

News

SCONUL community of interest groups: call for expressions of interest

SCONUL is setting up community of interest groups (CIGs) in the following areas: Delivering blended learning (looking at libraries' role in supporting their institutions as they make this transition); Embracing disruption: emerging technologies and systems (looking at new technologies and innovative uses of existing technologies); Organisational development (looking at roles, skills and the nature of our work post-Covid). The focus of the groups will be on knowledge exchange - sharing information and best practice between institutions and beyond. Membership is open to all staff at SCONUL member institutions who are interested in actively engaging in a conversation about the future. If this is of interest, please do register to join the convenors of each group for an informal discussion. If you are not able to make these but want further information or want to register your interest, please e-mail ann.rossiter@sconul.ac.uk.

- Embracing disruption, 17 June 14:00-15:00: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEvC-2grDktGdEGnnLhXNoMPSeMuNNWK7HA>
(Co-convenors: Birgit Fraser, Anglia Ruskin University and Wendy White, University of Southampton)
- Organisational development, 15 June 11:00-12:00: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYrdOGuqDwoH9b5ErLLU5q74pur669ywum5>
(Co-convenors: David Clay, University of Salford and Janet Corcoran, Imperial College London)
- Delivering blended learning, 18 June 13:00-14:00: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0vc-6rrT0vE9wLAfhBRdT74MihDdlGDKeq>
(Co-convenors: David Clover, Middlesex University and Suzanne Tatham, University of Sussex)

Shared international perspectives on libraries' responses to the pandemic, 29 March

On 29 March SCONUL held its launch event for the programme From Adaptive Practice to Service Redesign. *Shared international perspectives on libraries' responses to the pandemic* brought together speakers from Hong Kong, Europe and Australia to discuss the mutual challenges and opportunities facing academic and research libraries across the world in response to COVID-19 and all that has followed. The event shared perspectives on our learning around user wishes and needs, about barriers to full digital delivery, and the opportunities the crisis has brought to rethink established patterns of service delivery and user expectation. Further *Libraries after Lockdown* events will be announced shortly. A link to the recording of the webinar can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/5y8mecej> (access passcode: tt&QCA5s)

Unsub offer for SCONUL members

SCONUL and Jisc have negotiated a national agreement with not-for-profit [Our Research](#). The agreement will help individual SCONUL members in the UK to use [Unsub](#), a data analysis and dashboard tool that enables libraries and consortia to independently assess the value of the journal subscriptions they hold with publishers. The agreement, arranged in response to sector demand following a consultation by SCONUL, will also allow universities to assess and share various scenarios of selecting journal titles. Modelling different scenarios gives university libraries greater insight into the value of their subscription packages, with the opportunity to share their outcomes with the Jisc consortium to enable greater oversight in support of national negotiation activities. A reduced rate for Unsub membership for SCONUL members in the UK has agreed. [Read more](#)

Unsub agreement - webinars 1 June and 15 June

SCONUL and Jisc have organised two webinars for both existing and prospective Unsub users. Two preliminary webinars planned for June will introduce the Unsub dashboard, discuss the national deal and the value of a collective approach, outline development plans for a unique consortium level feature, seek input on this new development, and respond to any questions. To sign up to the webinar on Tuesday 1 June at 4pm please follow this link: <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/events/unsub-national-agreement->

[demonstration-01-jun-2021](https://www.jisc.ac.uk/events/unsub-national-agreement-demonstration-15-jun-2021). To sign up to the webinar on Tuesday 15 June at 4pm please follow this link: <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/events/unsub-national-agreement-demonstration-15-jun-2021>.

Including EDI data for the library sector within the SCONUL statistics

SCONUL has launched a research project on the feasibility of including EDI data for the library sector within the SCONUL Statistics. Understanding the make-up of our workforce is a prerequisite for effectively monitoring and promoting diversity and was a recommendation of the SCONUL report, BAME Staff Experience of Academic and Research Libraries. This research will look at the data required, what already exists and where, and the ease with which member institutions are able to supply the data. The research will be conducted by Dr Mohammed Ishaq, Reader in Human Resource Management at the School of Business and Enterprise at University of the West of Scotland. SCONUL will be issuing a survey exploring these questions, followed by a focus group with a representative sample of member institutions. If you are interested in taking part in the focus group (which will be held virtually), please do e-mail Ann Rossiter Ann.Rossiter@skonul.ac.uk.

VAT and the impact on Open Access agreements

HMRC's announcement that it would apply the zero rate of VAT (0%) for e-publications with effect from 1 May 2020 has had the side effect of increasing the relative cost of open access agreements. This anomaly places a greater financial burden on any institution that wishes to publish open access in compliance with Government and research funder's policies and threatens to undermine the broader transition to open access to research. Jisc have produced a briefing for Finance Directors that can be tailored by Library Directors which allow institutions to provide examples to illustrate the issues at a local level. The briefing can be found here: <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/publication/vat-and-the-impact-on-open-access-agreements>

Academic Libraries North: A New Name in the North

1 May saw the formal launch of Academic Libraries North (ALN), a new network of academic libraries based in the North of England and a subgroup of SCONUL. ALN supersedes and builds on the previous successes of Northern Collaboration (NC) and North West Academic Libraries (NoWAL), and was created in January 2021. ALN seeks to provide opportunities for members through the exchange of knowledge and experience, facilitate initiatives responding to emerging opportunities and support members through the challenges in HE and the library environment. The new group believes in maximising the benefits of collaboration, ensuring value for money and efficiencies in areas such as procurement whilst also preserving the value, culture and distinctiveness of co-operative working and a sense of community within the North. The new group's [website](#) will showcase its development over the next year, providing a platform to showcase the ALN staff development programme, highlight good practice and share ideas.

Quarantining books

Public Health England have updated its advice on quarantine of returned library books and resources. *With the present low prevalence of COVID-19 and the present knowledge of the ability of COVID-19 virus (including variants) to survive on surfaces after experimental studies, PHE do not consider there to be a need to isolate returned Library books for 72 hours. This is in line with the advice that shops do not need to isolate returned goods. Books can be wiped down if possible with a proprietary cleaning solution which is effective against COVID-19 (PHE cleaning guidance), especially if they have a protective plastic cover. This revised quarantine advice applies also to books with leather and vellum covers. Newspapers and magazines can be reinstated in libraries.* Libraries Connected have incorporated this advice into the revised Library Service Recovery Toolkit which can be found here:

<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/resource/service-recovery-toolkit-word>

The impact of AI, machine learning, automation and robotics on the information profession

CILIP with the support of Health Education England, has published its research report *The impact of AI, machine learning, automation and robotics on the information profession*. The purpose of this independent research is to help the professional community to understand how AI, machine learning, process automation and robotics are either already impacting the daily work of healthcare information professionals or likely to do so in the near future. Written by Dr Andrew M. Cox (Information School, University of Sheffield) the research has highlighted a set of skills and competencies that information professionals will need to develop in order to support their users and organisations through this 4th Industrial Revolution. [Read more](#)

Irish progress on transformative agreements

Ireland's Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science has announced that IReL has struck transformative agreements with 11 major international academic publishers. As a result, researchers based at participating member institutions of the IReL Consortium are now able to ensure that the articles they write are made available openly, immediately and at no cost to researchers, learners and citizens nationally and internationally by the publishers involved. [Read more](#)

CONUL Training and Development Annual Report 2019

CONUL published their Training and Development *Annual Report 2019*. It provides a summary report on the training events for library staff held in 2019 under the auspices of the Consortium of National and University Libraries in Ireland. The report can be found here: <http://www.conul.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CONUL-TD-Annual-Report-2019.pdf>

Updates from our peer organisations:

1. Academic Libraries North <https://www.academiclibrariesnorth.ac.uk/newsletters>
2. LIBER: <https://libereurope.eu/news/>
3. M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries: <https://www.m25lib.ac.uk/about-the-consortium/newsletter-archive/>
4. Mercian Collaboration <https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/news>
5. RLUK: <https://www.rluk.ac.uk/rluk-bulletin/>
6. SCURL <https://www.scurl.ac.uk/>
7. ucisa: <https://www.ucisa.ac.uk/News-and-Views>
8. WHELF: <https://whelf.ac.uk/>

Appointments and job opportunities

If you have moved to a new role or institution or have any senior job opportunities that you would like us to include, please e-mail SitMui.Ng@sconul.ac.uk.

Vacancy: Library Customer Service and Engagement Manager, Newman University

Newman University are seeking a Library Customer Service and Engagement Manager. The post holder will lead the Service Delivery team that provides frontline and advisory services to students and staff – including the Service Desk, Enquiry Service, Academic Liaison team and physical space management. As a member of the Library Leadership Team they will also play a key role in strategic planning and development of the whole library service. **Closing date 9 June** [Read more](#)

Resources

Below is a list of resources for SCONUL members dealing with Covid-19. If you would like SCONUL to include any resources that may be of interest to members, please email sitmui.ng@sconul.ac.uk

Current COVID resources

- Government guidance for English universities on Covid-19 (updated 20 May): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>
- The Welsh government guidance and services for higher education (updated 14 May): <https://gov.wales/guidance-higher-education-keep-wales-safe-covid-19>
- The Scottish government's guidance for higher and further education institutions and student accommodation providers to help reduce the spread of Covid-19 (updated 16 April): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-universities-colleges-and-student-accommodation-providers/>
- SAGE Advice, Mitigations to Reduce Transmission of the new variant SARS-CoV-2 virus SAGE-EMG, SPI-B, Transmission Group, 23 December 2020:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/948607/s0995-mitigations-to-reduce-transmission-of-the-new-variant.pdf

- Jisc's report on the response to COVID-19 and the future of digital learning and teaching:
<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/reports/learning-and-teaching-reimagined-a-new-dawn-for-higher-education>
- Public Library News article *The third lockdown: damned if you do...?* that includes a link to a list of public libraries and what services they are offering in the current lockdown:
<https://www.publiclibrariesnews.com/about-public-libraries-news/coronavirus-public-library-ideas-and-responses/when-and-how-will-public-libraries-reopen-in-england>

SCONUL services during the pandemic

- The SCONUL Access Scheme is suspended until further notice, in line with Government guidelines. The SCONUL Access form has been disabled on our website to prevent new applications being made during this period. SCONUL has produced a note which sets out the current position and would be grateful if members could share this with staff and students including using the text for your website if appropriate. If you receive any queries from students about the scheme, please direct them to our website <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/sconul-access>.
- The SCONUL office remains open, albeit virtually, and we are working as normal. Students or staff ringing the office or contacting us by email will have their enquiries dealt with in the usual way.
- All events this academic year (2020-21) will be held virtually and we will be bringing members together to discuss their response to the immediate crisis and to look at the longer-term impacts and the community's response
- We continue to provide our support for our deputies and directors' groups, SCONUL Mentoring and other services. Please feel free to contact us as usual.

Archive: Covid-19 documentation

Resources which are no longer current but have been retained for reference purposes can be found here:
<https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/archive-covid-19-documentation>

Events

With the current uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic many events have either been cancelled, postponed or moved to an online platform, please click on the event for further information.

Strategic use of COUNTER data, 4 June

SCURL Annual Conference: Focussed on the Future, 9 June

Sherif: Optimising and Transforming Library Services (post-Covid), 15 June

UKSG: "Back to the Future: Lessons learned from the Jisc OA Textbook project", 17 June

Open Science Webinar, 18 June

LIBER 2021 Online, 23-25 June

DCDC21 virtual conference, 28 June-2 July

FestivIL by LILAC online event, 6-8 July

Westminster HE Forum: Next steps for Open Access, 9 July

Westminster HE Forum: The future use of digital technology and remote learning in Higher Education, 15 July

Westminster Media Forum: Valuing culture and heritage, 23 August

OAI12 – The Geneva Workshop on Innovations in Scholarly Communication, 6-10 September

Call for papers: Academic Libraries North Conference, 8 and 9 September

Mercian Collaboration conference: Adaptation and Growth in Times of Adversity, 9-10 September

SCONUL AGM and members meeting, 15 September, 2-4pm

Call for contributions: New Librarianship Symposia Series, Autumn 2021

Call for papers: 14th International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries, 2-4 November