Editorial

Your Eds at the HQ of Bedford Slow Food
www.slowfood.org.uk

This issue continues to show the true international nature of UKSG. Our Editorial Board has a new member from Denmark – Helle Lauridsen – and a paper by Ruoxi Li gives a real insight into the use of Chinese academic journals. We profile two leading figures from parts of the world that are really blossoming at the moment: the truly international Pote Lee of iGroup, based in Thailand, and Vlastimil Ježek from the Czech Republic's prestigious national library. There are also licensing views from the global corporate world and from the Knowledge Exchange.

The new ISSN standard is expected to make the life of electronic resources much easier, along with a lot of other standards initiatives which seem to be all coming together at the same time. UKSG and NISO have launched their new Working Group on Knowledge Bases (KBART) and UKSG's Project Transfer is expected to publish the new Code of Practice at the end of March. Both will be featured at the UKSG conference. NISO has also picked up some of the work started by the Journal Supply Chain Pilot and set up a Working Group to develop a standard for institutional identifiers. One of the many areas where this will be important is in

clarifying the institutional affiliations of journal article authors …

And so, in the UK, all universities have finally submitted their data for the very last Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), although the outcomes will not be announced until the end of 2008. Over the years, *Serials* has published many articles about the impact of the RAE; an article on this topic by Geoffrey Crossick was one of the most heavily downloaded *Serials* articles in 2007. There is little doubt that the RAE has influenced the publishing behaviour of academics for decades. Now consultation has begun on daughter of RAE – the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The REF is planned to be far more metrics based and citations will be of high significance. UKSG and COUNTER have submitted a response to the consultation questions posed by the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCE) and we have raised issues such as different patterns of publication in different disciplines, potential issues with the use of Web of Science (WoS) and in particular the increasing importance of usage data and the UKSG/COUNTER Usage Factor Project.

Might this just be the year of the e-book? This issue features a write-up of a recent one-day ALPSP conference on e-books. A wide range of publishers gave their thoughts and predictions and there was a distinctly buoyant feeling about the future. The library perspective was given by one of your Eds (Hazel) who is currently chairing the JISC's exciting National E-Book Observatory Project. Interestingly, the topic of the Publishers Association conference held in February 2008 was also e-books. Once again the mood was positive. Dave Nicholas from the CIBER research group gave an update on the JISC project. Amazingly, some 120 UK university libraries are now signed up to the project and the user benchmark survey has already elicited over 19,000 responses. Interest is indeed high!

The other papers in this issue are from the highly successful 'Caught up in Web 2.0?' seminar, including one on blogging in Worcester. This brings us to the UKSG blog, which will be in action over the conference, so contact your local blogger and make sure you follow the exciting new conference format – even if you can't be in Torquay with us.

Helen & Hazel