. The library will be the university's largest ever capital development.

A new website has been launched aiming to be an information centre on Collaborative Collection Management. It contains a database of collaborative initiatives and wide-ranging details about projects from the UK Research Reserve to the RIN/CURL CCM Programme. Visit www.cocoman.ac.uk.