

Editorial

We are delighted that issue 104 of Library and Information Research embraces content from the widest possible range of professional environments. We have contributions from practitioners and academics, and from multiple sectors, including school, public and academic libraries – there is something for everyone!

July 2009 saw one of the largest audiences of Umbrella 2009¹ gather to hear John Feather speak on the subject of ‘The information society: does it need the information professions?’. Being clear to differentiate between the need for the *profession* and the need for information *professionals*, Feather’s talk sparked a lively debate and we are delighted to publish the paper here.

You may read for yourself whether Feather believes that the information professions are necessary, but one of his conclusions is echoed by another Umbrella speaker: the need for a research-driven evidence base for the achievements of the information profession. Cristina Ritchie discusses an evidence-based approach to school librarianship, arguing that this sector needs large scale research to support national changes in policy – and of course buy-in from school librarians to render policy change effective.

A third Umbrella speaker,Carolynn Rankin, and her colleagues describe methods used to assess the impact of a national initiative in public libraries: the National Year of Reading. Firmly rooted in the priorities and goals of the key stakeholders (the MLA, local government and the project participants themselves), the project is now well positioned to provide evaluative material that may be used for advocacy with a range of audiences including local and central government.

In common with the remaining papers in this issue, Rankin’s article has a strong focus on the methodological challenges of performing LIS research. Both Rankin *et al.* and Briddon *et al.* used mixed methods approaches to collecting and analysing data for their research and both articles benefit from some detailed description of these methods (see for example Rankin *et al.*’s section on computer assisted qualitative data analysis software). Briddon *et al.* have taken advantage of the online journal format to provide a copy of their questionnaire as a supplementary file; to view this, just click on the link alongside the main paper.

For those new to LIS research, or for those supporting others branching out into a new research area, Janet Clapton offers a tried and tested method of establishing current knowledge. Drawing on her extensive experience of background scoping in the field of Social Care, Clapton describes how she manages the scoping process and illustrates this by identifying a range of LIS resources. Clapton’s list is replicated on the resources section of the Library and Information Research Group website² and new suggestions are welcomed.

¹ <http://www.umbrella2009.org.uk/index.html>

² <http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/research/links>

Finally, we are pleased to include several new book reviews on a range of very practical and relevant topics. Qualitative research, information literacy, web accessibility and library planning and refurbishment will all resonate with readers.

Don't forget, if you have any views on the papers published in Library and Information Research you are welcome to leave a comment – simply click on 'Add comment' in the Reading Tools to the right of the paper. If you wish to view other people's comments then click on 'Add comment' and then 'Cancel'.

Miggie Pickton

Louise Cooke