On the Circuit

UKSG SERIALS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

February's Serials Resource Management Seminar provided an opportunity for around 25 individuals already working with serials to increase their knowledge of serials handling and management. The choice of St William's College, York, as the location made it possible for delegates from areas as far apart as Aberdeen and London, and Oxford and Dundee, to attend without inconvenience and to enjoy an unusually beautiful venue in the heart of mediaeval York.

In contrast to our historical surroundings, the four papers we heard were all about looking forward. Martin Delahunty of Elsevier Science and Des le Roy of Divine gave overviews of the role of publisher and subscription agent, and outlined some of the trends and changes in their respective services following the explosion of the Internet and the ever-increasing demand for electronic content and access. Martin Delahunty, the first of the speakers, described electronic publishing platforms and explained that Elsevier are committed to providing an electronic archive for the titles available within ScienceDirect. He commented on Elsevier's practice of exploring all possibilities for electronic publication throughout the publishing process and welcomed the fact that products currently obtainable electronically are now fewer and of higher quality than those offered in previous years.

All subscription agents now offer or plan to offer a one-stop-shop interface for serials subscription management, explained Des le Roy for Divine, and pay-per-view services will be big. Whilst things are changing, however, traditional services continue to be available, and Des cited the provision of management information as one of Divine's most valuable and popular services. Following an analysis of the role of the agent in the publisher/agent/librarian relationship, Des mentioned some of the benefits that come about as a result of collaboration between agents and publishers.

Providing the viewpoint of the serials librarian was Sarah Thompson, Acquisitions Librarian at the University of York. Sarah regretted the fact that her serials budget would shortly be cut. Simultaneous availability of print and online had, she felt, eased some academics into familiarity with electronic access – enabling moves towards online-only to be made with limited opposition. Inevitably, though, strong feelings are held about the wisdom of abandoning paper altogether in the context of archiving. Sarah described some other challenges involved in serials handling, such as unclear invoices, agent or journal failing to report a change of publisher to the library, and the late receipt of notice of forthcoming price increases. Librarians, she felt, appreciate the savings offered on a "package deal", but at the same time resent having to pay for products that won't be used. The message was definitely one of "room for improvement" on the part of agent and publisher.

"Getting Technical" was the title of the final paper, given by Ingenta's Simon Inger. Getting technical was what Simon proceeded to do as he described all aspects of linking between journals. Focusing on a wealth of new (to some of us) and quite complicated information was a challenge at this stage of the programme, and fortunately Simon's energy and enthusiasm were infectious. We heard about the various levels of reference linking, the role of CrossRef and the purpose and nature of the DOI. Simon then described the differences between hosts, aggregators and gateways – giving the examples of Northern Light and Ingenta and discussing the merits of the library as gateway – and discussed what makes a site "sticky" or otherwise. Finally we considered the power of products such as SFX and Jake which enable libraries to choose the most appropriate copy by displaying all available access methods.

UKSG deserve thanks for arranging the seminar. This was an interesting and well-organised day, and the papers provided much food for discussion on the train journey back down South.

Fran Harrap, Swets Blackwell

REPORT FROM THE 8TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE INFORUM

In my former home country, the Czech Republic. I attended the Annual Conference on Professional Information Resources, INFORUM, at Prague, May 21-23, 2002 (www.inforum.cz/english).

The main purpose was to bring together information specialists from public and special libraries, corporate sector and state agencies who shared a common interest in using, managing and promoting electronic information sources.

What I liked most was that people shared all the experiences with electronic information and that the atmosphere was so friendly. The conference had a very high international level, with more than 600 participants.

I have noticed that Slovak colleagues were very welcome. There was even a special bus fetching all the Slovak librarians and driving to Prague. The Slovakian contributions were very appreciated and they also received awards from the INFORUM board, which was based on the voting of all participants.

Although these two countries have been through the "velvet divorce", splitting the old Czechoslovakia into two countries, and changing completely the political and economical system, it almost seems to me that they are keener to use all the new technology and that that they are happy to "jump" into this new environment together with all the other political, economical and social "jumps".

Also the life-long learning process was discussed very intensively with great involvement and it engaged all the participants.

This was a very interesting and useful experience and also a good exercise of my mother tongue in the Czech library language. I would never believe how many new words I had to learn!

Zuzana Helinsky

CORRECTION

In the March 2002 issue of *Serials*, 'On the Circuit' contained an item entitled A Day in the Life of a Journal Publisher (*Serials*, 15(1), 68-70). Bill Russell of Emerald has asked that he following correction be published.

Valerie Bence's write-up contained an inaccuracy, which needs to be corrected. While we are a growing organisation, in terms of turnover, we did not "double turnover to £18 million to September 2001". What I explained was that the company "broke the £18M turnover level for the first time in September 2001".

Our other area of growth has been in the increased access to the Emerald Fulltext database. Access has increased from 200 institutions in January 2000 to 770 in June 2002, and as a result we continue to increase article downloads strongly. In March 2002 we achieved 650,000 article downloads in a month for the first time – and we maintained this level of usage in April and May as well, demonstrating strong year on year growth.

We look forward to continuing to work with UKSG to increase access to relevant material, particularly in the areas of management and library information services – Emerald's core content focus.

Bill Russell, Emerald