
Celebrating 15 years of library collaboration

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2008 marks the 15th anniversary of the M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries – whose members work together for the benefit of London's learners and researchers. During this

time some key milestones have been achieved for libraries in London and the South East of England.

The Consortium is a great achievement in itself, with membership expanding to 58 institutions from libraries of the large multi-faculty institutions through to those with a specialised subject base. In 2002 membership was opened up to non-higher education organisations such as the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

So what have been the Consortium's key achievements?

Providing services to learners and researchers

- The M25 Access Scheme, which influenced the creation of SCONUL Access - a co-operative venture between higher education libraries to enable academic staff and students to borrow material from other libraries
- The Inform25 suite of services providing electronic access to the unrivalled collections within the Consortium, including 'Find a library', 'Visit a library', the Union List of Serials and the Search Catalogues service which allows users to simultaneously cross search forty catalogues.

Mutual support of member libraries in improving services to their users

- Through its Staff Development and Training Organisation called CPD25, the Consortium

provides high quality training and development, covering a wide range of issues tailored for library staff at different stages of their careers

- Produces resources and services to support staff in member libraries, including templates for Disaster Management and Service Level Definition.

Collaboration and influence

- Acting as a single voice for its diverse membership, representing the interests of member libraries at regional and national level
- Building successful relationships with key organisations including the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and London Higher, influencing policy and promoting cross-sector collaboration.

Librarians and key players gathered at the House of Commons on 3 April 2008 to mark the 15th anniversary of the Consortium. The event was sponsored by Barry Sheerman, MP for Huddersfield, who is Chair of the House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee, is an LSE governor and has recently won a campaign to save an historic local library from closure.

Hosting the reception the Consortium Chair, Nick Bevan, described the Consortium as a “great brand comprising a number of distinct strengths with ambitious plans to progress and develop new services.” He also paid tribute to the “hard work of very many people” that had ensured that the Consortium was now in “great shape”.

In his speech, the former Consortium Secretary Roy Williams highlighted the contributions made by previous officers, describing the Consortium as “truly more than the sum of its parts” and “a voluntary group that has developed a cooperative and egalitarian approach to resource sharing and service development – whilst maintaining and indeed enriching the integrity of its individual members.”



*Present and Former Chairs of the M25 Consortium
L to R: Denis Heathcote, Robert Hall, Nick Bevan
(Chair), Brian Murphy*



*Jean Sykes (Former Chair of the M25 Consortium) cuts
the 15th Anniversary Cake with Nick Bevan present
Chair.*