L I R Library and Information Research

Volume 33   Issue 104
Contents

London: Facet Publishing. 2005.

CRAVEN, J. (ed.) Web Accessibility: practical advice for the library and information professional. London: Facet Publishing. 2008.

DEWE, Michael (ed.) Renewing our libraries: case studies in re-planning and refurbishment. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2009.

_____

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 2009[1] 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 website[2] 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

_____

The information society: Does it need the information professions?

John Feather

Abstract

A profession is constituted by a group of people with a shared body of knowledge and skills, based on formal training and well defined criteria. But the knowledge and skills which characterise the information profession, as defined by CILIP in the Body of Professional Knowledge and other documents, are no longer confined to those who describe themselves in this way, or feel any attachment to the information profession as traditionally defined. The paper discusses how this group do, can and should contribute to the so-called 'information society'. It challenges the idea that information society is in itself something new, and focuses more on the concept of the 'knowledge economy' in which information (and therefore information workers) have a key role. The challenge for the profession is to go beyond its own recognition of its knowledge, skills and insights, and to persuade others of the contribution it (and they) can make.

_____

The CILIP *Body of Professional Knowledge* is unequivocal in its claims for the information professions:

The knowledge base defined in this paper has been adopted by CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) and establishes the unique knowledge, which distinguishes library and information professionals from professionals within other domains.

(CILIP, 2009b)

The document is wide-ranging and not lacking in depth. Yet this statement is not beyond question, especially when put in the context of another of CILIP's *obita dicta*, this time describing itself:

_____

John Feather

John Feather is Professor of Library and Information Studies, Loughborough University, UK.

Email: j.p.feather@lboro.ac.uk

_____

CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals is the leading professional body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers.

(CILIP, 2009a)

The 'library and information professionals' referred to in the *Body of Professional Knowledge* are presumably to be equated with the 'librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers' in the strap line from the CILIP Website. Yet juxtaposing the 'professionals' and the 'specialists' in this way raises some interesting and perhaps disturbing questions about what constitutes this profession – or these professions!? – and what characterises their alleged uniqueness. In this paper, I want to address these questions, and in suggesting some of the ways in which they might be answered I shall also say something about the relationship between professional practice and research which will, I hope, be of interest to members of LIRG.

The concept of 'profession' is one which is carefully safeguarded, especially by those who consider themselves to belong to one. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines it as

An occupation in which a professed knowledge of some subject, field, or science is applied; a vocation or career, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification

(*s.n.* II.7 a.)

The essential elements are the application of knowledge, the prolonged training and the formal qualification. But there is a deeper layer of social meaning of which these cold words barely give a flavour. One of the OED's quotations hints at it:

Profession in our country is expressly that kind of business which deals primarily with men as men, and is thus distinguished from a Trade, which provides for the external wants or occasions of men.

This definition, from a work by the Christian Socialist F. D. Maurice, published in 1839, does not evade the real issue, and nor does the OED's note on its own original definition in 1908:

Now usually applied to an occupation considered to be socially superior to a trade or handicraft; but formerly, and still in vulgar (or humorous) use, including these.

(*s.n.* II.b, headnote).

Here we have it. The professions - at least in England ('our country') – are more than mere occupations, and are certainly distinct from trade. Professions cater for people's 'inner needs', whether those needs are spiritual, physical or intellectual. Professional people will of course accept fees or salaries for their services, but they are not tradesmen for whom profit is the only motive. Only by way of a joke do we describe shopkeeping or plumbing as a profession.

New professions can of course evolve. Indeed throughout the 19th century they proliferated. There was – and is – a peculiarly British way of signifying the point

_____

_____

of transition from occupation to profession: the formation and public recognition of a professional body. A handful of such bodies have statutory authority to control entry and practice. Most do not, but through their royal charters or charitable objectives lay claim to regulating standards, which typically have some form of recognition in the wider community.

The British concept of Public, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies – PSRBs – is central to our understanding of what it means to qualify and practice as a member of a profession. In the non-statutory professions, however, these are merely the outward forms. The real defining factors of the profession are the knowledge and skills which practitioners possess and exercise. It is these that the CILIP *Body of Professional Knowledge* tried to capture. It is the expectation that they will be acquired through a formal programme of training and education and that there is a system of progressive attainment from entry level to professional leadership. But information work, like most of the non-statutory professions, is not and could never be a closed shop. It never has been and despite the proliferation of professional education in the second half of the 20th century there is no sign of it becoming so. Indeed, we might argue that exactly the opposite trend can be seen.

There has been much talk in recent years of de-professionalisation, a phenomenon not unique to information work. We hear it from teachers concerned about the role of classroom assistants, we hear it from doctors as they watch the growth of the auxiliary professions in the healthcare sector, and we hear it from librarians who see people without formal qualifications take on posts which have traditionally been associated with qualified professionals. There are many alleged manifestations of this trend. As local authorities have combined formerly separate directorates into larger units, public libraries have found themselves with culture and leisure services, or perhaps with education, with the most senior officer having no background in library and information work. In many universities, the fashion – now beginning to reverse – for combining libraries with IT services and sometimes with other learning support services has had the same effect. Across the whole LIS sector we find staff who are undertaking tasks which fall well within CILIP's definition of professional work but neither are nor are required to be professionally qualified in the sense in which CILIP would understand it.

Some of these developments have of course been politically or financially driven. But, paradoxically, one of the most important factors has been the recognition of the increased importance of information, of the so-called information society.

The 'information society' has become a familiar phrase; it is even the title of a European Union programme and a portal on its Website (European Commission, 2009), not to mention of a journal and a number of books. But what do we mean by it? In practice, the EU associates it with the development and use of information and communications technologies. But the phrase is intended to imply far more than that. It means, in essence, a society in which knowledge and information are the building blocks of the social, political and economic structures through which it operates. The information society is the manifestation of the knowledge economy predicted by Machlup (Machlup, 1962) and analyzed by Porat (Porat, 1977) in the 1960s and 1970s; it is perhaps also the 'post-industrial society' of Daniel Bell (Bell, 1974) and others which was much discussed at about

_____

_____

the same time. Broadly speaking, what these writers saw developing around them was an economy driven not by extraction and manufacturing but by the creation and interchange of knowledge and information. They predicted that the successful economies of the future would be those which fully exploited these drivers in the way that the successful economies of the 19th and early 20th centuries had been those which were based on activities such as coal mining and steel-making. In this new economy, all the key workers would be knowledge workers and their raw material would be information.

Forty years later, we can see that some of this has come to pass, although in the way of social prophecy it has not worked out exactly as it was expected to do. But the details are less important than the commonly held belief that information and information systems are now fundamental to the way we live and work. Yet that very statement should give us pause for thought. The key word is 'now', because it makes us ask when information was *not* fundamental. The transmission of knowledge, both explicit and tacit, is one of the defining characteristics of *homo sapiens*. The development of complex languages, and the much later development of the means of recording them in a way which can be transmitted over time and distance, has enabled us to become the dominant species on the planet. Being able to transmit knowledge and information means that we have been able to enhance it rather than merely accumulate it, as we add to the received knowledge store by creating new knowledge in each generation. That has been happening at least since the first writing systems were developed in the middle east about five thousand years ago. The invention of printing, first in east Asia in the 11th century and then separately in western Europe in the mid-15th century, made the process more efficient. The knowledge store could more easily be encapsulated, preserved and transmitted and hence even further enhanced. It was a genuinely revolutionary technology, but it can be argued that it merely did better what had previously been done less well. And when we look at the history of the 500 years after Gutenberg, we see an increasing European, and especially western European, dominance over the whole world. The west's head start in developing an efficient communication technology was a significant factor in this development.

Computers were invented in a world which was already rich in knowledge and information and one in which the advanced economies were already moving away from the traditional industrial economic model towards one based on knowledge creation and exploitation. There is no doubt that more than any previous technology they have facilitated a quantum leap in our capacity to store, process and transmit information. This audience needs no reminding of that – those of us born in the age of the card index can never forget it! In the 1970s and 1980s as the scale of the transformation became clear, there were frequent and fevered discussions among people like us in which speaker after speaker foresaw a golden age of information and therefore for information professionals.

Up to a point that has happened. We have better access to more information than at any time in human history. And 'better' does not just mean less restricted or easier to find, it actually means qualitatively better than anything which went before. Simple examples will illustrate the point. How do I know what happened in the House of Commons yesterday? – I click. How do I find the time of my train? – I click. Moreover, with a comparatively inexpensive mobile device, I can

_____

_____

do this pretty well whenever and wherever I like. This is indeed a golden age for information access. But is it one for information professionals?

The answer to that question is buried in how the information is actually organized and retrieved. Society has been transformed at every level and in almost every aspect. At the personal level, the information society means the capacity not merely to find out, but to do – to tax a car, to order one's shopping from a supermarket, to book a seat at the theatre. This is where the early prophets of the information age (a phrase in common use before it happened, and now largely fallen into desuetude) were not entirely accurate. Although they were remarkably prescient at the macro level, what was not envisaged was the pervasiveness of the communications dimension of digital technologies. Indeed, as late as the early 1990s, politicians, including some very IT-savvy politicians like Bill Clinton and Al Gore, were still talking in terms of wired networks using metaphors derived from road systems. The more or less simultaneous development of ubiquitous mobile technologies and the World Wide Web – both products of the mid-1990s – actually completed the transformation. At the micro-level, access to information has become personal.

As information professionals, we understand that all of this is possible only because of the structure of the programs, systems and information resources which actually make the Web work, which sustain the networks, and which constitute individual Web sites and databases. But for all but a tiny handful of users this is as irrelevant as a knowledge of gearboxes is to the average car driver. The contribution of information professionals is at a different level. The development of the Web illustrates this perfectly. Berners-Lee set out to solve a very practical and urgent problem in information management. He turned to a proposal (hypertext) which had been developed at a conceptual level some twenty years earlier but never seriously pursued because the technology was inadequate, and added to it some design features which were made possible by the advances in interface design. Some of this work drew on the work of information researchers, and some on skills analogous to those of information professionals. If we look at Google or Microsoft today, we find them employing thousands of people, directly and indirectly, whose core skills are among those described in CILIP's *Body of Professional Knowledge*, as well as others whose research and development activities are focused on information storage, control, manipulation and retrieval. The public interface with information content is increasingly one which involves no immediate human contact, but specialist information work of the highest order is necessary for this to be achieved.

Of course, there are still information professionals whose work is built around working with clients. Some of them work in public-facing agencies like libraries, information service providers and advice bureaus. They are employed in the public and the private sectors, and they bring to their work the knowledge and understanding which enables them to help their clients. Why are they still needed? Partly no doubt because a professional can do the job more efficiently, but it would be a feeble justification for a profession if all it could do was save a little time and money on jobs which clients could do for themselves. The deeper answer lies in the ability to help the client to identify his or her real needs and then to satisfy them. And if that sounds remarkably like the work of a librarian, that is

_____

_____

because it is. Libraries have many different roles; one of the most important in the information society is that they are a cost-effective way of providing access to the complex and high-level specialist information which all professionals need if they are to function in the knowledge economy, the information society.

All of which brings me back to the question in my sub-title, which was very carefully posed. It was 'Does it need the information *professions*', not information *professionals*. If the question were to have been framed in terms of 'professionals', the answer would be obvious enough – it is 'yes'. But framed as I have done, it is more difficult. We need to go back to the OED definition in which 'prolonged training and formal education' is merely an exemplification of an 'occupation in which a professed knowledge…is applied'.; this is the knowledge base which allegedly distinguishes information professionals from 'professionals in other domains' (CILIP, 2009b). While CILIP acknowledges an 'overlap with the knowledge bases of other professions, such as the British Computer Society, UK Council for Health Information Professionals and the Records Management Society', there is little in the Core Schema which is not generically applicable to many other professions. It would not be difficult to adapt many of the statements to apply to barristers, architects or nurses where there is a similar relationship between conceptual underpinning, a knowledge base and a pool of information applied for the benefit of clients. So the distinctiveness lies perhaps in what the *Body of Professional Knowledge* calls the 'Applications Environment'.

Here a somewhat stronger case be made. Some of the specifications are very specific indeed, relating for example to the need for a working knowledge of the relevant aspects of the law relating to information; ethical issues in relation to client confidentiality and other rights; and working within the governance framework of the organisation. The legal issues are particularly important, and becoming more so as questions about data protection, freedom of information and copyright occupy an increasingly prominent place in broader political agendas. In the explication of the Core Schema itself there is a statement about the role of the information professional in promoting information literacy, although little consideration of any obligation to help clients to maximise the benefits they can obtain from information – not least by showing them that it exists. And nowhere is anything said about how the profession is to promote its allegedly unique role in relation to all of those whose work is said to be in some way comparable.

This is not simply, or even primarily, intended as a critique of the *Body of Professional Knowledge*. The problem is more deeply rooted. If we look at the graduate-level workers who are professionally concerned with information, we find that only a small percentage are actually members of CILIP and even fewer actively engaged with it. University programmes which are unquestionably a preparation for information work – programmes in Information Management or Information Systems, for example – do not seek CILIP accreditation. Why not? Because they cannot see the benefit of doing so. And yet in many cases these programmes are highly regarded and their graduates find professional employment. We actually have very little understanding of public perceptions of information work. I do not mean by that another project to look at the public image of librarians – we have had more than enough of that. I mean a serious engagement with public perceptions of the information society, how it operates

_____

_____

and who drives it. There is a research agenda here in which academic and practice-based researchers, like the members of LIRG, could very usefully work together. Yet any attempt to define that agenda in more detail will immediately show us that LIS specialists – whether academics or practitioners – are merely one of many groups of players and not perhaps the most important. To see some evidence for this, consider the pages on the EPSRC Website dealing with the programme called 'The Digital Economy', developed in conjunction with AHRC and ESRC, itself a measure of the range of disciplines and interests which it covers. (EPSRC, 2009).   Nowhere in this programme is there any acknowledgement of the existence of an information profession. Here indeed is a research agenda, but it is one which crosses the boundaries of disciplines and professions to the point at which the boundaries no longer meaningfully exist. LIS researchers should be exploring those boundaries, looking beyond them and working with those who occupy adjacent territories whose own borders are equally ill-defined and porous.

So does the information society need the information profession? It certainly needs those who constitute it; it needs their insights, knowledge and skills. But we live, as I suggested earlier, in a deprofessionalising world. Indeed this is becoming one of the defining characteristics of the information society itself. We need to focus more on the application of our professed knowledge and rather less on the formal qualification. I know of course that CILIP has tried very hard to open its arms and it doors. But there is a long way to go if we are all to play the part that we could and should in the knowledge-based economy which is no longer a prophecy but a present reality. To achieve that we need a sounder research-driven evidence base for the significance and achievements of the information profession. That should be at the core of the practice-based research agenda for the future; LIRG, not least through its involvement in the newly formed Research Coalition (Kenna, 2008), has a critical role to play as a partner in its evolution and implementation.

_____

_____

References

Bell, D. (1974) *The coming of a post-industrial society: a venture in social forecasting*. London: Heinemann.

CILIP (2009a) CILIP Website. URL: http://www.cilip.org.uk/default.cilip [accessed 16.07.09].

CILIP (2009b) *Body of Professional Knowledge.* URL: http://www.cilip.org.uk/qualificationschartership/bpk [accessed 16.07.09].

EPSRC (2009) *Digital Economy Programme*. URL: http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchFunding/Programmes/DE/default.htm [accessed 16.07.09].

European Commission (2009) *Europe's information society*. URL: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/index_en.htm [accessed 16.07.09].

Kenna, S. (2008) Towards a coalition for research in library, archive and information science. *Library and Information Research* [online], **32**(100). URL: http://www.lirg.org.uk/lir/ojs/index.php/lir/article/viewFile/68/87 [accessed 07.09.09].

Machlup, F. (1962) *The production and distribution of knowledge in the United States*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Porat, M. U. (1977) *The information economy: definition and measurement.* Washington, DC: United States Department of Commerce, Office of Telecommunications.

_____

Notes and Acknowledgement

_____

_____

Why can't every year be a National Year of Reading? An evaluation of the NYR in Yorkshire.

Carolynn Rankin, Avril Brock and Jackie Matthews

Abstract

An evaluation of the National Year of Reading in Yorkshire was conducted by Leeds Metropolitan University in response to a brief from Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA), Yorkshire. This paper outlines the development and planning of phase one of this small scale qualitative research project and the analysis of the initial results which looks at the impact of NYR on the organisations that delivered the campaign and their work with target groups. The Generic Social Outcomes and the National Indicators were used to develop a theoretical framework. Data were gathered via in depth interviews and focus groups with NYR steering group partners in Calderdale and North Lincolnshire, selected as the two case study authorities. The use of MAXQDA computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) enabled data and coding structures to be stored and will facilitate comparison in this longitudinal study. This evaluation will provide material that local library authorities can use for advocacy with a range of audiences including local and central government.

1 Introduction to the National Year of Reading evaluation project

The National Year of Reading (NYR) campaign in 2008 was about celebrating and encouraging reading in all its forms. The NYR campaign ran from January to December with organisations and local authorities asked to pledge and plan their

_____

Authors

Carolynn Rankin is a Chartered Librarian and senior lecturer in the School of Applied Global Ethics, Leeds Metropolitan University. Her research interests include the evaluation of library and information services and the provision of early years libraries.

Email: c.rankin@leedsmet.ac.uk

Dr Avril Brock is a principal lecturer in childhood and early years in the Carnegie Faculty, Leeds Metropolitan University, researching in professionalism, early language and play.

Jackie Matthews is a PhD candidate at the University of Wales, Bangor and worked part-time as a research assistant on the NYR research project.

11

_____

support between January and March. Delivery of the NYR was launched in April 2008 led by the National Literacy Trust on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families, supporting ongoing work to achieve national literacy targets, engage parents and families in reading with their children and develop adult literacy. The key values for the year long social marketing campaign were diversity, creativity and partnership. In Yorkshire a partnership of MLA Yorkshire, Renaissance Yorkshire and Arts Council England, Yorkshire jointly commissioned a regional co-ordinator for NYR with the remit of co-ordination, strategic intervention, legacy development and corporate engagement. To contribute to work already underway on the evidence impact of the cultural sector, the NYR Yorkshire Steering Group also sponsored a longitudinal evaluation of the NYR in Yorkshire. Carolynn Rankin and Avril Brock of Leeds Metropolitan University were appointed by MLA Yorkshire in August 2008 to undertake the evaluation research for the clients. This paper outlines the development and planning of this small scale qualitative research project, and the analysis of the initial results for the phase one interim report which looks at the impact of NYR on the organisations that delivered the campaign and their work with target groups. It is interesting to consider the change of emphasis in looking at the social potential of library projects. In their book about evaluating the impact of libraries, Markless & Streatfield (2006:44) discuss the first National Year of Reading which ran a decade ago in 1998-99. They note that there were numerous plans and energy, but most had no evaluation criteria attached – the evidence was almost all process performance indicators. Most local authorities had backed away from the more difficult questions about impact evaluation during the first National Year of Reading.

2 Overview of the NYR in Yorkshire project

The development of the brief and specification for the consultancy project was co-ordinated by MLA Yorkshire and required that the qualitative research should incorporate use of the MLA's Generic Social Outcomes. The aim of this longitudinal research was to investigate the efficacy of the National Year of Reading programme in Yorkshire as it relates to the place shaping and social inclusion targets of the NYR. The overall objectives were to investigate the impact of the NYR in sample local authorities in relation to

- Target beneficiaries
- Partnership and cross departmental working

The NYR campaign was delivered in 15 local authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber. In conjunction with the Leeds Metropolitan University research team the Yorkshire steering group decided to sample two contrasting authorities, one predominantly rural, and the other urban. Calderdale Libraries and North Lincolnshire Libraries were invited to participate, along with the departments and organisations involved in the NYR steering groups of those two authorities.

Contact with the key senior library personnel in Calderdale and North Lincolnshire was initiated by Erica Ramsay in her role as Regional Participation and Inclusion Advisor for MLA Yorkshire. Ethical principles permeate all aspects of research, particularly in relation to issues of potential harms to participants,

_____

_____

informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. At all stages in a research project it is important to scrutinise the methodology to ensure that processes proceed ethically without compromising the validity of the research (Cohen *et al*., 2003). The direct route to participants negotiated by the MLA facilitated timely access for the Leeds Metropolitan University research team and was of particular advantage due to the short timescale for phase one. An initial meeting between the client, representatives of the Calderdale and North Lincolnshire local authority library services and the research team took place in early September 2008. At this project initiation stage it was important to establish a rapport between the client, researchers and participants in order to communicate key messages about the project objectives, agree timescales and facilitate a partnership approach. It was proposed that the case study approach would enable a detailed and intensive analysis of NYR activities; there was no intention to undertake a comparison of the two case study authorities.

3 Project planning and timescale

The first phase of the evaluation project in Yorkshire ran between September and December 2008. The project plan for phase one is shown in the Gantt chart in Figure 1 below.

Project tasks	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Initiate project – meet regional NYR steering group to agree sample authorities	■			
Meet representatives from sample authorities	■			
Seek researcher ethical approval from Leeds Metropolitan University International Faculty	■			
Prepare project plan	■			
Develop questionnaires and interview schedules	■			
Undertake initial fieldwork with two selected local authorities – gather social impact data		■	■	
Meeting with NYR regional project steering group			■	
Appoint research assistant to help transcribe data		■		
Transcribe, collate and analyse results			■	■
Interim Report on phase one of evaluation to MLA Yorkshire & NYR regional steering group				■

Figure 1: Gantt chart showing project plan for phase one of NYR in Yorkshire

A Gantt chart is a useful, and simple, way of representing the various stages of a research project by showing the key tasks against the timescales for their completion. It can be a useful tool for research project staff in helping to manage time and also for communicating with client and other stakeholders.

_____

_____

The Gantt project chart also provided a starting point for discussing practical planning issues in arranging interview dates and times with busy library staff and co-ordinating field visits to coincide with the steering group meetings in each authority. The transcription of interviews is very labour intensive and given the short timescale available for phase one, the project budget included funding for a research assistant to assist with the transcription and analysis of the data sets. A suitable candidate with appropriate experience was appointed on a temporary contract through the Leeds Metropolitan University Job Shop.

4 Outline of the evaluation

The first phase of the evaluation involved an analysis of the NYR activities in the two case study authorities of Calderdale and North Lincolnshire. Powell (2006), in providing an overview of evaluation research says that it should enhance knowledge and decision making and lead to practical applications. One way of exploring the challenging question of how libraries contribute to the cohesion and development of their communities is to use the concept of social capital. Measuring impact evaluation is more difficult than collating statistics. This raises questions of how do you know you are making a difference and how can it be proved that a difference is being made. Markless and Streatfield (2006,81) remind about the dangers of getting side tracked and looking at activities and processes when trying to evaluate impact, rather than concentrating on what difference you make. This NYR project has collected a range of qualitative evidence and quantitative data which can be interpreted to tell the story of the cultural provision in the case study authorities. The more refined the evidence collection, the clearer the picture is gained of the impact of the library service.

If we consider that evidence is information or data gathered to help address research objectives, how much evidence should you gather? According to Markless and Streatfield the pragmatic answer to this is 'as little as you need to make good decisions'. (2006,90) How much evidence you gather (or need) also depends on why you are collecting it, and in this NYR evaluation the researchers were gathering material as required and specified by the client in the project brief.

5 The theoretical framework for the NYR evaluation project

Three levels of analysis were used to evaluate the NYR impact issues in the case study authorities. The MLA Generic Social Outcome framework (GSOs) and the National Indicators (NI) from The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities & Local Authority Partnerships (Department for Communities & Local Government, 2007) were specified in the project brief. A third level, issues raised by the respondents, was added by the research team to enrich the analysis of the qualitative data.

5.1 The Generic Social Outcomes framework

A requirement of the research brief was to use the Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs) The GSOs have been developed by the MLA to help museums, libraries and archives to deliver against key agendas and maximise their contribution to communities. The framework is build around three key strands – 'Stronger and safer communities', 'Health and well-being' and 'Strengthening public life', each

_____

_____

described by several second level themes. It is a means by which museums, libraries and archives can evidence their contribution to outcomes (Burns Owens Partnership, n.d.; MLA 2008). The GSOs are seen as an important tool because of the increased emphasis on outcomes as well as outputs. Linley and Herman (2008), in a report for MLA Yorkshire, argue that the GSO framework is useful for advocacy with potential partners and for funding applications.

5.2 National Indicators

The national indicator set has been developed as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 so that it reflects the Government's national priorities. The national indicator set 'will be the only measures on which central government will performance manage outcomes delivered by local government delivered alone or in partnerships'. (DCLG 2007,4)

5.3 Individual issues of importance to the respondents

The voice of the practitioner was considered an important aspect of the qualitative research in this evaluation project. Issues raised by respondents during interview were coded to enable the capture of data about individual concerns, interests and experiences.

6 Methodology – an overview of the data collection strategies

This was primarily a qualitative study involving the gathering, analysis, interpretation and presentation of narrative information. A variety of research methods were used to gather the data. Qualitative data was gathered via interviews and group discussions, which when analysed gave rise to quantitative data. Qualitative and quantitative data was also gathered from the case study authorities using desk research. In order to gain depth and rigour of analysis both the method and the process of analysis were triangulated. Bryman (2008) defines triangulation as the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena so that findings may be crosschecked. This was undertaken through combinations and comparisons of multiple data sources, data collection and analysis procedures. In the context of this evaluation the researchers gained different perspectives on outcomes by gathering the views of staff, partners and users, as well as evidence from other sources using desk research. It was considered important to gather evidence from different groups of people, not just library staff. In this way evidence is more robust and therefore more credible if reinforced by other perspectives. Data was collected through focus group interviews with NYR steering group partners, focus group written responses to key questions, individual interviews and by using a variety of documentation and publicity materials from each authority. In this way rich data from the varied sources was gathered to generate different perspectives and to gain both a holistic picture of the development of the NYR initiatives across both case study local authorities.

6.1 Interviewing

Using interviews as a research strategy provides for powerful data collection because they use one-to-one interaction between researchers and interviewees

_____

_____

(Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, 229). In-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with key senior library staff in the two case study authorities. It was decided that semi structured interviews would be the most appropriate method to gather data in support of the research questions (Denscombe, 2003). Each local authority 'setting' was visited to undertake a range of data collection. There is much to be said about respondents being interviewed in their own environments; it is more probable that this will result in rich data through being embedded within their work context and also where they may feel most confident. Interviewing is an essential tool of enquiry-based research enabling the social science researcher to enter into other peoples' perspective and so elicit both information and opinions. It is the most frequently used qualitative research method to determine people's experiences in context and the significance and connotation that these offer (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). The interviews were conducted as conversations between fellow professionals as these are effective in gaining deeper insights into the realities of particular situations and the values and views of those participating. This type of qualitative data gathering provides deep insights and rich, detailed responses where there is an emphasis on the interviewee's point of view. An interview schedule was devised covering key questions about the target beneficiaries and partnership and cross departmental working (see appendix 1). The interview schedule was also designed to enable comparability of interviewing style as two researchers were carrying out the fieldwork. This allowed room for the evaluation team to pursue topics of particular interest or concern to the interviewee. The interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of the interviewees; this facilitated transcription of the data.

6.2 Focus Group Interviews with NYR Steering Group members

Members of the NYR Steering Groups in Calderdale and North Lincolnshire were invited to take part in a group discussion. The focus group methodology has been used for many years in market research and is now being used extensively in social research. There is an emphasis in the questioning on a particular fairly tightly defined topic and the emphasis is on interaction within the group and the joint construction of meaning. This is an effective and efficient way of gaining qualitative data through engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion (Bloor, 2000, Bryman, 2008, Flick, 2002, Smith 2003). The group discussions focussed on a number of key questions designed to encourage discussion about partnership working and NYR legacy issues. The representatives of the partner organisations were invited to record their personal views and opinions on the NYR activities. Data gathered during the group interview discussions were digitally recorded for transcription, analysis and coding, as were written responses to key questions generated during the session by group members working in pairs. The participants raised issues, discussed their experiences and their own practice and activities in relation to the NYR campaign. As noted by Bryman (2008:490) the group interaction was seen as an important component of the discussion.

_____

_____

6.3 Documentary Evidence

A range of supporting material in printed, digital and visual format was provided by the case study authorities and is it important to note that this material was readily available and not created specifically for the purposes of the evaluation research. The documentary evidence included reports, publicity leaflets and brochures, advertisements, photographs and website links. Quantitative data was provided on the increases in library membership and the number of people, families and children attending NYR events. The latter was supported by evaluation feedback from those who participated in local events.

7 Reliability and validity of the evidence gathered

In any research project it is important to provide a clear statement of methodological stance with a justification of the choice of the research methods to be employed (BERA, 2003, Denscombe, 2003, Robson, 2002). Qualitative research can be problematic in terms of reliability. Different observers may have different interpretations, data extracts may be brief and interpretations of interview transcripts may be undermined if everything is not recorded. Silverman (2000, 10) warns that there may be problems of 'anecdotalism' - how sound are the explanations if the researcher includes only 'a few telling examples' of some apparent phenomenon? It is incumbent on researchers to document procedures to ensure the methods used are reliable, that categories are used consistently and that the conclusions are valid. Researchers need to take care with data management and coding; protocols and instruments require construct validity in order to measure what the researchers intends them to measure. Both respondent validation and involving 'informed others' in the coding and analysis is important so that there is continual objective scrutiny to ensure the analysis is as reliable as possible. As stated earlier, triangulation involves using different approaches to eliciting responses so that it is examined from different perspectives to corroborate the analysis of recurring issues, patterns and themes. Multi-methods of gathering data provide different kinds of data on the same topic, allowing the researcher to see from different perspectives and to enhance reliability.

7.1 Respondent validation

The individual and group interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed. The respondents were encouraged to participate actively in the research process and at each stage were asked to validate, respond and evaluate the research. The Data Protection Act confers the right for any person to have access to any personal data stored in relation to them (BERA, 2004:5, Bryman, 2008:119). It is good practice to provide respondents with a full transcription of their interview with a request for comments regarding accurate representation and establish reliability. In this way validity is checked with the practitioners concerned to ensure that the research team achieve accurate representation (Woods, 1999; Flick, 2002).

_____

_____

8 Analysing the data – the value of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)

Qualitative data elicited through interview transcripts is notoriously difficult to manage and needs to be well organised and structured to allow for coding and theory building. Good researchers come to know their raw data thoroughly as this facilitates the analysis, develops the emerging theory and aims to avoid any preconceptions (Campbell *et al*., 2004). Analysing data involves segmenting text and isolating items into categories to look for patterns. These may be particular factors repeated, explicit connections between different issues or consistent perspectives representing a view of a subject (Drever, 1995).

In recent years, one of the most notable developments in qualitative data research has been the development of computer software that can assist in the analysis of the data. Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, abbreviated as CAQDAS, handles many of the clerical tasks associated with coding and retrieving data. In this research project the MAXQDA software was used to support the systematic evaluation and interpretation of the data and made the coding and retrieval process more efficient. Coding is one of the key phases in the process of qualitative data analysis and MAXQDA facilitated the categorisation of each of the transcripts in as consistent a way as possible. The advantage of CAQDAS is that it can be effective in handling large volumes of coded data, enabling the researcher to track; retrieve; map; chart and redefine it quickly and accurately (Silverman, 2000). CAQDAS also enables the researchers to sift backwards and forwards through the data, adding new codes as well as removing those that do not gain enough evidence in the data (Siraj-Blatchford *et al*., 2002, Bryman, 2008)). It is the researcher who must determine the main areas for the analysis of the research and interpret the data - not the software package (Siraj-Blatchford *et al*., 2002).

MAXQDA proved to be a very effective tool that enabled the NYR data to be readily accessible and so continually interrogated. The process was extremely valuable in enabling a depth of analysis and interpretation, in developing consistent coding schemes and providing both qualitative and quantitative evidence. The quantitative evidence arises through the frequencies that a code is allocated to the dialogue of the respondents and indicated the strength of their issues, interests and concerns. The qualitative evidence derives from the richness of the individual narratives, group discussions and written responses. To ensure reliability the three members of the research team verified the interpretation and analysis of the way the codes were assigned to the data. The quantification and analysis of the codings within each individual interview and across all the interviews enabled the identification of what was noteworthy for the respondents.

The MAXQDA CAQDAS package enabled the researchers to code and validate the data as required by MLA (Yorkshire) clients by using the Generic Social Outcomes framework and the Public Service Agreements (PSA) National Outcome and Indicator Set. A third level of coding was developed to identify issues raised by the interviewees. In this way the data analysis was triangulated in order to gain deeper levels of meaning through these three dimensions. This first phase of the research project has already generated a substantial data set and the

_____

_____

use of MAXQDA software will facilitate phase two of the NYR evaluation scheduled to be undertaken between September and December 2009. The software stores the data and the coding structures and will facilitate a comparison of the data gained through the longitudinal study; this evidence can be used as comparative data set for the second phase.

9 Initial findings from phase one of the evaluation study

The brief and specification for the evaluation project required the evaluation to investigate the impact of the NYR in two sample local authorities in relation to target beneficiaries and partnership and cross departmental working. This paper does not identify specific locations for activities but endeavours to present generic findings and the analysis has been effected across all data sets. The sections below discuss the initial findings from the three levels of analysis.

9.1 Initial Findings from the Generic Social Outcomes framework

The phase one evaluation has found considerable evidence of NYR related activities in supporting the three primary social outcomes 'Stronger and Safer Communities', 'Health and Well-Being' and 'Strengthening Public Life'.

9.1.1 GSO Stronger and Safer Communities

In examining the project objectives of 'Target beneficiaries' and 'Partnership and cross departmental working' there is evidence to indicate the second level of social outcome themes. There is very strong evidence for 'improving group and inter-group dialogue and understanding', this came from all layers of analysis and from all participating groups. The coding and analysis demonstrated that this was the strongest outcome overall from the NYR activities. 'Supporting cultural diversity and identity' was also identified as being a strong theme throughout the data collection. A range of different groups were identified as key target groups and there was varied cultural diversity within the target groups in both case study authorities.

The Manga event brought all sorts of people in to the library who have never been before. I want to go one step further and consult those people about using our service.

 'Encouraging familial ties and relationships' also merited attention as there was interest in supporting family groups. Some projects focussed on activities aimed at hard to reach groups, some added value to original users while others were new ideas inspired by the opportunities of the NYR partnerships.

We are doing a lot of great stuff, including breakthrough initiatives for some groups e.g. making materials for homeless people. We have never done that before.

We are now thinking about legacy. We don't just want to run events and then stop it at the end of NYR. We are also thinking about community engagement so I want to use some of the people we have made contact with to improve our community engagement in future.

_____

_____

9.1.2 GSO Strengthening Public Life

A very strong second tier theme was improving services:

We have various targets and agendas that drive us. The leading agenda is the Equalities Impact Assessment, which in library terms means identifying new communities and providing a service for them. The NYR has pushed towards a service located outside the library. Were it not for the NYR we would have contented ourselves with providing stock within the library and the outreach might not have happened. The actuality is that the NYR gave us the steering group that provided us with the contacts that we needed to do that.

There was also evidence that partnership projects were being used to reach target beneficiaries:

It has been through the partnerships we have been working with – housing benefits, sheltered housing, and the hospital library - we find it hard to reach those target groups. Those kinds of people don't tend to come into libraries. We need to make contact with the people who work with them on a regular basis.

Other second tier themes that generated an evidence base were 'Safe, inclusive and trusted public spaces' and 'Building the capacity of community and voluntary groups'.

We are taking out of this year a commitment to changing the pattern of city and local libraries, where most things happen. We will hopefully soon have two more places and hopefully we will have more. In terms of redevelopment, a place becomes a hub if it becomes a place where the community gets used to expecting exciting and valuable reading events, workshops, festivals on a regular basis. I hope that will emerge from the NYR.

We suddenly got access to everyone else's knowledge and could piggy back on other people's events. The NYR was a way of reaching other staff. People don't always respond to emails – meeting people makes such a difference.

9.1.3 GSO Health and Well-Being

Within this GSO the strongest second tier theme was 'Helping children and young people to enjoy life and make a positive contribution'. 'Encouraging healthy life styles and contributing to mental and physical-well being' also merited attention. Some of the projects the case study teams have started will last beyond the year of NYR and they hope they will become embedded and so continue to run and not be dependent on individuals

We are reaching the homeless, new immigrants, people with mental health problems – the potential is much more than we are doing. I hope that we will maintain the commitment to be creative.

We have staged a Third poetry competition aimed at adult learners across the region. There were lots of entries. People who had never been in a library read out poems in front of a whole audience.

_____

_____

9.2 Initial Findings from National Indicators

From the evidence gathered, the coding using the National Indicators (NI) mirrored the findings of the GSOs. The analysis using the NI demonstrated that these two case study local authorities have the needs of their target groups at the heart of their work. There was considerable evidence of how they were working to build stronger communities. The coding analysis using the PSA National Indicators demonstrated that the evidence gathered from the case study authorities held 'Stronger communities' to be their most important issue. Obviously the 'Use of public libraries (N 9) was very strong, but also 'Belonging to neighbourhood' and 'People from different backgrounds' were significant. The evidence shows that they had the needs of 'children and young people', 'adult health and well-being' and tackling exclusion and promoting equality inherent in what they do.

9.3 Initial Findings from Interviewees' Issues

The voice and experiences of the practitioner proved to be a really important level of analysis. Significant issues would be omitted if the views and concerns and issues of the individual were not taken into account. Across all the data sets there were noteworthy issues that are not addressed either the GSO or the NI. For any evaluation of library services to be effective it is important to elicit the voices of those engaged in the management and delivery of the services and the development of new initiatives. The voice of the practitioner needs to be heard and taken into account by those who are involved in policy making.

The interviewees felt extremely strongly that partnerships were a key aspect of the NYR activities. The steering groups in both case study local authorities had worked successfully in different ways. These were a very positive outcome in the two locations, driven by highly motivated practitioners who were using the NYR as a focal point for drawing together their work, showcasing new projects and refreshing ideas about existing provision. The NYR proved to be an opportunity for stimulation and was effective in further developing existing and new partnerships. The interviewees reflected positively upon the challenges offered by the NYR. These included initial problems about NYR promotion and publicity and the difficulties of getting the year underway with minimal time to plan and implement. Concerns were raised about the lack of clarity about what the NYR would actually entail, particularly as no additional funding was available. There were issues about personnel and staffing where service provision was already under some considerable pressure.

Legacy was a noteworthy issue raised by the interviewees. There was a feeling that the enthusiasm generated by the NYR focus should be fostered and sustained. There is a real willingness to continue to develop and some early evidence on opportunities for partnership work to be embedded in the planning and delivery of local authority agendas. This will be interesting to review at the next phase of the evaluation as there is a very strong desire to move beyond the need for dependency on personal contacts and ad hoc arrangements into more sustainable partnerships.

Mirroring the GSO and NI findings, the diversity of the target groups was evidenced. The interviewees spoke about provision that targeted adults, young

_____

_____

people and children; diverse ethnic communities; migrant workers; specific workforce groups; hard to reach groups such as the homeless and those with mental health needs. The case study data showcases a wide range of activities and events offered under the banner head of the NYR campaign.

10 Results & Implications of the phase one data collection

The analysis of data from the first phase has suggested 6 key themes:

- Improving services and sharpening the focus of what is on offer.

- Working in partnership and strengthening partnerships

- Dealing with challenges

- The importance of activities and events

- Stronger communities – with a particular emphasis on improving group and inter-group dialogue and understanding and supporting cultural diversity and identity

- Legacy of the NYR

These key issues will help to frame the evidence base for phase two of the evaluation project. Evaluation research should enhance knowledge and decision making and lead to practical applications. The MLA project brief proposes that the same methodology should be used to revisit the same authorities to measure the distance travelled on the areas of investigation from phase one. The researcher team will repeat the process in September - December 2009 using the same theoretical framework. It is anticipated that this will allow sufficient time for a number of the partnership initiatives to have matured and will be leading up to repeat opportunities for some events.

11 Conclusion

These are the issues that have been flagged up following phase one; the phase two study will enable a deeper analysis. In this way, longitudinal study would illuminate social change and improve the understanding of causal influences over time. The first phase of the NYR evaluation has developed a framework for analysing future data and provides a means of tracking progress. The evaluation research will provide material that local library authorities can use for advocacy with a range of audiences including local and central government. The interim report prepared for MLA Yorkshire responds to the challenging question of how libraries can contribute to the cohesion and development of their communities and how the concept of social capital might be used. Stronger and safer communities and the improvement of group and inter group dialogue and understanding proved to be some of the most significant issues resulting from this phase one evaluation. The NYR has certainly had an impact on the visibility of reading in communities and the analysis of the evidence gives an indication of the enthusiasm and professionalism involved in delivering the campaign. The feeling of achievement and accomplishment might be best summed up in the very positive comment 'Why can't every year be a National Year of Reading?'

_____

_____

References

BERA (British Educational Research Association) (2004) *Revised ethical guidelines for educational research*. Notts: BERA. URL: http://www.bera.ac.uk/files/2008/09/ethica1.pdf [accessed 07.09.09].

Bloor, M., Frankland, J., Thomas, M. and Robson, K. (2000) *Focus groups in social research*. London: Sage

Burns Owens Partnership (n.d.) *MLA: Social outcomes for museums, libraries and archives. Prototype social outcomes framework*. URL: http://www.malmo.se/download/18.3964bd3611d8d4a5d1c800027714/gso_framework_12198.pdf [accessed 12.09.09]

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social research methods*. 3rd Ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Campbell, A., McNamara, O. and Gilroy, P. (2004) *Practitioner research and professional development in education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K (2003). *Research methods in education*. 5th Ed. London: Routledge Falmer.

DCLG Department for Communities and Local Government (2007) *The new Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Single Set of National Indicators*. London: Department for Communities and Local Authorities.

Denscombe, M. (2003) *The good research guide for small scale research projects*. 2nd Ed. Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Drever, E. (1995) *Using semi-structured interviews in small scale research*. Scottish Council for Research in Education.

Flick, U. (2002) *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Hollway, W. and Jefferson, T. (2000) *Doing qualitative research differently*. London: Sage.

Linley, R. and Herman, C. (2008) *Yorkshire GSO Pilot Programme*. Report for MLA Yorkshire.

Markless, S. and Streatfield, D. (2006) Evaluating the impact of your library. London: Facet Publishing.

MLA (2008) *Inspiring learning: Generic Social Outcomes*. URL: http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/toolstemplates/genericsocial/ [accessed 12.09.09].

Powell, R.R. (2006) Evaluation research: An overview. *Library Trends,* **55**(1), 102-120.

Robson, C. (2002) *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers*. 2nd Ed. Oxford: Blackwell

Silverman, D. (2000) *Doing qualitative research*. London: Sage.

_____

_____

Siraj-Blatchford, I., Sylva, K., Muttock, S., Gilden, R. and Bell, D. (2002) *Researching effective pedagogy in the early years*. London: Institute of Education.

Smith, J. (2003) *Qualitative psychology: a practical guide to research methods.* London: Sage.

Teddlie, C. and Tashakkori, A. (2009) *Foundations of mixed methods research : Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioural sciences*. London: Sage

Woods, P. (1999) Successful writing for qualitative researchers. London: Routledge.

_____

Acknowledgments

_____

_____

Appendix 1

National Year of Reading evaluation project

Interview Schedule for library staff in the Calderdale and North Lincolnshire case study authorities

Section 1: Target beneficiaries

Please can you tell me about what are you doing to promote the NYR in [your authority] with the target groups.

What opportunities has the NYR offered for developing new projects and initiatives?

In what way has the NYR changed the way you are supporting the target groups.

What do you think are the likely legacy benefits for the NYR in your authority?

Section 2: Partnership and cross departmental working

How are partnerships with other organisations being used to promote the NYR in [your authority]?

What NYR partnerships activities do you feel are working well in [your authority]?

What are the challenges for your staff in working in NYR partnership activities?

How has the NYR effected what you are doing in your everyday work?

_____

_____

Filling a gap: would evidence-based school librarianship work in the UK?

Cristina Sacco Ritchie

Abstract

School librarians in the UK have a lower status than librarians in other sectors, and research on school librarianship in the UK is sparse. Annual self-evaluation is one way the profession has tried to make itself more visible. Evidence-based school librarianship (EBSL) could assist school librarians in the UK to improve their services, boost their profile, and build their portfolios as part of existing self-evaluation programmes. EBSL is an off-shoot of evidence-based librarianship, which aims to bridge the gap between research and practice, and encourages practitioners to conduct research in the workplace. Most of the current EBSL work is being done in the US, where school librarians are also typically trained teachers, however, EBSL is suitable for adaptation and use in the UK. Appropriate research methods must be chosen in order to make EBSL work in the UK, action research being one such method.

1 Introduction

Constant pressure to cut budgets and make the most of existing resources threatens any sector which cannot prove itself to be valuable. School librarians are feeling increasing pressure to prove their worth and ensure the safety of future resources, particularly as new schools in the UK have recently opened without school libraries, posts have been downgraded, and many librarians have lost both status and salary in the Single Status agreement, some as much as £2,000 a year (see Owen, 2009; *Schools dumping libraries*, 2008). Continual improvement through regular evaluation is one way schools, professional organizations, and advocates have attempted to bring the value of school libraries to the attention of stake- and budget-holders. Regular evaluation allows managers to determine what is and is not working, to identify areas of improvement, and to make judgments about the overall quality of a programme. In order to do this more effectively, current methods of evaluation have shifted focus away from traditional methods

_____

Author

Cristina Sacco Ritchie is a PhD Researcher at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow.

Email: cristina.ritchie@cis.strath.ac.uk

_____

such as taking quantitative measures such as stock and issue figures, and moving towards measuring learning outcomes and impacts made by the school library. Some current methods of school library evaluation encourage building a portfolio, documenting actions and achievements of the school library throughout the course of the year.

This paper will look at a potentially valuable tool in the arsenal of school library evaluation, evidence-based school librarianship (EBSL), which facilitates the process of asking what needs improvement, and the process of finding the best way to make those improvements. EBSL also provides a way to build a portfolio of evidence demonstrating professionalism and reflective practice. In the UK, where school librarians have a diminished position compared to librarians in other sectors, EBSL is a potential lifeline, a means to align the school library to the goals of the school, and to show that school libraries and school librarians contribute positively to academic life.

2 School Librarians in the UK

School librarians in the UK are typically solo-workers (Tilke 2002, 32) with no vertical mobility and extremely limited potential for career advancement. Historically, school librarianship has been perceived as a job for new graduates (see, amongst others, School Library Association, 1980, 21; Stimpson, 1976, 26), and this perception persists today. As solo workers, school librarians must carry out a wide range of tasks, including budget management, training, cataloguing, computer help, maintaining a website, marketing, and most importantly, he or she must build and maintain good relationships with patrons of all ages. Despite this wide range of responsibilities, school librarians are not compensated accordingly. Research conducted in 2008 suggests that school librarians in much of Scotland have lower pay ceilings than public librarians, in some cases, even lower than the pay grade specifically for children's librarians (Ritchie, 2009). Fewer prospects for career advancement, and a terminally low salary, however, do not appear to undermine the job satisfaction of school librarians. Recent research in the US found that school librarians are more likely than other types of librarians, such as cataloguers and reference librarians, to exhibit optimism, teamwork, emotional resilience, and a visionary work style (Williamson, Pemberton and Lounsbury, 2008). School librarians in particular enjoy high levels of job satisfaction: Berry writes that 85.6 percent of over 3000 library workers surveyed said that if they were to start over, they would choose a career in librarianship again, and among school librarians the figure is higher at 94 percent (Berry, 2007). There are no published figures for the UK with which to compare, however, as part of a survey undertaken as part of the author's Master's research, 84% of 225 responding school librarians across the UK reported being either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their job overall, however, 56% were either "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with their pay (Ritchie, 2008).

Across the UK, school library staffing is inconsistent, however, recent research indicates that in Scotland, 29 of 31 responding councils (out of a total of 32 councils) make a practice of hiring professional school librarians, and not library assistants (Ritchie, 2009). It is statutory in Scotland for schools to have school libraries, unlike in the rest of the UK. There are historical reasons for this; the

_____

_____

Stimpson Report, published in 1976 for the Scottish Department of Education, is widely cited as one of the most influential works in the history of school libraries in Scotland (among others, see Valentine and Nelson, 1988, 4; Carroll, 1981, 193). The Stimpson Report recommended that each secondary school with more than 600 pupils have a centralised resource centre staffed by a professional librarian, or a qualified library assistant in schools with fewer than 600 pupils (Stimpson, 1976, 24). The number of qualified librarians in Scottish schools rose from 70 before the Stimpson Report (Stimpson, 1976, 27) to over 300 by 2002 (Knowles, 2002, 174). Scottish school librarians typically have a bachelor's degree in a subject area and a post-graduate qualification (diploma or Master's) in Library and Information Science, Library Management, or an equivalent (Herring, 1998). The Stimpson Report did not gain much traction outside of Scotland. In England, many fewer schools employ professional librarians, instead assigning a teacher to run the library (referred to in the literature as "teacher librarians"). According to a UK-wide survey on secondary school library staffing in 2000, 36.6% respondents were full or part-time chartered librarians, 17.6% were full or part-time teachers, and 3.6 were teacher-librarians. Nearly half of those surveyed, 46.8%, fell into the category of "other", i.e. they were neither fully qualified as teachers nor librarians (Tilke, 2002, 22). Comparing this data with the figures from Scotland, it is reasonable to assume that most of those working in school libraries without qualifications are in England.

The status of the librarian within the school is highly variable. Studies have suggested that the support of a head teacher is critical to the development of a school library, particularly in terms of vision, planning, resources, and monitoring problems (Oberg, 2006, 13). Ofsted found that in their survey, "overwhelmingly, the most significant element in bringing about improvements was the commitment and support of effective head teachers," (Ofsted, 2006, 1). Turner, *et al*. (2007), comment that senior management is a major factor affecting the running of school libraries, but found that 27.2% of respondents disagreed (slightly or strongly) that senior management understand the way the library is run. Oberg also notes that research has shown that teacher-librarians have low expectations of the support of head teachers, although they believe that support of the head teacher is critical to the success of the school library (Oberg, 2006, 13). Recent research indicates school librarians who feel that their supervisor is not supportive of the library were: most likely to feel they have the same status within the school as clerical staff, most likely to be planning on leaving their jobs within two years, and are also far less likely to feel respected by teaching staff (Ritchie, 2008). Tilke poses a potential reason why head teachers may have little understanding of the role of school librarians: because many may never have ever hired one. As Tilke points out, if a school librarian has worked at a school for ten years, and the head teacher has worked there for nine, then that head teacher will have never hired a school librarian in that school. The same could be said for the business manager, or any other member of the senior management team in a school (Tilke, 2002, 32). In order to improve the long-term position of school librarians, it is important to influence the thinking of head teachers.

_____

_____

3 School Library Research in the UK

Current school library research in the UK is sparse. There is currently no national picture of provision for Scotland (Knowles, 2002), and the collection of annual library statistics published by LISU at Loughborough University has been discontinued. School library research is unique in that in order to study school libraries fully, one must touch on at least one other discipline, education, within the scope of study. This means that school library research often straddles a line between library research and education research, and "research aimed at evaluating the role of library and information services in support of other disciplines lacks a conceptual framework and an accepted body of methodologies," (Johnson *et al*., 2004). McLelland comments that the problem with contemporary school library literature in the UK is that little library literature is research-based, and research in librarianship tends to be carried out by individuals rather than properly-funded teams (McLelland, 2005, 9). McLelland attributes this imbalance in the literature to the preference on the part of practicing librarians for information about practical problems, also arguing that librarianship journals are more likely to publish a study if it is dramatic or favorable rather than critical (Eldredge, 2004, cited by McLelland, 2005 9). Johnson, *et al*., attempt to sound the alarm by warning that, given "the present weak state of evidence linking the activities of libraries and information services with organisations' performance," it will be difficult to make the case for more resources for school libraries "without more and better research," (Johnson *et al*., 2004). In the US, a large body of research spanning over ten years and 14 states has indicated with remarkable consistency that American school libraries positively impact student achievement, particularly those with longer opening hours, more teaching hours spent on information skills, high-quality collections, and more professional staff (amongst others, see Lance, Rodney, and Hamilton-Penell, 2000; Lance, Rodney, and Russell, 2007).

4 Evidence-Based Librarianship

The tension between research and practice is a well-worn conflict in librarianship. Evidence-based practice (EBP) attempts to bridge this gap. EBP originated in the healthcare sector in the UK in the 1990s, and since then, evidence-based librarianship (EBL) and evidence-based practice in teaching have both gained traction as well (Todd, 2008; Eldredge, 2004). EBL "seeks to combine the use of the best available research evidence with a pragmatic perspective developed from working experiences in librarianship," (Eldredge, 2006). At the core of EBP, EBL, and its younger descendant, evidence-based school librarianship (EBSL), is the idea that users are best served when the bridge between research and practice, or theory and expertise, is strong. Eldredge summarizes this relationship as meaning that practitioners use research results to inform their daily decision-making, and in turn, practicing librarians also become "applied researchers, who strive to 'produce' the research evidence intended for use by practitioners," (Eldredge, 2006).

The most prolific writer on EBSL, Ross Todd of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, takes the duality of the relationship between theory and practice, and expands it. Ross Todd promotes a threefold relationship between evidence and

_____

_____

practice: there is evidence *for* practice, which is to use the best research available in order to inform daily problem-solving; there is evidence *in* practice, which is the application of research to practice; and there is evidence *from* practice, wherein practitioners pose answerable research questions and conduct research within their own school libraries, ideally to be disseminated for the benefit of other practitioners (Todd, 2008; Todd, 2009). Unlike in the medical profession, small-scale school library research undertaken in professional practice "is considered to be of value alongside evidence from published research studies," (Todd 2003, cited by Clyde, 2005) which means that all three legs of Todd's model have value in the wider world of school librarianship.

5 Suitability of EBSL in the UK

EBP and EBL originated in the UK, and as such, the foundations exist for its spread into British school librarianship. In addition, as Booth points out, the relatively small size of the UK provides an advantage in terms of potential uptake and coordination:

[T]he UK scene is more compact than that in the USA and yet more intensive than that in Canada. If one is to attempt to promote the uptake of a paradigm, it should be more achievable in a national setting where there are less than a dozen regional constituencies, a similar number of academic departments and no more than a handful of professional group.

(Booth, 2002, 118)

An aspect of EBSL, however, as promoted by Gordon (2005) and Gordon and Todd (2009), is the idea that EBSL is particularly well-suited to the teaching aspect of school librarianship. Of course, school librarians in the US and in Australia are typically trained as teachers as well as librarians, an idea that gained some traction in the UK, but eventually died out in the 1980s. School librarians in Australia must hold dual-qualifications to work in state schools (Tilke, 1998, 11) and in the US, most states require a Master's degree and a classroom teaching certificate (Thomas and Perritt, 2003) though the exact requirements vary from state to state. This means that school librarians in these countries, where the bulk of EBSL research comes from, are trained in pedagogy. They are also charged with teaching information skills as part of their remit. These differences inevitably impact their ability to carry out research on learning interventions. This does not, however, limit the potential applicability of EBSL in the UK, it simply means that appropriate research methodologies must be highlighted. Crumley and Koufogiannakis' model for a "core-centered approach" to research in evidence-based librarianship arranges research methodologies by who is more likely to use them, academics, or practitioners (Crumley and Koufogiannakis, 2001, cited by Todd, 2006). At the centre of the core are methodologies likely to be used by librarians in pursuit of answers to practical problems, such as case-studies, interviews, and observational study. At the periphery are methodologies that academics would likely use as part of formal research, such as meta-analysis, cross-sectional study, and randomized, controlled trials. A methodology missing from this model is action research, promoted by Carol Gordon (2007) as particularly useful to evidence-based librarianship. Action research is a suitable

_____

_____

method allowing school librarians in the UK to undertake what is essentially educational research, because it is intended to be collaborative.

Although there is a lack of consensus about its methodology, action research has been described by various authors as "a tool of evidence-based practice," "problem-focused," and as "insider research done by practitioners using their own site as the focus of their study," (Ballard, March and Sand, 2009). Action research is a collaborative process, and can be an effective way to build partnerships between teachers and school librarians. In addition, the results of action research, when disseminated, have the potential to reach teachers is a way that other research would not: "results of action research can provide the vicarious experiences provided by narrative accounts from schools and classrooms which educators find more helpful than formal educational research," (Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen, 1994, cited by Gordon, 2005, 38). Ballard, March and Sand (2009), document two action research studies carried out in their school district in Londonderry, New Hampshire. A problem identified in Londonderry was that, even though the school district performed very well, it was felt that "students continued to struggle with the research process and the resulting projects appeared more 'repackaged' than 'reflective' of understanding the topic." With the help of Carol Gordon, the authors surveyed teachers and students asking questions in order to identify whether or not students understood the ethical use of information. They found that students needed better understanding of ethical use of information in two regards: creating an accurate bibliography and the level of collaboration appropriate to schoolwork. Because of the results of these studies, the school developed a statement declaring the school's position on the ethical use of information and included it in the student handbook. Although the team at Londonderry did consult with an outside academic researcher, any solo worker comfortable designing and administering questionnaires or using other research methods is equally capable of running an action research study by him or herself (see Gorman and Clayton, 2005, for information on conducting qualitative research in libraries).

6 Challenges

One of the challenges facing EBSL is the dissemination of research. In order for research to be read by practitioners, it needs to be accessible in publications available to practitioners. Such publications include journals included in membership to professional organizations, such as the School Libraries Worldwide, the official journal of the International Association of School Librarians, as well as publicly-available serials such as the Times Education Supplement. In addition, few practitioners write published articles about research. Clyde and Oberg carried out a study on articles published in School Libraries Worldwide (SLW) from 1995-2003, in order to find out how well SLW supported evidence-based school librarianship. They calculated the percentage of research articles published, and the occupation of the people who wrote them. They found that over 80% of research articles were written by university faculty or PhD students. 7.5% of articles were written by a mixed group, such as a collaboration between an academic and a school librarian, and various practitioners, such as

_____

_____

school librarians, employees of university libraries, and officers of library authorities contributed just over 2% of the articles each (Clyde and Oberg, 2004).

7 Conclusions

School librarianship in the UK suffers from a chronically low profile and a current lack of robust research. Evidence-based school librarianship can boost the profile of school librarianship whilst working within the current framework of regular evaluation extant in the UK. Despite the fact that school librarians in the UK are not trained as teachers, research methodology is currently a required component of library education programmes in the UK, and therefore, the foundations exist for professional librarians to conduct research in the workplace. On the whole, practitioners are committed to developing their services and "seem more likely to be interested in research that offers them the opportunity to do so," (McNichol and Nankiwell, 2003, cited by Johnson *et al*., 2004). The next step, therefore, for school librarianship, must lie in the gathering of evidence at the local level, and in increased large-scale research. It is promising that University College London has drawn up a proposal for a large-scale impact study using methodologies similar to the large-scale impact studies performed in the US (Owen, 2009, 1). In doing so, the profession must redouble its efforts to effect change in policy. Johnson *et al*. (2004) claim that there is "little merit in increasing research into the impact of libraries and information services if the results are not transferred into the policy-making process," (Johnson *et al*., 2004). This is imperative to strengthen the profession, even if a thorough examination reveals system-wide failures. The burden of responsibility to initiate improvement rests most heavily on the LIS research community and the professional organisations. Without large-scale work, local efforts will not be disseminated and the profession as a whole will not benefit. Conversely, enthusiastic work at the national level without buy-in and commitment on the part of the school librarian means that national campaigns will be an empty, pointless exercise. As demonstrated by a large and growing body of international evidence, school libraries are too important to let go to waste.

References

Anderson, G., Herr, K. and Nihlen, A. (1994). *Studying your own school: an educator's guide to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Ballard, S.D., March, G. and Sand, J.K. (2009). Creation of a research community in a K-12 school system using action research and evidence based practice, *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice* [online], **4** (2), 8-36. URL: http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/EBLIP/article/viewFile/5020/5319 [accessed 13.07.09].

Berry, J. N. (2007). Great work, genuine problems, *Library Journal* **132**(16), 26.

Booth, A. (2002). Evidence-based librarianship: one small step, *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, **19,** 116–119.

Carroll, F. L. (1981) *Recent advances in school librarianship*. Oxford: Pergamon.

_____

_____

Clyde, L.A. (2005). The basis for evidence-based practice: evaluating the research evidence. *World Library and Information Congress: 71st IFLA General Conference and Council. 14th-18th August, Oslo, Norway*. URL: http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla71/Programme.htm [accessed 20.07.09].

Clyde, L.A., and Oberg, D. (2004). LIS journals as a source of evidence for evidence-based practice. *World Library and Information Congress: 70th IFLA General Conference and Council. 22nd-27th August 2004, Buenos Aires, Argentina*. URL: http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla70/prog04.htm [accessed 20.07.09].

Crumley, E. and Koufogiannakis, D. (2001). Developing evidence-based librarianship: practical steps for implementation, *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, **19**, 61-70.

Davies, J.E. (2002). What gets measured, gets managed: statistics and performance indicators for evidence based management, *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, **34**(3), 129-133.

Eldredge, J. (2004). How good is the evidence base? *In:* Booth, A. and Brice, A. (eds). *Evidence-based practice for information professionals*. London: Facet. 36-48.

Eldredge, J. (2006). Evidence-based librarianship: the EBL process, *Library Hi Tech*, **24**(3), 341-354.

Gordon, C. (2005). A study of action research: a three-dimensional model, *Synergy*, **3**(2), 36-49.

Gordon, C. (2007). The trouble with the gold standard: school libraries and research, *School Library Journal*, 2007(10),

Gordon, C. and Todd, R.J. (2009). Weaving evidence, reflection, and action into the fabric of school librarianship, *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice* [online], **4**(2), 4-7. URL: http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/EBLIP/article/viewFile/6281/5412 [accessed 13.07.09].

Gorman, G.E. and Clayton, P. (2005) *Qualitative research for the information professional: a practical handbook*. London: Facet.

Herring, J. E. (1998). The role of the principal in an information literate school community: An international research panel. The Scotland report. *64th IFLA General Conference. 16th-21st August 1998, Amsterdam, Netherlands.* URL: http://farrer.riv.csu.edu.au/principal/survey/report/paper_SC.html [accessed 08.09. 09].

Johnson, I., Williams, D., Wavell, C. and Baxter, G. (2004). Impact evaluation, professional practice, and policy making, *New Library World*, **105**(1/2), 33-46.

Knowles, L. (2002) Libraries and information services in schools. *In:* McElroy, R. (ed.) *Advocating Libraries: essays presented to Robert Craig*. Hamilton: CILIPS.

Lance, K.C. Rodney, M.J., and Hamilton-Pennell, C. (2000) *How school librarians help kids achieve standards: the second Colorado study*. Denver,

_____

_____

Colorado: Library Research Service. URL: http://www.lrs.org/impact.php [accessed 01.07.09].

Lance, K.C. Rodney, M.J., and Russell, B. (2007). *How students, teachers, and principals benefit from strong school libraries: the Indiana study.* Denver, Colorado: Library Research Service. URL: http://www.lrs.org/impact.php [accessed 01.07.09].

McLelland, D.H. (2005) *The effective secondary school library: the pupils' view.* Ph.D. thesis, University of Strathclyde.

McNichol, S. and Nankiwell, C. (2003). *The LIS research landscape: a review and prognosis*. Birmingham: Centre for Information Research and Teaching, University of Central England.

Oberg, D. (2006). Developing the respect and support of school administrators, *Teacher Librarian*, **33**(3), 13-18.

Ofsted. (2006) *Good school libraries: making a difference to learning*. Ofsted, Manchester. URL: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Education/Leadership/Governance/Good-school-libraries-making-a-difference-to-learning [accessed 07.09.09].

Owen, T.B. (2009). Into battle for school libraries, *Library and Information Gazette*, 19 June - 2 July, 1-2.

Ritchie, C. S. (2008) *The self-perceived status of school librarians*. MSc thesis, Department of Computing and Information Science, University of Strathclyde.

Ritchie, C. S. (2009). How much is a school librarian worth? *Library and Information Update*, May, 48-9.

School Library Association (1980). *The way ahead: the organisation and staffing of libraries and learning resources in schools in the 1980s*. Oxford: School Library Association.

Schools dumping libraries (2008) *Library and Information Update*, December, 7.

Stimpson, D. E. (1976). *Non-teaching staff in secondary schools*. Edinburgh: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Thomas, M.J., and Perritt, P.H. (2003). A higher standard, *School Library Journal*, December. URL: http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA339562.html [accessed 12.07.09].

Tilke, A. (1998). *On-the-job sourcebook for school librarians*. London : Library Association.

Tilke, A. (2002) *Managing your school library and information service: a practical handbook*. London: Facet.

Todd, R.J. (2003). Irrefutable evidence. *School Library Journal*, April. URL: http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA287119.html [accessed 12.07.09].

Todd, R.J. (2006). School libraries and evidence-based practice: an integrated approach to evidence, *School Libraries Worldwide*, **12**(2), 31-37.

Todd, R.J. (2008). A question of evidence. *Knowledge Quest*, **37**(2), 16-21.

_____

_____

Todd, R.J. (2009). School librarianship and evidence based practice: progress, perspectives, and challenges, *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, **4** (2), 78-96. URL: http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/EBLIP/article/viewFile/4637/5318 [accessed 13.07.09].

Turner, R., Matthews, G., Ashcroft, L. And Farrow, J. (2007). The management of independent secondary school libraries in England and Wales: the skills and perceptions of library managers, *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 39(4), 213-222.

Valentine, P. and Nelson, B. (1988). *Sneaky teaching: the role of the school librarian*. London: The British Library Research and Development Department.

Williamson, J.M., Pemberton, A.E., and Lounsbury, J.W. (2008). Personality traits of individuals in different specialities of librarianship, *Journal of Documentation*, **64**(2), 273-286.

_____

_____

Establishing the context for your research project

Janet Clapton

1 Introduction

The purpose of this article is to describe a process and resources which will enable a researcher to contextualise a new research project within its field. Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals will find this process useful not only for their own practitioner research, but also, with appropriate adaption to different subject areas, for finding information at work for their customers or clients.

My own work role is information specialist support for research commissioning in the social care field; from this I have drawn general tips for background scoping in a social science field such as library and information science. Variety of sources is key: the sources drawn on here include bibliographic databases, research databases, portals, key organisations' websites, discussion groups, conferences and awards. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and can only provide a snapshot of a changing environment, but these resources can act as a starting point for further detailed preparation. To supplement this article, the Library and Information Research (LIRG) website links list has been expanded and updated: please see
www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/research/links.

2 Approach

The term 'scoping' does not have a commonly accepted definition (Arksey *et al.*, 2005, and Davis *et al.*, 2009). Here, background scoping means establishing what activities are going on in a particular field (including policy, practice and current research), who the relevant organisations and individuals are, and what has already been published on the topic. Grayson and Gomersall (2003) neatly describe problems specific to searching in the social sciences, including: the diversity of literature, sources and database features, and the lack of single controlled language tool for searching. They recommend a broad approach, combined with strong awareness of the range of sources available and how to use them.

_____

Janet Clapton

Janet Clapton is Project Information Manager at the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

Email: janet.clapton@scie.org.uk

_____

For more details on how establishing the research context fits into the process of compiling a research proposal, see Juliet Eve's recent article in *Library and Information Research* (Eve, 2008).

In my research support role, I manage and standardise the scoping process by using a checklist and templates. Useful documents include:

- Spreadsheet - showing search sources, search terms and outputs – primarily intended as a device for tracking progress, this could later form the foundation of a more detailed search strategy for a literature review.

- Database of bibliographic references, ideally built using reference management software such as EndNote or Reference Manager. Such software usually contains tools for inserting and ordering citations and bibliographies in later research reports.

- Mindmap of weblinks: mindmapping is a method of gathering and presenting ideas (see www.buzanworld.com/Home1.htm) and is a useful format for presenting further information such as weblinks. The mindmap template is organised into categories such as policy, government agencies, academic institutions, experts, professional bodies, third sector bodies, service user groups, discussion groups and media sources. There is an example of a mindmap in the supplementary file associated with this article.
  Freemind is an example of free software for mindmapping (http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page) but commercial products such as MindGenius are also available.

- Summary report describing the overall findings. Template headings include:
  - Brief
  - Short summary of findings
  - Description of types of output
  - Sources drawn on
  - Challenges encountered on this topic
  - How much time was spent
  - Potential for further work
  - Key documents, authors and organisations

The output is a bibliography derived from a balanced but exploratory literature search, a collection of weblinks in a mindmap or list, and the summary report.

3 Sources

It is a good idea to use a variety of approaches when gathering information. Traditional keyword searching is a good starting point, but authors such as Sandieson (2006) promote other methods such as 'pearl harvesting' or drawing on relevant items to give clues for finding more. Ramer (2005) recommends a similar process for relevant websites: 'site-ation'.

_____

_____

Given the bias that is introduced by such factors as time lag between research study and publication, lack of reporting of negative results in peer reviewed journals, and the challenge of finding grey literature (often a key type of source in a practitioner-led field), it is sensible to draw on as wide a range of sources as possible.

3.1 Bibliographic databases

Like social care, the LIS field is covered in several different disciplines, so when considering bibliographic databases, select representative databases from the following range:

- LIS specific sources, e.g. Library and Information Service Abstracts, Information Research Watch International (both available to CILIP members via 'Member resources' on the CILIP website: www.cilip.org.uk)

- Sector specific resources, such as law, engineering or health, e.g. PubMed www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/

- Education, e.g. Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) www.eric.ed.gov/

- Computer science, e.g. CiteSeerX http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/

- Business and management, e.g. Business Source Premier (subscription required)

- Broad social science sources, e.g. International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (subscription required)

- Multi-discipline databases, e.g. British Library catalogue http://catalogue.bl.uk

3.2 Access

Unless you are linked to an academic institution, you will probably be looking for free access to bibliographic databases. Luckily, CILIP membership (and access to the CILIP website) opens up possibilities (see 'Member resources' section of www.cilip.org.uk).

If you can get to the British Library reading rooms at St Pancras, a similar range of subscription databases are freely available to you without restriction (see www.bl.uk/eresources/main.shtml). You will need to register in advance for a Reader Pass but this can be obtained on the basis of CILIP membership. For remote resources, the 'Help for Researchers' web page (www.bl.uk/reshelp/index.html) links through to a Librarianship and Information Science page.

_____

_____

3.3 Coverage

Aspects to consider include: size of database; years of coverage; alteration to selection criteria over time; past mergers with other databases; geographical coverage (which may be nominal for some regions); and languages. However, in the first instance it is likely that you will not have time to familiarise yourself with all aspects of coverage and will only be able to gain an impression.

3.4 Search functions

General considerations include whether there is a thesaurus and how useful it is; availability and reliability of limiters; quality of indexing; whether abstracts are available; download features; utilities which don't work as you expect; and results presentation.

3.5 Research project databases

Research project databases complement searches for published research by helping you answer the question: "What's going on?" Or rather, "what went on?" Unfortunately, initial entries are often not updated when a project is complete and it can be difficult to track down subsequent publications, as they may not have the same title or author order.

Useful examples include:

- E-prints in Library and Information Science
  http://eprints.rclis.org/information.html

- Information Research Watch International (available via CILIP Member resources) www.cilip.org.uk/publications/irwi

- Library and Information Research Directory of Current Research in LIS departments in UK and Ireland
  www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/research/publications

Repositories can also fulfill a similar function, see:

- British Library Research Archive http://sherpa.bl.uk/

- OpenDOAR www.opendoar.org/

3.6 Journals

In theory, journal content appears in bibliographic databases. However, the effort required to establish which journals are covered on which database, the time lag for content to be indexed onto the database, selection criteria and lack of access to author abstracts all mean that journal searching complements bibliographic database searching. In recent years, table of contents searches have made it relatively simple to search across a journal title or even across aggregated titles. However, simple is generally what these searches are: often a single phrase, returning somewhat unexpected results. Hand-searching gets around the problem of poor search utilities, but has a very high effort / benefit ratio.

_____

_____

Relevant journals include:

- 13 Emerald LIS journals listed as available to CILIP members at
  www.cilip.org.uk/publications/emerald

- 4 Sage LIS journals listed as available to CILIP members at
  www.cilip.org.uk/publications/researchjournals

- Health Information and Libraries Journal
  www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=1471-1834

Numerous journals are available on Open Access:

- Evidence Based Library and Information Practice
  http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/EBLIP

- Information Research http://informationr.net/ir/index.html

- Library and Information Research www.cilipjournals.org.uk/lir

- Library and Information Science Research Electronic Journal
  http://libres.curtin.edu.au/

- LIBRI: International Journal of Libraries and Information Services
  www.librijournal.org/

3.7 Newsletters

Whilst not peer reviewed, the strength of newsletters lies in their reporting of
practice and current awareness about issues and organizations. Examples include:

- Ariadne www.ariadne.ac.uk/

- Free Pint www.freepint.com/ which also acts as a portal and community

- Sconul Focus www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/newsletter/

3.8 Portals and resource lists

Portals and resource lists consist of pre-screened material, usually where an
information professional has done some of the leg work for you – a valuable
backup to search results. Selection criteria are rarely stated, but the concentrated
nature of such resources generally means they are not too time consuming to
browse or search. A structured index is usually available. Examples of this type of
resource include:

- BUBL link: Library and Information Science Research
  http://bubl.ac.uk/link/l/libraryandinformationscienceresearch.htm

- Phil Bradley's web page www.philb.com/

- CILIP www.cilip.org.uk

- Communication Institute for Online Scholarship
  www.cios.org/www/tocs/tablesnew.htm

- Economic and Social Research Council
  www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/index.aspx

_____

_____

- Intute www.intute.ac.uk – the relevant section seems to be Museums / Libraries / Archives, also Research tools and methods www.intute.ac.uk/socialsciences/researchtools/

- LibEcon (European Library Statistics database, newsletters, reports) www.libecon.org/default.asp

- Library statistics www.cilip.org.uk/informationadvice/standardsandstats/statistics

- LISU (previously the Library and Information Statistics Unit) www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/dils/lisu/index.html

- The Researching Librarian www.researchinglibrarian.com/

- Scirus www.scirus.com/

3.9 Discussion lists

Discussion list content can be searched for relevant topics, or a post can be used to ask practice research questions of list readers. JISCmail (www.jiscmail.ac.uk) contains more than 100 LIS lists e.g. LIS-LIRG, LIS-LINK.

Communities can be tapped into in a similar way, e.g. CILIP Communities (http://communities.cilip.org.uk/)

Wider Web 2.0 resource use, although important, is outside the scope of this article.

3.10 Conferences

Conferences are a great source of information about current research, but time and budgets to attend them are limited, and conference proceedings can be quite challenging to get hold of. Write-ups in trade magazines are useful, and eventually the individual presentations may appear online.

Conference papers and presentations are increasingly turning up in institutional repositories (e.g. University of Southampton (http://eprints.soton.ac.uk) and in online presentation sharing sites such as Slideshare (www.slideshare.net). Some subscription databases offer search facilities for conference papers, e.g. Zetoc (http://zetoc.mimas.ac.uk/) and Web of Knowledge (http://isiwebofknowledge.com/).

To find out about impending conferences, try the CILIP events listing at www.cilip.org.uk/training/calendar or wait for postings to arrive from JISCmail discussion lists. Another resource is Information Science Conferences Worldwide (www.conferencealerts.com/library.htm).

Significant international events include:

- IFLA www.ifla.org/en/annual-conference

- Internet Librarian www.internet-librarian.com/2009/

- Online Information www.online-information.co.uk/index.html

- Umbrella www.umbrella2009.org.uk/

_____

_____

Sometimes connected with conferences, award-winning projects can also be useful sources of (especially) practitioner research. Discussion lists are again probably the most useful way to keep up to date on award news.

3.11 Organisations

There are very many potentially relevant organisations; a mindmap can help organise and reorganise them by category. Examples of organisations include:

- Association of Librarians and Information Professionals in the Social Sciences (ALISS) www.alissnet.org.uk/

- British Association for Information & Library Education and Research (BAILER) www.bailer.org.uk[1]

- British Computer Society Information Retrieval Specialist Group http://irsg.bcs.org/

- CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals www.cilip.org.uk . LIRG is a Special Interest Group of CILIP.

- Commercial, Legal and Scientific Information Group (CLSIG) www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/clsig/default.htm

- Evidence Network https://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/interdisciplinary/evidence/

- International Association of Technological University Libraries (IATUL) www.iatul.org/

- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) www.ifla.org
  Divisions include:

    o Division of Education and Research www.ifla.org/en/education-and-research

  Sections include:

    o Library Theory and Research Section www.ifla.org/en/library-theory-and-research

    o Statistics and Evaluation Section www.ifla.org/en/statistics-and-evaluation

- Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) www.mla.gov.uk/ , see also its Research section: www.mla.gov.uk/what/research

- Research Information Network www.rin.ac.uk/

- SOROS Foundations Network - See 'Information Program' www.soros.org/initiatives/information

- UkeIG: The UK e-Information Group www.ukeig.org.uk/

_____

[1] At the time of publication this site was under construction

_____

_____

- UKOLN www.ukoln.ac.uk/

4 Procedure: further suggestions

Be creative when developing search sources and terms – you will definitely be learning as you go along. Iteration is the norm rather than the exception. Filters, if available, should be used sparingly and critically – for scoping, you are likely to get better results by scanning a broad search output.

Mind the gaps – maintain a highly critical approach to the result of your searching and context-gathering. In light of lack of controlled language tools, this is likely to include the question, "Is my search term retrieving what I thought it would?" This applies even more to website searches than to bibliographic databases.

What's going on elsewhere? My own unpublished investigations of 60 mental health-relevant organisations' websites showed that very few organisations publish their current research programme or future plans. A good back up is to speak to knowledgeable contacts: speak to an expert at a conference, or contact information staff at a relevant organisation. A ten minute conversation with a knowledgeable colleague could save you hours of work.

All information and sources become out of date, and the research literature field continues to evolve, so during your current awareness it is wise to keep an eye out for new sources and terms as well as new research. In the social care field, I estimate the shelf life of background scoping to be around 6 months – this time scale could be relevant if you, say, take a year out from your PhD.

5 Conclusion

This article outlines an approach and a range of resources for establishing the context for your research or that of your service users. It is not exhaustive, but provides a framework for managing the process, and suggested resources.

Further contributions are welcomed to the resources section of the LIRG website www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/research/links and to the Library and Information Research Directory www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/research/publications - please follow the prompts on both sites to suggest resources or add your research.

_____

_____

References

Arksey, H. and O'Malley, L. (2005) Scoping studies: towards a methodological framework. *International Journal of Social Research Methdology*, **8**(1), 19-32. Also available from http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/1618/ [accessed 15.8.09].

Davis, K., Drey, N. and Gould, D. (In press) What are scoping studies? A review of the nursing literature. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*.

Eve, J. (2008). Writing a research proposal: planning and communicating your research ideas effectively. *Library and Information Research* [online]**, 32**(102), 18-28. URL: http://www.lirg.org.uk/lir/ojs/index.php/lir/article/view/92/136 [accessed 15.8.09].

Grayson, L. and Gomersall, A. (2003) *A difficult business: Finding the evidence for social science reviews*. ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice,Working Paper 19. London: ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice. URL: http://kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/interdisciplinary/evidence/publications/wp19.html [accessed 15.8.09].

Ramer, S. (2005). Site-ation pearl growing: methods and librarianship history and theory. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, **93**(3), 397–400. URL: www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1175807 [accessed 15.8.09].

Sandieson, R. (2006). Pathfinding in the research forest: The pearl harvesting method for effective information retrieval. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, **41**(4), 401–409. URL: http://publish.edu.uwo.ca/robert.sandieson/downloads/ETDD.pdf [accessed 17.8.09].

Note: weblinks to relevant resources are provided in the text.

_____

_____

"E-books are good if there are no copies left": a survey of e-book usage at UWE Library Services

Jason Briddon, Jackie Chelin, Greg Ince, Jane Redman, Alastair Sleat, Elspeth Williams

Abstract

This article outlines research carried out with students and academic staff at a large UK university library on how e-books are being used for learning, teaching and research. It was discovered that e-books are meeting many of users' needs, especially in terms of accessibility, but there are still concerns about subject coverage and the impact on students' learning. There are various reasons why e-books are beneficial in developing an academic library collection, most particularly for reference materials and essential readings, but librarians need to work closely with academic staff to integrate use of e-books effectively into learning and teaching, taking care that licence and access implications are better understood. The drivers to the use of e-books appear to be outweighing the barriers, although the latter will require considerable effort on the part of librarians within their institutions and also in terms of communicating concerns to e-book providers.

1 Introduction

This article reports on the outcomes from a small scale research project at the University of the West of England (UWE) funded by the Library Information and Research Group (LIRG) / Elsevier Research Award (2007-08)[1]. The focus of the study was on how staff and students are using e-books for learning, teaching and research to inform library collection management and development.

The aims of the study were to discover:

_____

[1]http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/research/activities/awards/researchaward.htm

_____

Authors

The authors are librarians working at the University of the West of England and have been engaged in this research project for around 2 years. They work in the Library's Senior Management, Academic Services and Acquisition Services teams.

_____

- whether e-books are meeting users' needs;

- what place there is for e-books within the context of a multidisciplinary academic library collection;

- more about the distinct drivers and barriers to the use of e-books.

As part of a consortium of libraries within the Bristol/Bath area[2] we also sought to provide a set of tools that could be re-used to review the state of e-book usage in future years and at other institutions.

Having previously carried out an impact study under a LIRG initiative, UWE Library Services had already developed useful research instruments that would adapt well to this research into e-book use (Nelson *et al*., 2005). The methods included both quantitative and qualitative approaches:

- a web based survey aimed at students;

- semi structured interviews with academic staff;

- a small number of observed tasks undertaken by students.

Each method had its own by-products: the survey brought e-books to the attention of a wider audience; the interviews helped to consolidate relationships with academic staff and provided the opportunity for reinforcement of other messages about the library's services; the observed tasks suggested specific improvements that could be made to the library's home page and to the display of catalogue records.

The definition of e-books is a matter of great debate (Armstrong, 2008 and Vassiliou and Rowley, 2008) but for the purposes of the UWE study a clear and simple definition was agreed:

Electronic versions of titles that are, were, or could be available as hard copy books, and therefore resemble books in their structure and presentation. Examples of e-books could include textbooks, reference books (dictionaries, encyclopaedias) and law texts.

2 Context

UWE, Bristol is a post 1992 university, with five campuses serving around 27,000 students and over 3,000 staff. Each campus has a UWE Library.

UWE Library Services has invested heavily in e-journals over the past five years and, as a consequence, the proportion of funding spent on journals far outweighs that spent on books. As more e-book titles become available, the Library has been increasing its acquisition of e-books.   However, some e-book purchasing models are subscription based, tying up even greater proportions of Library funding in ongoing commitments leaving little left for one-off purchases. Essentially the Library is trying to develop and grow the e-book collections in a way that is sustainable. One of the students actually commented in the free text section of the online survey that "E-books have to be printed to be any use, so why not go to the

_____

[2] http://www.uwe.ac.uk/library/aulic/

_____

_____

original?" The biggest question this begs is how can an academic library possibly provide enough print copies? The problem is succinctly stated by Carlock and Perry of the Arizona State Library:

We do not have excess funds to purchase multiple copies while still keeping current with new publications and meeting the curriculum and research needs of our students and faculty

(Carlock, 2008, 1)

Over the last four years the Library has been working on "Reading Strategies"[3] with academic staff at UWE. The Library supports academic staff in developing the information literacy of their students and managing student expectations by making available essential chapters and articles from their reading lists. This is done through a variety of means, e.g. indicating which texts students should purchase, providing scanned documents and/or linking (legally) to electronic journal articles or by distributing print study packs. The potential for e-books to support this initiative was compelling.

However, through informal discussions with students it was becoming clear that their use and expectations of electronic books might be very different from electronic journals. Were e-books more appropriate for reference only rather than essential texts as, perhaps, suggested in the study by Van Epps (2005) which was limited to electronic reference books? A study by Clark (2005) at the University of Denver, that aimed to find out how and why e-books are used, supports this idea as it suggested that students only read small portions of e-books and that print volumes are better for immersion in the text. This view was further supported by a study at Liverpool John Moores (McClelland, 2006) that found that some users want features of print books to be preserved in the electronic medium. Appleton (2004) reported on a focus group with student midwives who were encouraged to use e-books as part of a structured information skills programme and concluded that further development of e-books would be very positive, in this respect, but would need further investigation into their most effective use.

All of this suggested the need to do more research into how our students were using e-books before investing more in them and relying heavily on them to support our Reading Strategies initiative.

3 E-book collections at UWE

Since 2001, UWE has made individual title purchases from NetLibrary, currently accounting for around 800 titles. A lot of these were purchased on an annual renewal basis, many of which have been renewed yearly, over five years, and are therefore now in stock in perpetuity. Concurrent users are limited in the NetLibrary model.

UWE has also subscribed to a subset of the Ebrary Academic Complete service for the last three years, with unlimited concurrent user access to almost 14,000

---

[3] http://www.uwe.ac.uk/library/info/academic/toolkit/

_____

_____

titles. In addition a small number of perpetual accesses to e-books has been purchased from Ebrary, taking advantage of some financially attractive 'subject sets'. These purchases have often been single-user access.

A subscription to the Safari Books Online service has also been taken in the last year, which has provided access to approximately 500 titles with four concurrent users.

Most recently, UWE has begun purchasing individual, perpetual access titles through the Dawson ERA platform, an acquisition route proving very popular with Faculty and Subject Librarians, with the levels of access being dictated by the publisher, falling somewhere between 325 and 400 accesses per annum, on a multi concurrent user access basis.

In addition, UWE subscribes to the following services which offer a wealth of further electronic "book" content:

- Construction Information Service (CIS);
- Credo Reference;
- Early English Books Online (EEBO);
- Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO);
- FORENSICnetBASE;
- Lexis Library;
- Literature Online (LION) ;
- Westlaw

Wherever possible, MARC records are purchased and added to the Library Catalogue.

Outside of the packages of subscribed electronic book content our individual electronic book purchases have so far been focused on NetLibrary purchases. Acquisition has been particularly successful in areas relating to Business and Management, Health, Education and the Social Sciences where the availability of relevant content has been good.

4 Methodology

4.1 Survey

An online survey methodology to find out how and if students at UWE are using e-books as part of their learning was chosen for its relative low cost, potentially fast response rate and its simplicity to complete in a short time.

The student survey had an introductory page stating the aim and also the definition of e-books, for the purposes of the survey and for those students unfamiliar with the term.

The survey consisted of 18 questions in several sections. There were six specific factual response questions requesting personal information. There were 12 behavioural questions focusing on the use and functionality of e-books, and

_____

_____

preference for e-books over print. These questions required a specific response, or scaled specific response, in combination with optional open response questions about e-books.

The survey questions were chosen for their perceived ability to determine if students were successfully accessing and using e-books, for what purpose, how easy they found them to read compared with print, and also what features and functionality appealed to them or were an obstacle to their use.

The survey was available via the UWE Library Services web site for two weeks in early December 2007. These weeks fell at the end of the first semester of the academic year when it was likely that all students would have had a need to access the library catalogue and other electronic resources for their academic work. The student sample was self-selecting. The respondents had to consent to the use of the information they provided to comply with the UWE ethics guidelines and to successfully submit the survey. All respondents were asked to supply their name and e-mail address if they agreed to be contacted at a later date to participate further in the e-books study and to be included in a prize draw.

The online survey was created using commercial software, e-inform, supplied by Priority Research Ltd. The collected survey data was exported into MS Excel for manipulation and analysis.

4.2 Interviews

The use of semi structured interviews with academic staff was deemed the most appropriate way to find more detail and insights into the drivers and barriers of e-book usage. As indicated by Gillham:

It could be argued that the semi-structured interview is the most important way of conducting a research interview because of its flexibility balanced by structure, and the quality of the data so obtained.

(Gillham, 2005, 70)

Questions focused on:

* whether and why staff were using e-books;

* how they found and accessed them;

* what role they saw for them within the academic context;

* what they considered to be their (dis)advantages;

* what their experiences of using them were;

* what they felt about recommending them to students.

The interviews were intended to last about half an hour and were recorded for transcription purposes. Faculty librarians emailed academics asking for volunteers to be interviewed, irrespective of whether or not they were currently using e-books.   The respondents were necessarily self selecting, but nonetheless demonstrated a wide range of use and understanding of e-books and ideas about their application. Twelve academics were interviewed, representing a wide range of subject areas and a good mix of teaching and research foci.

_____

_____

Transcripts were read by all members of the research project group in order to identify the main themes, which were then coded. Each transcript was read by two or more members of the project team in order to assign codes and to ensure consistency of application and interpretation.

4.3 Observed task

The use of an observed task as a method of research was chosen in order to focus on how students were actually finding and using e-books on a practical level. As indicated by Rowlands:

Libraries must move away from bean counting dubious download statistics, and get much closer to monitoring the actual information seeking behaviour of their users

(Rowlands *et al.*, 2008, 294)

Six students were observed and videoed as they undertook two tasks. The first task was, starting at the university home page, to find an e-book on the subject of change management. The second was to find a quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson in a specified e-book and then to explore the functionality of the interface. The students were asked to describe what they were doing as they undertook the task. As the e-book they were asked to find was available in both the NetLibrary and ebrary interfaces, they were encouraged to compare and contrast the features of each. Afterwards, they were asked questions about how frequently they use online resources and whether their tutors recommend e-books.

The students were selected randomly from those who had indicated their willingness to be contacted to help with further research. The first people who responded, and who could make the dates identified for the task, were selected. Two students from the UWE MSc Information and Library Management course piloted the task. Four further observed tasks were carried out. However, these students, along with the two pilot students, included full and part-time attendance patterns, a good range of subject areas and all levels of study.

5 Findings

5.1 Survey

There were 845 respondents to the survey of which 62% indicated that they used e-books, which correlates closely with findings in the JISC funded UK National E-books Observatory project[4] (61.8%).

Responses to the survey were received from students in all faculties, including Joint Honours (JH) students.

_____

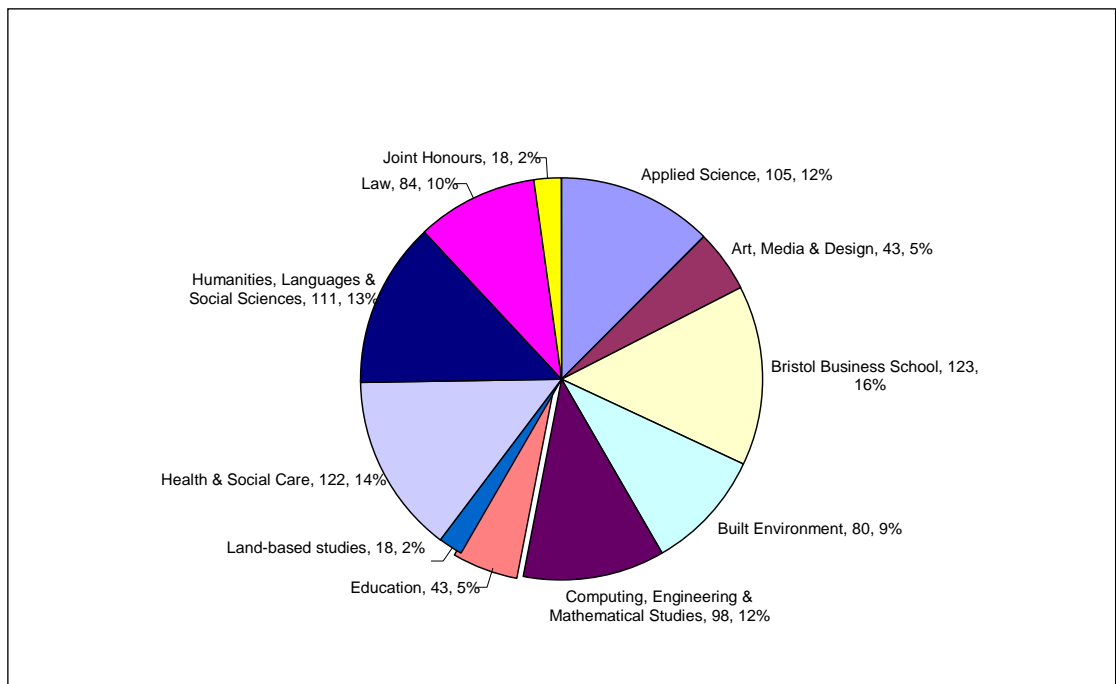[4] http://www.jiscebooksproject.org/

_____

_____

Table 1: Responses by faculty

First year students were the most likely to be non-users. Of the students who reported using e-books, Law had the highest percentage of students describing themselves as frequent users (31%) compared with the next most frequent, Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences (HLSS) students, (21%), and only 10% reporting frequent use in Art Media and Design (AMD). This may well reflect the electronic resources that are available to Law students, and heavily promoted through the intensive training they receive from library staff on finding information. These resources may also be more easy to use in electronic format than their print counterparts.

When asked for what **type of information** students used e-books, the most popular reason, cited by 76% of respondents, was 'independent reading for coursework'. This was followed, with 55%, by 'reading recommended for coursework'.

Of those respondents who identified themselves as e-book users, 82% of level 3 students reported using e-books for independent reading, compared with 76% of level 2 students, 71% of level one students and 75% postgraduates.

First year undergraduates (66%) were most likely to use e-books for recommended reading and postgraduates (PG) least (47%). This suggests that PG students are encouraged to pursue more independent reading and research within their studies but also reflects the approach to Reading Strategies that UWE library staff have been encouraging academics to employ, i.e. advising them to provide set texts at the outset of the course, and then to ensure that students develop skills to find their own as they progress.
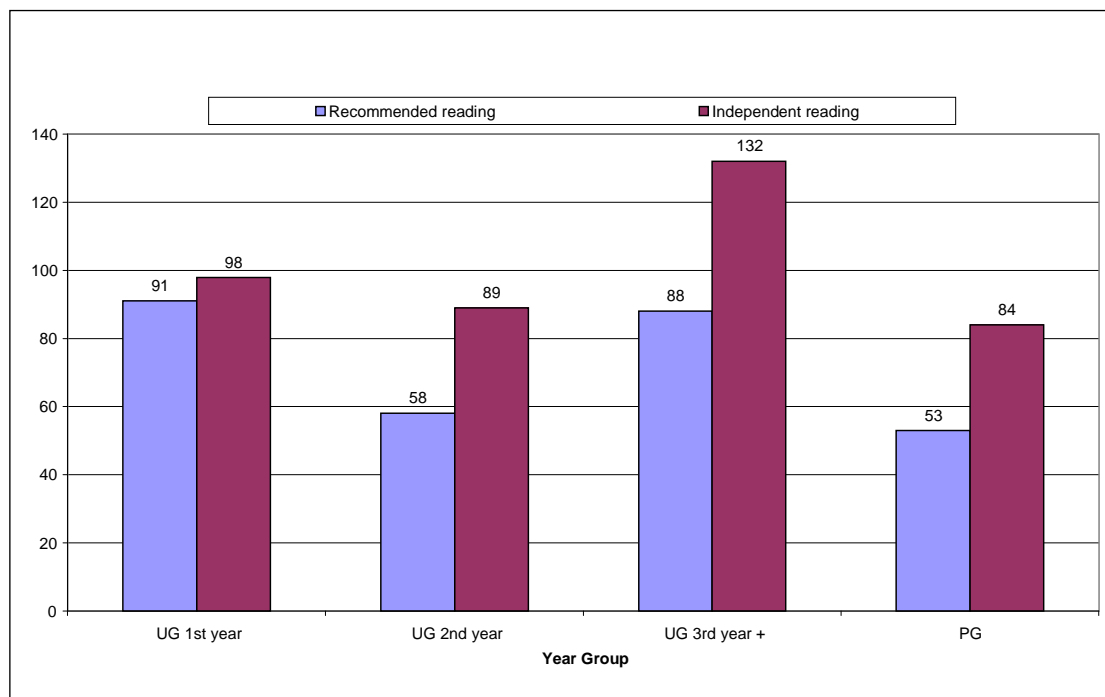
_____

_____

Table 2: Recommended reading by year group (1st, 2nd, 3rd and postgraduate)

Reference use was reported by 27% of e-book users. Sixteen percent had used e-books for hobbies or interests and 8% in connection with jobs or careers. In this last category usage was greatest amongst postgraduate students (13%).

Students who reported using e-books most extensively were, not surprisingly, those within faculties whose librarians have bought/subscribed to the largest number of e-books.

Gratifyingly, the library catalogue was the most frequently cited method for finding e-books, i.e. by 57% of e-book users. Students across all years gave this as their most frequent starting point.

The question relating to **how they found out about e-books** was particularly interesting. As 'tutor recommendation', 'module documentation' and 'Blackboard' could be categorised as faculty sources of information on e-books, and 'library publicity', 'library catalogue', 'library web pages' and 'librarians' could be categorised as library sources, responses have been further analysed in these 2 groupings.

Forty three percent of e-book users used library sources, 41% used faculty sources and 16% used other sources, which is perhaps not so emphatically library-oriented as reported by Nicholas (2008, 326). Of these other sources, 'other students' comprised the most frequently cited source, closely followed by 'friends'. This indicates that faculty sources and library sources are both highly (and almost equally) important sources of information about useful e-books, and that peer recommendation is a significant influence.

_____

_____

Source	Number of responses (N = 1218)	Percentage of total responses
Faculty	500	41%
Library	522	42.9%
Other (Peer)	196	16.1%

Table 3: Recommendations by faculty, library and other

The questions about **ease of use** prompted more polarised responses. Ninety one percent of e-book users rated e-books as 'easy' to use (73%) or 'very easy' (18%). Only 8% rated them as 'poor' and 1% as 'very poor'.

The major **appeal** of e-books is clearly their accessibility with 88% of the 2214 responses to this question citing '24/7 availability', 77% indicating 'instant online access' was appealing and 68% that 'no visit to the library was necessary'. Issues of basic functionality were the next most appealing, with 'ability to search' being the most important, followed by 'ability to download', then 'print', 'change font size' and 'personalise'.
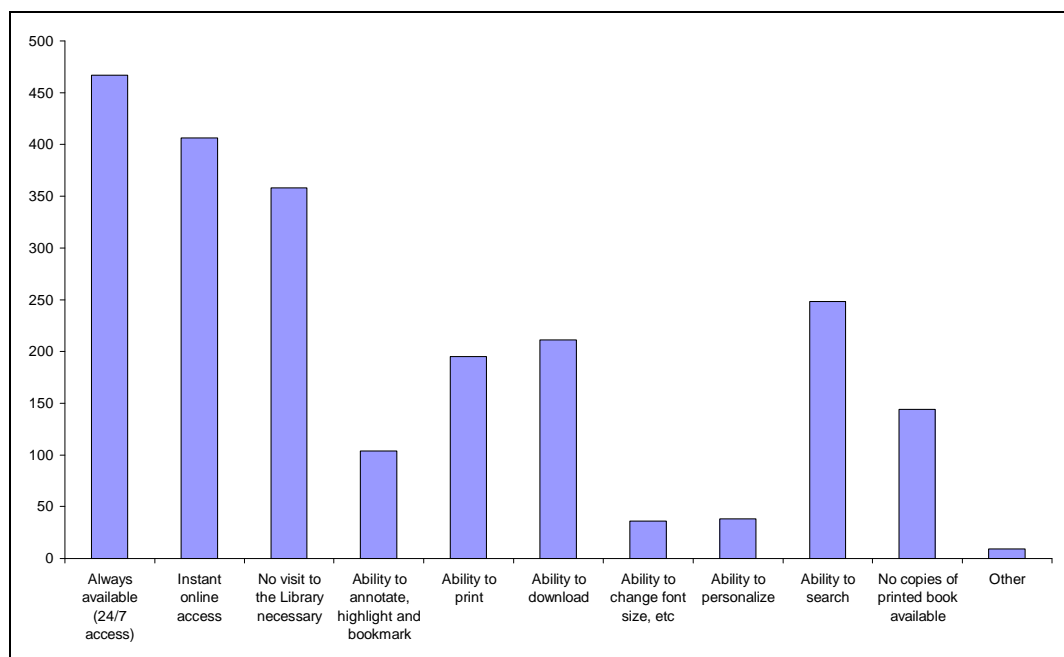

Table 4: Appeal of e-book features/functionality

Only 6% of e-book users gave the reason 'no printed copies of books available' as an attractive feature. This is interesting in the light of responses to the question asking whether they prefer e-books to print. Overall, 32% of e-book users preferred print, 17% preferred e-books, while 51% had no preference.

More sophisticated functionality does not appear to be particularly important to students, but 20% appreciated the ability to annotate, highlight and bookmark; 7% liked the personalisation features and 7% liked the options to change font size etc. There do not appear to be any significant variations between faculties on this.

_____

_____

When asked **why they do not use e-books**, students cited the most common reason as 'don't know about them', which may be construed as a criticism of the library's promotional efforts. This raises wider issues about the best way to promote e-books, the role of serendipity, the use of the catalogue as a promotional tool and how to alert those students about e-books who do not use the catalogue.

Further insights from the *free text comments* on the survey might help to shed some more light on the findings. When asked why they preferred print books, the comments fell into 8 main categories. By far the largest number of comments related to the fact that print books were easier to read – the issue of eye strain was a major deterrent to use of e-books. This was followed, in popularity, by:

- the physical aspects (some students not only liking the look and feel, but also the smell of print books and "I also remember where information is on a page");

- the fact that no technology is required ("they don't crash or shut down unexpectantly" [sic]);

- the ability to easily annotate print texts;

- the fact that it is easier to concentrate when reading a print book (including "it sinks in better when I read from a book");

- a lack of awareness of e-books;

- the reliability of print books;

- their availability in print format (or lack of availability in electronic form).

These reasons are similar to those mentioned in Anhurahda and Usha (2006, 51) at the Indian Institute of Science, and also by McKnight *et al.* (2008) within the UK public library context.

When asked for any further free text comments about e-books on the survey form, the 298 responses fell into 7 main areas. Issues relating to accessibility were the most frequently mentioned, by nearly a third of those who commented ("a copy always accessible"; "everyone has a fair access to them"). The need for better marketing and training was mentioned by almost one fifth ("I think if I knew about e-books I would use them"; "just sort of stumbled across them".)

5.2 Interviews

Of the twelve staff interviewed eight described themselves as users of e-books. Two had initially described themselves as non-users but it soon became clear, when interviewing them, that they were actually users. This does beg the question of how people perceive e-books and in what context they may have been (unknowingly) using them. It might also reflect their level of confidence, or lack of it. A range of subject areas was represented – applied sciences, economics, education, history, information sciences, law, land and property management, languages, linguistics, marketing and nursing. Some staff were more technologically oriented than others, some were more focused on research and others on learning and teaching. In relation to the latter, there were variations in their class sizes and modes of delivery. One was blind.

_____

_____

Answers to the specific interview questions elicited some detailed and complex information.

5.2.1 Whether and why academic staff use e-books

Academics' reasons for using them, not surprisingly, included research, reference, support for distance learning students and support for their lectures. Some also commented that they used them by default if they found them on the catalogue and also when print was unavailable. There were various comments raised about the distinction between primary and secondary sources in the e-book format. ("I'm still not sure that I'd want them [the students] to use them as secondary texts….I just think that the book is probably worth understanding in its total, usually, rather than hunting through it for something and just fishing that out"). The blind academic had been using electronic texts with a screen reader for years and was most enthusiastic about the potential of e-books both for himself, and also for his students ("...not just for visually impaired users but for other print disadvantaged users, dyslexics, people with problems concentrating visually for a long time, there may be many reasons why these are going to be considerably useful...")

The reasons for not using them were similar to those identified by students in the survey, i.e. not knowing about them (and this could be lack of e-book content in their subject area), a preference for hard copy and also the fact that other demands on their time had prevented exploration of e-books.

5.2.2 Finding and accessing e-books

When asked how they found and accessed e-books, the following responses were forthcoming (in descending order of frequency): the Web (e.g. Google, publisher sites), library web site/catalogue, recommendations (by colleagues/librarians), ebrary, Project Gutenberg, other bibliographical tools and e-resources. This supports Milloy's view that "the routes through which users discover an e-book are varied and as yet there is no consensus" (2007, 33).

5.2.3 What role for e-books?

Academics saw various roles for e-books including essential readings (high quality content) for students, reference purposes, exploitation of primary sources and for interactive use in lectures (e.g. to demonstrate a working mechanical part). Practical aspects were also mentioned such as linking between resources and linking from the virtual learning environment direct to e-books. One academic mentioned that e-books can "allow a tutor to direct students to relevant/appropriate chapters from a range of books on a particular subject. So, advantages are very much the pick and mix facility. This is particularly good for more interdisciplinary subjects like gender and law". Some thought e-books should be complementary to print books.

_____

_____

5.2.4 (Dis)advantages

The main advantages of e-books were seen to be their accessibility, in all respects, i.e. availability 24/7 anywhere, ease of searching and also for those who can't read print. Others felt that the variety of resources was a distinct advantage and that e-books might actually encourage reading through their intrinsic nature of being serendipitous and offering just-in-time benefits. One academic even felt that an advantage of e-books might be to reduce plagiarism.   ("Providing access through Blackboard to relevant resources such as e-books may help to minimise student plagiarism as it means students are given a head start and should have more time to get on with their assignments").

Not surprisingly, however, plagiarism was included in the list of disadvantages that academics cited for e-books.

Inertia was cited frequently, i.e. the fact that if recommended texts are easily available in electronic format then students (and indeed staff themselves) might be seduced into using only these and not searching more widely for other relevant information ("There's an inertia factor. Rather than get up and come into the Library, they'll sit there and if they can't see it electronically they won't bother and unless they've got fairly clear directives from members of staff they're going to do what they can electronically"). This concurs with Sandstrom's view, mentioned in Rowlands (2007b, 385) that the principles of least effort, amongst other factors, determine information-seeking behaviour.   In the same article, the point is made that users are now so dependent upon convenient desktop access that content that is not online might as well not exist.

In terms of concern for libraries, several academics thought that e-books would reduce students' library skills. ("Electronic access does make life easier for them [students] but by the same card I think there's no substitute for going in to the library, getting used to the databases and getting used to all resources.")

One academic was worried about incompetent archiving as a result of this proliferation of online text without careful bibliographic control ("over time there is a real risk with electronic publishing that there won't be a copy of certain things for comparative research").

On a practical level, many of the academics felt that it was not so easy to flick back and forth in an e-book, they rued the lack of portability, they felt that note-taking, annotation and browsing were less satisfactory and they were worried about the eye strain that might derive from screen reading.

On the more technical side, there were concerns about the time consuming aspects of learning how to use e-books, including getting to grips with the different technologies, platforms and interfaces. Most still felt that they needed to print off information from an e-book.

McKiel is quoted in Lonsdale (2008, 31), on the analysis of the ebrary global e-book survey, as saying that e-book collections and the research tools they provide are not well understood by a significant percentage of faculty and students. This is a concern that seems to be supported in the UWE study. A key message from Rowlands, *et al.*, and one that challenges librarians to act quickly, is that

_____

_____

Information professionals have exactly the right skills set to address the need for greater simplicity…of both raising awareness of this expensive and valuable content and making the interfaces much more standard and easier to use.

(Rowlands, 2008, 306)

There was also confusion over the different licensing models and the fact that it feels as if there is nothing to show for the cost. Of particular interest was the feeling of overload, both for academics themselves and for their students and researchers. Whilst there was considerable appreciation of the fantastic amount of information available at the click of a button, there was a feeling that people would only derive sound bites from online texts, that the information they found would have been through a keyword search, would be out of context and would lack the wider context that reading a complete text sequentially provides. ("…that's the thing that I'm working with at the moment with my students…. wanting them to understand what the advantages of keyword searching are but also trying to get them to understand that there are pitfalls and there is a problem with us not wading around things anymore.") This is particularly interesting as the "bite size chunks of information" are deemed by Nicholas *et al.* to be one of the reasons why e-books are likely to take off (2008a, 312) but were mentioned by Godwin (in Walton and Pope, 2006, 36) as problematic in terms of information literacy training.

5.2.5 Experiences of e-books

One of the more positive experiences that the academics mentioned was the ability to make connections more easily between information from different sources and the fact that this can help enormously with their research. The ability to undertake textual analysis was mentioned both by the linguists and historians, something that is particularly difficult in the print context. ("I was able to sort of compare what intuitively I knew, that the readership was different but you could actually evidence it and you could evidence it in five minutes.") Academics' experience also suggests that if they had recommended an electronic book to their students they could be more confident that students would read it. Nonetheless, a couple of academics mentioned a 12 page watershed, over which students are reluctant to read any text, either in print or electronic format, which is supported by Nicholas *et al*. (2008b, 192).

The academics' negative experiences of e-books included stockpiling items to read, i.e. the "squirreling" behaviour identified in Rowlands *et al*. (2008, 295), lack of content in their subject area, variety of quality and functionality of e-books, and copyright implications, both as a user and as an author. There was a perception on the part of some academics that publishers were either not equipped/knowledgeable enough to offer e-publishing options for the textbooks they wrote or that they would lose royalties if their books were published electronically ("The other thing is that I wonder how many authors, once they begin to understand the implications of dented sales of their titles, will support [e-books] because as far as I understand it, the royalty on an e-book is exactly the same as on the agreement you've made with a printed page hardback/paperback book"). This echoes views expressed at the Publishers' Association annual

_____

_____

conference, and reported by Reisz in the Times Higher Education (20 March 2008, 39), where it was stated that publishers' incentives to produce textbooks in electronic format are marred by "the research assessment exercise and the audit culture it generates".

5.2.6 Recommending e-books

The responses to this area of questioning fell into five main categories:

Content – There would need to be a system for checking for updates to editions to ensure that the recommendations weren't out of date. There was a concern that there might not be the breadth of information, yet, in electronic format.

Library – Academics were worried about sidelining the library ("[the students] think oh how can I find this article or this book on the internet for nothing, and they'll go searching around to get it for nothing rather than actually going to a library and finding the book in the library"). This was a challenge identified by Rowlands *et al*. (2008a, 308). Academics also recognised that they needed the services of library staff even more urgently to guide them through the e-book environment.

Equality issues – There was recognition that there would be an onus on PC ownership and, increasingly, a PC with appropriate software capabilities, multimedia features, etc. The debate about what the effect might be on less wealthy students was inconclusive – would they be more likely to rely on e-books (given that they can access them on fixed PCs across campus) than students who have the financial capability to purchase print copies for their own convenient use?

Pedagogy – When recommending an increasing number of electronic resources to students it is necessary to ensure they have the skills to evaluate them appropriately. There were real concerns about surface learning, skimming online texts and not truly getting to grips with concepts, etc. ("When getting students to use e-books tutors need to take care to promote WHY they are being recommended and HOW to use them within the context of the work being set".) This is perhaps another area where library staff could help. There were also misgivings about what might be seen as spoon feeding students, especially to those students at level 3 and PG.

Means of recommending e-books – There were discussions about whether to include e-books in the Virtual Learning Environment, on ordinary reading lists or in module handbooks. There was still felt to be a need to encourage students to use the library catalogue to find books for themselves.

5.2.7 Staff interviews: main themes

All in all, the main themes from the staff interviews are outlined below (in descending order of importance/frequency of mention).

- Issues relating to *pedagogy*, e.g. VLE, reading lists, spoon feeding: "I think we'd say, well, the digital future is probably a better one but I do think it puts new constraints and problems around our teaching practice. I think we need to catch up with that".

_____

_____

- Aspects pertaining to *content*, e.g. availability, appropriateness, primary-secondary material: "I think we'd be mad to get anything, any sort of collected works of anything…. I think we'd be potty to get that in anything other than electronic format"; "…if they're available electronically more of them [the students] will actually read them"

- Consideration of *different types of user*, e.g. off campus, distance, international, print disabled: "I think e-books are great and specifically for the type of students that might be a widening participation type of student or somebody who's at home with three kids under five or got a job, can't find the time to go to the library"; "The fact that there is no due date on an e-book I can read and re-read at my convenience. Being a dyslexic, it does take me longer to get through material."

- *Purpose/use*, e.g. complementing print, textual analysis, reference, and research: "I like the flexibility that keyword searching gives you because it means you can expose a text to scrutiny in ways in which it was never intended."

- Issues relating to *technology*, e.g. hand held devices: "I think there's still resistance to some of the electronic resources that if it doesn't work the first time they don't go back."

- *Social, cultural and political* issues, e.g. library and archive use: "I think they're [e-books] important because they democratise the archive…….and these are things that would previously be available to people who are privileged by happening to live in London and therefore have access to the British Library or people who lived in Oxford and had access to the Bodleian."

5.3 Observed task

Most of the students involved in the observed task indicated that they would want to print off sections of e-books, especially if using them for a seminar, although one person was just happy to screen read. Most would read a couple of chapters on screen. As indicated by Parkes:

… students do not use e-books in the same manner as they use print books – they are "hunters" seeking what they perceive to the most useful extracts from the book rather than browsing

(Parkes, 2007, 260)

A couple of students already made extensive use of online resources because of the distance they live from the University. The tensions between these competing needs/preferences exemplify the seemingly contradictory findings mentioned in Rowlands *et al*. (2007a, 494).

With regard to routes into the e-book, three students used the library catalogue and three used the A-Z list of e-resources to find an e-book package. Once in the e-book, students had a tendency to do what they would in print format, i.e. use the index and the contents page. Indeed, they preferred the e-book interface that looked more like a book than just a Word document. Knowledge of the print

_____

_____

format of books appears to help students with the navigation and search of e-books.

The e-book search within the library catalogue was popular, although it was noted that the option for keyword only (there is no author/title option) was limiting. Other comments on the library catalogue related to the use of the term 'Internet resource' to describe a link, which is vague, and also 'connect to resource' as it is not clear what kind of resource is meant.

Although the students generally found the relevant book for the task, they commented that the retrieval software was unforgiving of misspellings. Most of the students, when presented with a list of e-books that met their search criteria, opened up the one at the top of the list. This may indicate that they assume relevance ranking, along the lines of Google, or perhaps date order.

Searching within two different e-book platforms highlighted the difference in searching (better in NetLibrary) and functionality (more extensive in ebrary). It also demonstrated that guidance in how to get the best out of the e-book platform would be beneficial for students at the outset.

Students generally liked the options to highlight, bookmark, make notes and add to a bookshelf. They did not expect to find these features but when they did they were usually impressed. Even those who had used e-books before were not au fait with the functionality as they had not spent time exploring it. This supports the view of Safari, quoted in Lonsdale and Armstrong (2008, 31), that e-books are mainly used where someone has a very definite problem to solve or a research topic.

Generally, the students' use of e-books is still on a need to use rather than a preferred option basis. They are not yet making full use of the functionality. They are prepared to read on screen but only if it is essential and more convenient than any other way.

5.4 Summary

It was clear that the people surveyed and interviewed understood e-books in very different ways, despite our efforts to provide a definition. Questions about e-books caused academic staff to comment more generally about electronic resources, eliciting many enthusiastic messages about them and about the library's provision. There was very much a sense that e-books are going to offer different opportunities and challenges for academic libraries and a feeling that academic staff are still finding their way and perhaps looking to library staff to help them in their endeavours to make the most of the technology within their teaching, aware that they need to understand better the possibilities they offer.

It would appear that student take-up of e-books is going to be much quicker since, as Nicholas *et al.* indicate, "students are far more likely to read from the screen" (2008a, 322). Even if they don't all feel it is comfortable, it may still be easier than making a long journey to a distant library.

Two of the students who did the observed tasks did not really like e-books, or would prefer to use print books. Others mentioned that if they had to rely on e-books for recommended texts, the books really had to be available at all times and

_____

_____

from anywhere, which has distinct implications for the restrictions on some of the providers' licences and functionality.

6 Conclusions

In drawing conclusions from the research, it is appropriate to answer our initial objectives.

6.1 Are e-books meeting users' needs?

Access is clearly a key factor. E-books can be available 24 hours a day to a range of people simultaneously. They are perfect for print disabled people (as long as they are well structured and designed) and they can be key word searched, as well as offering indexing and navigation, which opens up access to the contents quickly and easily.

Although people are extremely enthusiastic about the accessibility of e-books there are still some questions over availability of subject content and how soon coverage will increase to make a real difference to the learning and teaching environment in particular discipline areas ("at the moment, the range is limited and therefore you are working to somebody else's secondary list of materials").

There is reason to believe, from the interviews, that primary texts are used more frequently online than secondary texts, (the latter being, for example, textbooks that are recommended reading). The reasons for this may relate to coverage, as above, but also to some of the concerns expressed by academic staff in relation to potential (lack of) context, difficulties in sustained screen reading, surface (as opposed to deep, effective) learning, inertia and the possible reduction in information seeking or evaluation skills etc. ("I had a much kind of deeper understanding of the smaller subject area…., now I'm afraid that they [students] have a rather scanty understanding of a very broad range of sources and materials.")

6.2 What place is there for e-books within the context of a multidisciplinary academic library collection?

Staff interviews would suggest that there are many places for e-books within the academic library. Firstly, dictionaries and reference books are seen as much more relevant to the electronic format, being in need of constant access (in the case of the former) and constant updating (in the case of the latter). ("...but certainly anything to do with reference, anything that's updated I think we shouldn't be investing in hard copy stuff, I think given that resources are so short we should be using them online")

Secondly, the possibilities of multiple concurrent users for core readings/texts is particularly attractive (…"to encourage us to have say one e-book for each module, just somewhere on the reading list and attach that to Blackboard in the module…"). Links can be made from the virtual learning environment, used by students for the majority of their learning support, direct to particular sections of an e-book text (licence and technology permitting).

_____

_____

Access to material of a relevant level and quality can be achieved through recommendations to a specific e-book, and this can also be more environmentally friendly if it saves printing onto paper. ("If you've got selected shortlist of the essential books, at least to begin with that would seem to me to be a good way to go forward.")

Referring students to different sections in a range of e-books can provide the perfect composite set text for particular modules.

Students are encouraged to read quality sources accessed through their favoured online medium rather than relying on poor quality resources that they would otherwise use having found them through Google.

Nonetheless, the complementarities of print and electronic texts were mentioned by various people, suggesting that there is room for both for some time to come. ("I have a preference for e-books because they're easy to use but ……. I don't think there's a reason why you can't use the two in parallel I don't think it's an either /or.")

Librarians are significant in helping at various levels:

- lobbying publishers/suppliers for appropriate licence models and functionality;

- promoting e-books, training students in their use and in evaluating online services generally;

- working with academic staff to identify the best ways of integrating e-books into teaching and learning.

The implications for collection management and development are complex. Using e-books in a similar way to a short loan collection can provide access to the titles most in demand on reading lists. Such titles might be purchased in electronic format via the traditional library book suppliers on a title by title basis. But, wider collections of traditional reference materials, and indeed, titles to broaden the range of stock within the library as a whole, might be bought through identified packages, depending greatly on the access model and pricing structure on offer. This has far reaching implications on the individual subject budgets of a multi-disciplinary library and is still evolving.

6.3 What are the distinct drivers for use of e-books?

Accessibility is a key feature given the frustration students feel in trying to get hold of key texts. This means that librarians need to consider carefully the kind of access models that different providers are offering and take care to ensure they are appropriate, or to negotiate/lobby for the most beneficial. OCLC's recent survey indicates that half of UK academic libraries claim their e-book usage is to support core reading lists (2008).

Increased availability of e-books across a range of subject areas will almost certainly drive up usage, not just for key texts but as students search for secondary materials to support assignments.

_____

_____

6.4 What are the distinct barriers to use of e-books?

Lack of training and awareness of e-books is a major barrier. As indicated by Nicholas *et al*… "there is considerable room for…..better communication or publicity…" (2008a, 325). The need for training on and awareness about e-books was clearly articulated by students in the survey and in the observed task. Indeed, it was well demonstrated in the study by Belanger (2007) that libraries would benefit from more overtly instructing library users to access e-books via the catalogue and to provide information about which collections were covered within it. The need for training for academic staff was certainly implicit and, to a certain extent, explicit from the interviews. ("I think I should be using them [e-books]. I want to appear to my students to be doing the right thing.") As academic staff are likely to be instrumental in drawing students' attention to e-books, promoting e-books firstly to academics is likely to reap the highest rewards.

The observed tasks suggested that students are likely to persevere in using e-books, even if they are not finding the information they want within them, because they have been told it should be there. This raises the need for academic staff, who are recommending an e-book, to ensure that the information is readily available within it, and to understand the means of accessing it. The searching functionality of some e-book providers (and, indeed, the library catalogue) could be improved considerably, in this respect, through use of more fuzzy searching techniques.

If e-books are not available on the library catalogue many users will not find them. Therefore making them clearly available and managing expectations on their use by the provision of information about their functionality might be particularly helpful. Loading in catalogue records and keeping them up-to-date are going to be major challenges for librarians.

References

Anuradha, K.T., and Usha, H.S. (2006) Use of e-books in an academic and research environment: A case study from the Indian Institute of Science, *Program* **40**(1), 48-62.

Appleton, L. (2004) The use of electronic books in midwifery education: the student perspective, *Health Information and Libraries Journal,* **21**(4), 245-252.

Armstrong, C. (2008) Books in a virtual world: the evolution of the e-book and its lexicon, *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science,* **40**(3), 193-206.

Belanger, J. (2007) Cataloguing e-books in UK higher education libraries: report of a survey, *Program: Electronic Library and Information Systems,* **41**(3), 203-216.

Carlock, D., and Perry, A.M. (2008) Exploring faculty experiences with e-books: a focus group, *Library Hi Tech,* **26**(2), 244-254.

Clark, M.I. (2005) Electronic book usage: a survey at the University of Denver, *Portal: Libraries and the Academy,* **6**(3), 288-299.

_____

_____

Gillham, B. (2005) *Research interviewing: the range of techniques.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press. ,

Godwin, P. (2006) Keeping up with the Google generation: the challenge for Information Literacy teachers. *In:* Walton, G. and Pope, A. (eds.) *Information literacy: recognising the need.* London: Chandos.

Lonsdale, R., and Armstrong, C. (2008) Aggre-culture: what do e-book aggregators offer? *Library and Information Update,* **7**(4), 28-33.

McClelland, R.J., and Hawkins, N. (2006) Perspectives on the use and development of a broad range of e-books in higher education and their use in supporting virtual learning environments, *Electronic Library,* **24**(1), 68-82.

McKnight, C., Dearnley, J., Morris, A. (2008) Making e-books available through public libraries: some user reactions, *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science,* **40**(1), 31-43.

Milloy, C. (2008) Promoting and embedding e-textbooks: the library challenge, *Against the Grain,* **20**(1), 48-51.

Nelson, D., Chelin, J., Redman, J. and Shaw, P. (2005) We know we are making a difference but can we prove it? Impact measurement in a higher education library. *In:* Brophy, P. (ed.) *Libraries without walls 6.* London: Facet, 90-99.

Nicholas, D., Huntington, P., Hamid, R.J., Rowlands, I., Dobrowolski, T. (2008) Viewing and reading behaviour in a virtual environment: the full text download and what can be read into it, *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives,* **60**(3), 185-198.

Nicholas, D., Rowlands, I., Huntington, P. (2008) UK scholarly e-book usage: a landmark survey, *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives,* **60**(4), 311-334.

OCLC (2008) Survey points to high growth in eBooks over the next year. *OCLC eNews.* December. URL: http://www.oclc.org/uk/en/enews/2008/07/en_survey.htm [accessed 13.09.09]

Parkes, D. (2007) E-books from ebrary at Staffordshire University: a case study, *Program: Electronic Library and Information Systems,* **41**(3), 253-261.

Reisz, M. (2008) Familiar text, new chapter, *Times Higher Education,* March 28th, 37-39.

Rowlands, I. (2007) Electronic journals and user behavior: a review of recent research, *Library and Information Science Research,* **29**, 369-396.

Rowlands, I., Nicholas, D., Jamali, H.R., Huntington, P. (2007) What do faculty and students really think about e-books? *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives,* **59**(6), 489-511.

Rowlands, I., Nicholas, D., Williams, P., Huntington, P., Fieldhouse, M. (2008) The Google generation: the information behaviour of the researcher of the future, *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives,* **60**(4), 290-310.

_____

_____

Van Epps, A.S. (2005) The evolution of electronic reference sources, *Library Hi Tech,* **23**(2), 287-298.

Vassiliou, M., and Rowley, J. (2008) Progressing the definition of "e-book", *Library Hi Tech,* **26**(3), 355-368.

_____

The Occasion

Library Information Research Group (LIRG) and Elsevier Research Award (2007-08)

Acknowledgement

_____

_____

GODWIN, Peter and PARKER, Jo. (eds.) *Information literacy meets Library 2.0*. **London: Facet Publishing. 2008.**
200 pages. ISBN: 978 1 85604 637 4. £44.95.

This book brings together two topical subjects: Library 2.0 and information literacy (IL). It is organised in four sections: The basics, Library 2.0 and the implications for IL learning, Library 2.0 and IL in practice, and The future.

The first section comprises an introduction and a chapter on the tools of Library 2.0 and IL. In the latter, Brian Kelly describes the main characteristics of Web 2.0. He discusses such tools as blogs, wikis, RSS (Really Simple Syndication), communications technologies (such as instant messaging and Skype), social networking and social bookmarking applications, podcasts and videocasts, tagging and folksonomies, mashups and virtual worlds.

The section on IL learning covers higher education, school libraries and public libaries. Sheila Webber focuses on educating Web 2.0 LIS students for IL. While she sees no need for every LIS graduate to become a Web 2.0 guru, she does think that all LIS professionals should be able to engage critically with new online tools in order to identify their potential in their own LIS specialism.

Judy O'Connell provides examples of Web 2.0 tools that a school librarian can adopt to support IL in schools. She maintains that school librarians should embrace a 'Web 2.0 mindset', which accepts a transition from formal to informal learning spaces and which has flexibility and personalisation at its core.

Michelle McLean looks at public libraries and Web 2.0. Her examples are from the US, where many public libraries have their own blogs and some use wikis for readers to post book reviews.

Chapters in the section 'Library 2.0 and IL in practice' describe case studies showing how Web 2.0 tools may be applied in the teaching of IL.

Georgina Payne discusses the blog as an assessment tool. Library staff at the University of Northampton asked students to write a minimum of ten blogs over 13 weeks on the quality of information they encountered on a daily basis.

Anne-Marie Detiering uses Wikipedia to teach students to 'eavesdrop' on the scholarly conversation, and thereby have a richer understanding of how knowledge is created. Rather than seeing knowledge as something that is revealed, staff at Oregon State University seek to help their students research like scholars and to introduce them to academic writing. Detiering maintains that Wikipedia makes the construction of knowledge transparent because it is possible to use its history pages to trace the discourse about a topic.

Christopher Fryer and Jane Seck consider IL and RSS feeds. They describe using RSS to republish information on training sessions at LSE and give examples of US libraries using RSS feeds to make their information more accessible.

Jennifer Zimmer and Sally Ziph report on podcasting at the Kresge Library at the University of Michigan. The library staff experimented with audio podcasts and vodcasts (podcasts with video) for their library instruction sessions. At the time of writing they were planning to move the project out of the pilot phase and fully incorporate the podcasting in the existing instruction programme.

_____

_____

Jo Parker describes Beyond Google, an IL course at the Open University. The course covers making the best use of Google features as well as using tools to retrieve information that search engines are unable to find. It includes evaluating information, organising and finding it (e.g. social bookmarks), user-generated content (e.g. blogs and Flickr) and keeping up to date (e.g. RSS feeds).

Other case studies include: Laurie Allen and Marcella Barnhart on Penntags, a social bookmarking tool for locating, organising and sharing online resources developed by librarians at the University of Pennsylvania; Cameron Hoffman and Sarah Polkinghorne on how the tagging capacity of Flickr helps students learn the distinctions between natural and controlled vocabularies; Susan Ariew on a project at the University of Florida's Tampa Library to create a pilot video for instructional purposes using YouTube; and Julie Adams, Alison Pope and Geoff Watson on using Web 2.0 to enhance the Staffordshire University Assignment Survival Kit (ASK), a web-based tool designed to support undergraduate students encountering their first assignment.

The final section has two chapters: one on the teaching of IL through digital games and a conclusion by Peter Godwin. John Kirriemuir discusses the pedagogic benefits of digital games, and gives examples of initiatives at US universities.

The book will certainly provide inspiration to people teaching IL. However, there may be a limit to the use of Web 2.0. Godwin cautions: 'It may be … that students do not want us in "their" spaces' (p172). Considering the pros and cons of using RSS or SMS to keep students updated, Adams *et al.* note that students might prefer to compartmentalise their communication – using SMS for their social life and RSS for academic purposes.

The issue of keeping up to date is a thorny one. Adams *et al.* quote Czarnecki's statement that: '"we are always in a state of [constant] beta" when using Web 2.0' (p139). Parker points to the problem of keeping her IL course up to date when new tools and services are emerging all the time. One of her solutions is to provide a forum for students to post interesting links they have found. Godwin reflects on the wisdom of bringing out a book on this fast-changing world. He justifies it on the grounds of the convenience of print for browsing, review and reference, and addresses the currency question by creating a blog (http://infolitlib20.blogspot.com/) to record new developments.

Monica Blake
Library and Information Consultant
info@blakeinformation.com

_____

_____

GORMAN, G.E. and CLAYTON, P. *Qualitative Research for the Information Professional: A Practical Handbook*. 2nd ed London: Facet Publishing, 2005. 282 pages. ISBN 978-1-85604-472-1.

This is the second edition of this text, first published in 2005, and republished last year, which in and of itself may indicate its value and popularity. I have to confess to not being familiar with it before now – much to my loss, as it would have been a very useful addition to my (and my students') bookshelf; I shall certainly be using it with, and recommending it to, my students this year. The book is written by two highly experienced library academics, based in New Zealand (Gorman) and Australia (Clayton), and their wealth of experience as teachers and researchers shines through.

The text begins with the more 'theoretical' aspects in chapters 1 and 2 (the nature of qualitative research; evaluating qualitative research); the following 11 chapters cover all the stages of research, from design to writing up, taking in case studies, how to approach fieldwork, four specific methods (observation, interviewing, group discussion and historical investigation), and – again, usefully, as these aspects are sometimes not covered well in other texts – recording fieldwork data, analysing data and writing reports. The subtitle, 'A Practical Handbook' is very apt – unlike some research methods texts, there is an extremely good emphasis on the practical, and on communicating the 'hows' of doing research really clearly and in a lot of detail.

For someone like me, who is familiar with most of the techniques they describe, I found this an engaging and interesting read, which gave me many useful leads on further reading, and I enjoyed it very much. I would certainly recommend this book for anyone new – and not so new – to research, as it really does give readers the tools to implement the methods discussed, as well as providing many practical examples and illustrations. For example, I am not very familiar with the technique described in Chapter 9, a form of focus group called NGT (nominal group technique), but having read their clear and detailed account of it, I felt I would be confident to try it out, even without further reading. One of the most useful aspects is the questions at the end of each chapter, which relate either to an example used in the chapter or to the case study in Chapter 14 – these encourage readers to reflect on what they have read and understand it better.

There are many good things about this book; it is engagingly written, and highly accessible without being simplistic or undemanding of its reader. It incorporates practical and valuable examples particularly well, alongside clear linking of, for example, methods to types of research question. My criticisms are niggles really, and reflect my own personal preferences and 'things I would have done differently if I'd written it', rather than any major issues. Being something of a nerd about research methods, I would have liked slightly more on the debates around research paradigms, and more upfront definitions of terms such as 'inductive', 'deductive' in that first chapter. There are only 2 pages on ethics, which is perhaps a little thin, and there is no mention of working with children, or hard-to-reach/vulnerable groups, and nothing on health-related research. The section on negotiating access to a case study is helpful, but more here on researching within your own organisation would also be useful, as that is a highly

_____

_____

likely scenario for many information professionals. The section on historical research could, I feel, have placed more emphasis on both discourse analysis as a method, and using contemporary documents (e.g. in policy analysis). The authors have – mostly successfully – updated the text from its first publication in 1997, but there a few places where they seem a little out of date; for example recommending tape recorders rather than digital recorders, and they could have included more e-resources. The literature review section I also found a little thin, and their list of journals misses out some I would consider key (particularly for practitioners), as well as being very library focused; we should be encouraging a wider range of literature searching, to take in sociology, education, health, for example.

However, these quibbles do nothing to stop me recommending this wholeheartedly, and a research methods text for me is no fun if I don't have something in it to disagree with! I learnt a lot from this book, and will return to it many times, I'm sure.

Juliet Eve
Principal Lecturer
University of Brighton.
j.eve@brighton.ac.uk

_____

_____

CRAVEN, J. (ed.) Web Accessibility: practical advice for the library and information professional. London: Facet Publishing. 2008. 168 pages. ISBN: 978-1-85604-625-1. £44.95 (hbk)

The provision of accessible web services is about delivering online information that is useful, informative, quality-assured and does not present unnecessary barriers.

This edited collection is a "practical introduction to web accessibility" (p.1) and is primarily aimed at library and information professionals, students and lecturers of library and information studies. Editor Jenny Craven is Research Associate at the Centre for Research in Library and Information Management (CERLIM) and has worked on a number of research projects associated with web accessibility and the provision of library services for visually impaired people. Craven is therefore ideally placed to bring together a highly practical and timely collection of advice and guidance from a range of experts and experienced practitioners. Craven contributes to a number of chapters within the book and this gives the collection an authoritative and cohesive 'voice' on the subject of web accessibility.

At the beginning of the book, Craven provides a straightforward discussion and overview of the term accessibility and briefly discusses consideration of accessible and inclusive practice to the technological aspects of library work including computer use within the library, the provision and use of e-resources and website design.

All featured authors provide excellent, straightforward advice and guidance regarding issues of web accessibility. Draffan (Chapter 2) takes us through some of the tools available to customise the web experience for users as well as considering wider impact. Ball (Chapter 3) argues for the inclusive learning approach and takes a look at website design from this diverse perspective. Eskins and Craven usefully highlight the importance (and difficulties) of implementing Design for All principles when referring to the proposed Design for All knowledge and skills sets as advocated by Velasco *et al.* (p.116).

Sloan and Howell's chapters on the importance of accessibility, accessibility advice and guidance, and the ongoing evaluation that needs to take place when developing web accessibility (Chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively) provide some key pointers and the legislative requirements.

Each chapter follows with references to further reading and URLs to websites of direct relevance to the topic covered within the chapter. However, in some chapters the URLs refer to documents from the same organisation a number of times which does make for a lengthy list of references. Many of the URL references are "deep links", that is, referring to documents embedded within organisational pages and my concern is that these deep links may change as organisations develop their sites. It may have been preferable to refer to an organisation's home page and then to encourage the use of the search page once the home page is located to find the relevant documents. Despite this reservation, care has been taken to ensure that each URL is clearly marked within the body of the text and this certainly helps the reader to easily refer to and follow up any particular lines of enquiry or interest.

_____

_____

Particularly important threads running throughout the book are the pivotal role that library and information professionals should play in developing accessible systems and working closely with IT developers to ensure that web accessibility is an integral part of any technological development, and the important role of stakeholders in determining what needs to be done. Peter Brophy, in his chapter on issues for library and information services, advocates the iterative approach to ensuring accessibility (p.106) and this is a model that is clearly reflected throughout the book. Brian Kelly's chapter effectively highlights the obligation on all library and information professionals to continually re-visit the web accessibility agenda.

There are a number of case studies included, most notably the chapter highlighting how Design for All principles have been fully embedded into the library and information science curricula. Other case studies mentioned throughout the book include public libraries and FE Colleges and this helps broaden the appeal of the book and demonstrates that web accessibility is an issue that all library and information services professionals need to address irrespective of the communities which they support. This is demonstrated in Craven's own chapter on best practice examples of web accessibility (Chapter 9) and how during her own research and that of others the lack of compliance to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) in terms of web accessibility was evident by a number of organisations.

I would have liked to have seen an appendix highlighting some of the principal organisations that are working within the fields of inclusive learning and web accessibility such as Ability Net and JISC TechDis. This would be of use to students and professionals new to this important aspect of library and information work.

It might also have been useful for a glossary of terms to be included in the book; there is some assumption that the reader will understand the terminology associated with web accessibility and at times this book can be a little technical.

As a practical, easy-to-read compendium of advice and guidance, this book is a perfect addition to a library and information services student's reading list and for the staff development library and should be required reading for anyone considering technological developments within their library. Indeed it is well worth sharing with external colleagues involved in website development to ensure that the good practice advocated by the information professionals and accessibility experts within this book is embedded within website design principles, thereby striving to achieve inclusive and comprehensive web accessibility.

Virginia Havergal
e-Learning Advisor (Learning Resources)
JISC Regional Support Centre South West
virginiahavergal@rsc-south-west.ac.uk

_____

_____

DEWE, Michael (ed). *Renewing our libraries: case studies in re-planning and refurbishment*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2009.
284 pages. ISBN 978-0-7546-7339-2.   £60.00

Like a great many other librarians, much of my recent professional life has revolved around the modernisation, refurbishment and re-invigoration of the libraries I've worked in, so I was fascinated to read the accounts and experiences of others who had undergone similar transformations – and a little frustrated that such a volume wasn't at hand when we were considering the various design options available to us.

The book is departmentalised into logical chapters which group the 16 case studies by refurbishment type, so that the aspirations and limitations which influenced renewal or refurbishment take precedence over sector definitions. The effect is to allow those with particular interests to more easily compare and contrast the techniques and resolutions employed by others who might have faced similar challenges to their own.

Surrounding the chapters are Michael Dewe's own excellent contributions. The Preface and Introduction offer him an opportunity to clearly describe the design logic which underpins the chapterisation of the book and the criteria against which the case studies were selected; and to consider the many and various forces for change which, over the years, have brought about periods of library building, refurbishment and renewal. I found his 'snapshot' case studies, a gallop through a variety of recent (up to 2007) refurbishments, this time sub-divided mostly by sector, very enlightening. No great depth is offered for individual cases, but any would serve well as a basis for future investigation by those faced with similar restrictions or with similar aspirations. The book ends with an overview of the various stages through which a typical project might ideally progress, and in itself becomes a very useful 'toolkit', a guide for libraries approaching their own refurbishment project – starting with an assessment of the library building, progressing through a thorough review of user requirements and other influences upon the design, to methods of mitigation during the works themselves and finally to the conduct of project review and impact assessments. At each stage, reference is made to the previous case studies, with discussion of the real-life problems faced and overcome.

The case studies themselves, though each author is allowed their own style and voice, are well and clearly written, detailed and informative, and a number of photographs and tables are used for illustrative purposes. They follow a similar content pattern, designed to ensure that all important facets are covered – the reasons for refurbishment, descriptions of the various design stages and the final design itself, a summary of any difficulties encountered and their resolution, and finally an evaluation of the refurbishment and its impact on the library community.   Most library sectors are covered, including national, academic, public and independent libraries; and a variety of refurbishment types are included, covering the problems of modernising and extending library space, creating modern learning and research environments and creating environments

_____

_____

capable of delivering new styles of provision, to enhancing heritage buildings with modern facilities. The case studies are predominantly UK based, though with valuable contributions from Sweden and the Republic of Ireland, and projects in Australia, Canada and the USA are discussed in the surrounding chapters.

Michael Dewe describes periods of library renewal as being largely cyclical in nature – they seem to happen in a big way every so many years. In reality, of course, it's unlikely that anything we do today will remain as it is for very long. We all make 'fine-tuning' changes along the way to meet current demands, or to enable better use of various features – however, there comes a time when fine-tuning just isn't enough anymore, and we need to take a deep breath and start over. This well-written, well designed collection of case studies and commentaries illustrates many of the challenges faced by those charged with renewing our libraries, and discusses the outcomes achieved. I have no doubt that it will prove an invaluable reference tool for students of library design and history, architects, designers, planners and librarians for many years to come.

Stephen Mossop
Head of Library Customer Services
University of Exeter
s.a.mossop@exeter.ac.uk

_____