

The students' view

Four students were awarded sponsored delegate places at the 28th UKSG Annual Conference, and their edited reports appear below.



Left to right: Hamid R Jamali (University College London), Jamie Allen and Charlotte Gleeson (Manchester Metropolitan University), Ross MacIntyre (UKSG Education Officer) and Anna Lupton (also MMU)

Photo by Paul Harwood, camera courtesy of Hamid. All other photos by Steve Sharp.

Report by Charlotte Gleeson, Manchester Metropolitan University

One of the main reasons I applied for a sponsored place at the UKSG conference was to have the opportunity to gather some useful information for my dissertation topic on open access. I felt it would give me the chance to put so much of the theory I had already learnt in the lecture theatre into practice. The fact that it was in Edinburgh, a place I have always wanted to visit, was an added bonus, so I was delighted to learn my application had been successful.

The three of us from Manchester who had been given sponsored places set off for Edinburgh in eagerness and anticipation, unsure what would await us ahead. On arrival we soon spotted some familiar faces from Manchester in the crowd, which eased our nerves for the start of the conference the following morning.

Day 1

Before the conference was officially opened by the Chair of UKSG, Keith Courtney, we had the opportunity to register and get our much anticipated UKSG delegate bags, full of information and goodies that previous attendees had told me so much about. The opening succeeded in putting us first-timers at ease as there were clearly a few

others attending their first UKSG conference in the audience.

The topics covered in the first plenary session certainly ignited the audience. *Simon Mays-Smith* from Credit Suisse First Boston made an excellent start to the session, covering an outsider's point of view on the scientific publishing industry, bringing attention to the vast quantity of information that is increasing and how libraries are responding to this. This encouraged much debate amongst librarians and publishers alike about the validity of the statistics used.

Derk Haank of Springer Science+Business Media then gave a light-hearted but thorough overview of commercial scholarly publishing in the world of open access, which set the scene for the rest of the conference and gave everyone in the audience something to relate to. Not only did his presentation focus on the current situation of open access, with the ever present topic of the 'big deal' coming into the spotlight, but he also looked at what has been achieved through electronic publishing in the past.

Breaking for lunch gave us the opportunity to meet Ross MacIntyre, the educational representative from UKSG, and also the other sponsored student (from University College London) attending this year. This provided the chance to get to know a bit more about the conference and what we

could expect during the next few days. The food was definitely more extravagant than I was expecting – something which was to be a dominant theme throughout the conference.

The afternoon session brought our very first workshop and briefing session. For me, this was one of the highlights of the conference. Learning about current, in-depth issues associated with the serials industry and hearing other people's experiences and opinions was simply invaluable. There were so many sessions to choose from, there was something new for everyone to learn. The second plenary session looked at the 'big deal'. It was interesting to hear the developments from both national and international academic libraries on this topic.

For the final part of the day's session, we were treated to product reviews. It was particularly enjoyable to see the latest developments in the serials world. This was one area of the conference I thought would not interest me but each company tried to make their five-minute presentation as interesting as possible. Some of the talks were so memorable that they made us students pluck up the courage to go and actually visit their exhibition stand, just to witness at first hand the products they were describing.

By the time the day's events had ended, we were all in need of some relaxation. The social events of the conference came highly recommended by previous delegates and by my tutor Peter Lea, so it was something I was particularly looking forward to. I had not expected the first night to be so spectacular. We were whisked away by bus to the National Museum of Scotland for the renowned conference dinner. We were greeted at the entrance by a lone piper and champagne. What better way to start the evening? The surroundings and the food were both outstanding. After the meal, the evening was far from over. The buses took us back to campus where a disco and late bar was laid on for those delegates who could take the pace (which was pretty much everybody). This meant that a 9 am start the next day would be a tough challenge to meet.

Day 2

The next day saw a similar set-up to the previous day. Plenary Session 3 saw the continuation of the open access debate with speakers from both the

library and publishing worlds fighting their corners on the impact of open access. I found this session to be particularly invigorating as what the speakers had to say on the topic was well researched and very relevant for my chosen dissertation topic.

Martin Richardson from Oxford University Press opened this session looking at ways to experiment with open access publishing. Interesting points were made about the future of institutional and subject repositories. As with earlier sessions, the three speakers were looking at different viewpoints. Next to come was the library's view on open access and how it impacts on research libraries. *Paul Ayris* made some interesting points on the difficulties authors face in depositing articles into institutional repositories and the barriers subscriptions make to access. Finally, from a funding perspective, *Mark Walport* from the Wellcome Trust gave an overview of open access and how it could lead to increased usage and citation if it became available globally.

The break for lunch gave us a chance to visit more exhibitors and try out our networking skills. We learnt more about new developments, as well as getting those all-important freebies. It was interesting to learn more about the publishers we had all taken for granted when using electronic journals for our studies. The day's session concluded with a look at VLEs, something which we had to do research on for our course, so it was particularly relevant. Following previous sessions, the two presentations looked at both the publisher and the library viewpoint.

The evening saw another opportunity to meet other delegates informally over dinner. It was amazing to meet such a variety of people and to discover just how many had actually been previous library students in the same position as we are now. Yet again, the food, drink and company were something to be remembered. After dinner came the famous UKSG quiz. The Manchester team reformed once again to try and go one better than the title of 'best loser', gained last year. Would we become the new owners of the 'I lost it in Edinburgh' T-shirts? It came as a relief to many of the team that there was no longer a loser's title to compete for after being told the questions had been compiled by a finalist on Mastermind. Similarly to the first night, the quiz was followed by a disco and late bar which went on until the early hours. Both librarians and publishers battled for a well-earned place on the packed dance floor. An exciting and energetic day was had by all.



Socializing over dinner on Day 2

Left to right: Jayne Bradley, Eileen Hiller and Jill Taylor-Roe

Below, left to right: June Thoburn and Susanna Lob



Day 3

It was indeed a struggle to make the 9 am start the next day after the previous evening of entertainment and socializing, but we all made it. The morning brought more interesting talks on relevant issues in the world of serials today, including how libraries can benefit from usage statistics. Finally, the last plenary session brought two light-hearted and enthralling speakers, *Mike Clark* and *Colin Steele*, to discuss the future of serials. With some very entertaining images on how the serials world will look in the future, the presentations certainly left me with some food for thought, as I am sure it did most other delegates in the audience.

The close of the conference saw our last chance to chat with new friends and acquaintances over lunch before a quick dash to get the train home. It left me with plenty of time to reflect on what had been a very memorable three days and, ultimately, a great experience I will never forget. Not only was everyone so friendly and encouraging, but the knowledge I gained of all aspects of serials during the conference has been invaluable. I would like to thank my tutor Peter Lea for encouraging me to apply for the sponsored place and supporting me all the way through it. The conference is definitely something I would recommend to any student interested in the serials aspect of librarianship and I will look forward to returning to the conference one day.

Report by James Allen, Manchester Metropolitan University

Having been introduced to the UKSG through the roadshow at the University earlier in the year, I jumped at the chance of a sponsored place at the conference, especially the chance to go to Edinburgh for a few days! The three of us from Manchester all had varying amounts of experience working with journals in academic and medical libraries, so we were all keen to learn more about every aspect of the industry. In addition, there was always the chance of finding out some useful information for my dissertation ... so it was with the eagerness of expectant library students that we registered, mingled, and arrived at the first session on Monday morning. Keith Courtney, chair of the UKSG, opened the conference.

With the conference underway, the first banker ever to speak at the conference was introduced. Could *Simon Mays-Smith's* sharp suit, financial prowess and numerical dexterity impress the crowd? Well, yes, with more bar graphs than a university library has serials, the thoroughness of

his analysis was incredible. As an industry outsider, the analysis of figures had the aim of predicting future changes in the financial fortunes of publishers, but the speaker's expert knowledge of the sector allowed him to add his view of the consequences for libraries.

Derk Haank, CEO of Springer Science+Business Media, was next up, with a reputation to defend by his own admission! He certainly delivered a professional speech, but I was surprised that none of the librarians took the chance to confront him. He was, however, thoroughly convincing in his argument that academic publishing should not be a matter of moral debate but rather an issue of practicalities. In many ways Mr Haank set the scene for the rest of the conference, discussing his views about the 'big deal' and open access which were common threads through the following two days.

As the day progressed we heard some tales from the front line of serials librarianship, wandered around the exhibition, and generally enjoyed ourselves. For people new to serials, like us, the product reviews later in the afternoon were very useful. Not only was it entertaining to see speakers squeeze in as much as possible to their five-minute slots (threatened by a trap door if they overran) but they also brought new companies, products and services to our attention. Armed with this extra information, we could interrogate people on their exhibition stands more thoroughly the next day.

The social element of the conference cannot be under-estimated. After one of our number was rescued from freezing during an unfortunately timed fire alarm by the scarf of a well-known recruitment consultant, we headed off to the National Museum of Scotland for the famous UKSG Dinner. The dinners on both Monday and Tuesday offered the best opportunities to get to know other delegates, and we met a variety of interesting librarians, publishers, bibliography compilers and others in this way. Surrounded by totem poles, a fountain, hundreds of tea-lights and a huge millennium clock, the Museum offered the more remarkable setting, and the whole evening was certainly a magnificent experience.

On Tuesday morning the open access theme was explored in depth from the perspectives of the publisher, the librarian and the funder. Each speaker outlined their views and the progress that their organizations were making towards the new business models. For us students (especially those focusing on some aspect of open access for their

research!) it was beneficial to hear the views of the different stakeholders in the process juxtaposed in this way, and to hear opinions which might not otherwise be easily extracted from the literature.

The pattern continued throughout the day: speakers on subjects from virtual learning environments to scientific research in Africa, interspersed with tea breaks, chats, gathering freebies from the exhibitors and more enjoying ourselves. The main benefit of the conference was being able to see the serial universe from multiple viewpoints.

Tuesday evening saw a quiz team made up mostly of librarians from Manchester and its environs performing spectacularly poorly in a spectacularly difficult quiz. To reflect the multinational background of the delegates, each round of the quiz was based around a particular continent. We had our hopes pinned on round seven (Antarctica) but unfortunately the quiz ended after round five ... The subsequent disco left us in a sleepy mood the next morning, especially considering the 9 o'clock start.

The final session rounded off the conference well, with thought-provoking talks. *Mike Clark*, from the GeoData Institute, delivered an excellent presentation, and took a much broader view of the whole publication process than your common or garden serials librarian. He drew attention to the uncertainty of the future of the serials system: will we be more interested in blogs in the future? is e-only access to information restricting access, especially the developing countries? will the peer review system survive as it is today?

Overall, the UKSG conference has been an excellent experience. Every speaker introduced new ideas to us, or gave a new viewpoint or case-study to consider. The conference thoroughly explored all aspects of serials publication, especially during the workshops and briefing sessions where precise issues were debated. In addition it was a wonderful chance to meet a variety of people and to discuss their positions in the grand scheme of academic communication. How will we fit into that scheme in the future?

For all the past and present students of Manchester Metropolitan University who were present this year, the conference also marked the last attendance of Peter Lea, who has been a constant fixture at the conference since its inception. Manchester Metropolitan University will be a less interesting place when he retires later this year, and we have been privileged this year to be his last

students. We wish you a long and happy retirement, Peter.

Report by Anna Lupton, Manchester Metropolitan University

"The bad news is you've all got a place!"

This was how I and my two fellow MMU students, Charlotte and Jamie, were told by lecturer Peter Lea that we were on our way to the UKSG conference in Edinburgh. Excited? I nearly ran out and bought a kilt. The prospect of three days of listening to papers given by figures of authority in the serials world and the chance to meet some of them filled me with awe, enthusiasm and, yes, more than a little nervousness.

We arrived to find a buffet waiting for us on the Sunday evening, setting a welcoming and friendly atmosphere which lasted throughout the three days. Having had no idea what was in store before I arrived at the conference, I soon decided to make the most of the experience which, I thought, should include as much mingling, socializing, drinking of coffee and eating of biscuits as I could manage. Oh, and there was quite a lot of free wine, which was rather nice too!

The talks given by various figures that were connected to the serials industry were an education, to say the least. It was great to be able to listen to so many experienced and knowledgeable people from the library and information sectors. Listening to the speakers made clear to me the key issues and challenges facing the serials industry today and made me realize how committed each speaker was to their particular corner. I found myself nodding in agreement with each conflicting viewpoint, thoroughly impressed and convinced by every speaker. Here I was listening to the most up-to-date developments in the serials industry being discussed – I couldn't help but feel that I was taking part in something special.

One speaker highlighted the fact that only ten years ago, the merits of electronic journals were debated at the conference whilst open access was unheard of, demonstrating the rapidity of change in the serials industry. A theme that struck me throughout the conference was that many authors who support open access in theory do not commit to it in practice. Thus, without high level policy support, open access and institutional repositories could remain idealistic concepts rather than a reality.



A gathering of delegates, including a strong northern contingent!

Left to right (back row): Steve Sharp, Terry Bucknell and Ian Jennings

Left to right (front row): Karen Allen, Lesley Crawshaw, Louise Cole and Karina Bradshaw



"The highlight of the conference was dinner in the spectacular surroundings of the Royal Museum of Scotland."

The conference ended with a bang when, in my opinion, the most engaging speaker of the conference gave a paper towards the close of the last morning. *Mike Clark* of the GeoData Institute (University of Southampton) gave a truly inspirational talk which covered, amongst other things, the overload of information we face in modern life. His powerful talk defined technology as merely the latest medium through which information is transmitted and he stated it is information, not technology, which matters. He related this to the serials industry by pointing out that we are in danger of a situation whereby *where* authors publish becomes more important than *what* they publish.

At the end of each day of talks all delegates enjoyed a wonderful dinner with flowing wine and dancing until 1 am. The highlight of the conference was dinner in the spectacular surroundings of the Royal Museum of Scotland. The famous UKSG quiz was not, to my disappointment, on the intricacies of Dewey. I expected to be able to contribute, having watched 'Fifteen to One' religiously throughout my student career. As it turned out, Charlotte and I knew one, solitary answer, relating to 'Neighbours' (also obligatory

viewing for all students, obviously). Luckily, we managed to drown our embarrassment (did I mention the lovely free wine?).

The conference was made extra special by the fact that we shared the very last attendance of Peter Lea, Lecturer in Information and Communications at MMU. Peter has attended the conference almost every year in its twenty-eight year history. I was honoured to have a dance with Peter and for those who know him I'm sure the conference will not be quite the same without him. So after three days of inspirational talks, great company, excellent food, fine wine and generally being thoroughly spoiled, I can safely say my first conference was a fabulous experience and one that I hope to repeat in the future. My thanks go to Alison Whitehorn, Ross MacIntyre and Karen Sadler at UKSG for organizing our sponsored places and making us newcomers feel so welcome.

Report by Hamid R Jamali, University College London

I arrived in Edinburgh the day before the conference, and although I have attended an international conference that was held in a hotel, I believe that campus-based conferences have many more advantages. I met the other three sponsored

students on the first day of the conference before lunch and we were all hospitably welcomed by Ross MacIntyre and Paul Harwood.

Day 1

The conference opened with a welcome from Keith Courtney, the UKSG Chair, who indicated the increasing international nature of the conference. More than 500 people were registered for the conference with delegates from different countries such as Japan, Sweden and Zimbabwe, to name just a few. The formal welcome address was followed by the first plenary session with presentations by two non-librarians: a banker and a publisher. The fact that the conference is not restricted to librarians, and many people from different fields participate in the conference, is one of those features that make this event very effective and productive. *Simon Mays-Smith*, a banker who specializes in professional publishing, dealt with different financial aspects of the serials market. According to him, one of the major reasons financial markets are interested in scientific publishing is that they are amongst the largest European media stocks. Rising journal prices and declining library budgets have squeezed the libraries, and the libraries' response to this trend has been manifested in the growth of open repositories. Then *Derk Haank* from Springer, with his Dutch sense of humour, gave us the publishers' view of open access publishing models, especially Springer's author-pays business model. I had already heard and read a lot about open access but most of it from the point of view of librarians or those who are in favour of open access. It was really enlightening to look at the debate from a publisher's point of view. Though it seems that publishers do not consider open access publishing as a real danger to their business at the moment, it is good for the scientific community to have more publishers offering open access options to authors.

The afternoon plenary session was focused on the 'big deals'. While *Nancy Gibbs* was against big deals and used the experiences of an American university to illustrate the consequences of walking away from this kind of contract, *Nol Verhagen* had a more moderate view. Based on some Dutch experiences, he showed the big deal as a seductive and addictive contract that can bring both opportunities and challenges to the libraries. The efficiency

of big deal models depends on how flexible they are, and the key to achieving the best deal seems to be 'negotiation'. *Fiona McGoldrick's* presentation was about the efforts of IReL to provide access to electronic resources in Ireland, and this highlighted the significance of negotiation even more. As a result of this complicated and specialized negotiation between libraries and publishers, we can see the emergence of some companies such as Content Complete Ltd, who are specialized negotiating agents.

Day 2

The focus of the third plenary session was a debate on open access, and I was especially interested as I recently finished a joint paper with two of my friends about different business models of open access publishing. All of the three speakers were supportive of open access publishing. *Martin Richardson* discussed the experience of Oxford University Press in testing two different business models for journal publishing: partial open access (*Journal of Experimental Botany*) and full open access (*Nuclear Acid Research*). *Paul Ayris* put the open access debate in an academic library context. Focusing on institutional repositories, he discussed the effects of open access in the academic environment and concluded that institutional repositories are still in their infancy and the UK has to examine some new subscription models for serials. *Mark Walport* from The Wellcome Trust, the institution that spends more than 400 million pounds a year in supporting research, talked enthusiastically about some new models of open access publishing. He pointed out that over 90% of research funding in the UK universities is public money. My reading shows that about 56% of research activities in the United States are government funded too. He used this fact as an argument to justify the idea that the results of public-funded research should be freely available to all. In fact this is one of the main driving arguments behind the open access debate especially in the field of medical sciences. Some argue that free availability of the medical research output helps the public improve their health, but there is a question over whether all people have the appropriate information literacy and required background to use the research findings properly.

There were two sets of concurrent sessions in the afternoon. Hoping it would be useful for my

own country (Iran), I decided to go to the session about making journals accessible in developing countries. The first presentation by *Barbara Aronson* was a review of some major projects such as HINARI, PERI and AGORA, mainly run by international agencies to enhance access to scholarly journals in developing countries. *Gracian Chimwaza* introduced FAO's AGORA project. In spite of several problems with providing online access to journals for African users, such as the high cost of internet access, this project has made the access to journals by agricultural researchers and academics much easier. Finally *Pippa Smart* talked about African Journals Online (AJOL). This project aims to increase the visibility of the journals published in Africa. African journals are facing several problems including lack of finance, lack of quality submission, small pool of reviewers, lack of publishing knowledge and low visibility. But on the other hand, they are strong in that they are committed to local research and are highly valued by research communities. The AJOL initiative, started in 1998, has helped African journals overcome their weaknesses and represent themselves to the world research community. The AJOL project encouraged me to think about the problems of scholarly journals in my country and some other Middle Eastern countries. Our journals have almost the same difficulties and potential as African journals. There is a real need for the transfer of journal publication knowledge and experience from developed countries to developing countries. Language does seem to be a big barrier.

Day 3

The fourth plenary session was one of the main reasons I wanted to attend the conference. There were two talks about usage data and their benefits for libraries. *Simon Bevan* discussed the results of the analysis of NESLi2 usage data and their significance for libraries. Considering the importance of the usage data for assessment of library deals, Simon recommended a national deal for the UK and the setting up of a portal site for statistics. *Jill Taylor-Roe's* paper was particularly helpful for me. She looked at the 'librarian's view of usage data' and dealt with different questions including why do they need the usage data? And how do they utilize the data? She discussed the political and managerial benefits of usage statistics to librarians.

To the best of my knowledge, there is a consensus in the literature for the benefits of usage statistics for libraries, but unfortunately librarians don't seem to pay enough attention to the usage reports they are provided by publishers. Although most statistical reports by publishers are COUNTER compliant these days, they have different structures. I reckon there is a need for a tool or methodology to help librarians analyse the statistics in a more straightforward way and understand the progress of their services.

Two presentations in the last plenary session before the conference close were the most interesting and inspiring presentations (and it was very clever to put them just before the end). Almost everybody left the session cheerful. Professor *Mike Clark* had chosen 'Serial blogonomy' as the title of his talk. He intelligently linked serials with the media world and tried to illustrate some of the similarities between serial publishing and the blogging phenomenon. He used sophisticated humour in his talk and pictured the future of serials publishing as a 'personal' activity with characteristics such as being real time. He even predicted that peer review would change to a sort of discussion group. Then *Colin Steele* used another inspiring method to picture the future of serials. He used cartoons to summarize his vision of different aspects of serial publishing in the future. We could see the struggling interactions between authors, publishers and librarians in the cartoons.

Exhibition and product reviews

Holding an exhibition alongside the conference adds great value to it. During the breaks I took time to see the exhibition and approach some of the exhibitors to ask them questions concerning my research. They all kindly talked to me and gave me contact details for further information. However, there were some other stands where I was curious to know what they did, so I found the product review sessions extremely useful. As a matter of fact the idea of giving time to exhibitors to introduce their services and products was a new idea that I had not seen before, so I attended all the product review sessions. Besides getting to know about several different companies and products that I had not heard of before, I learned several marketing tips from the way the exhibitors made their presentations; it was as if there was a



competition amongst them and everyone was trying to make their own presentation more informative, interesting and memorable. Some of them had come up with innovative ideas in their presentations such as Emerald not using the PowerPoint, or another one who started by asking questions of the audience. I found the PowerPoint presentation of Scopus very clever. Thanks to fast Internet provision for the exhibitors by Heriot-Watt University, I finally found an opportunity to search and try Scopus database myself.

Workshops and briefing sessions

Workshops and briefing sessions covered a wide range of topics, most of them interesting. I managed to attend the COUNTER workshop which was informative but slightly different from what I expected. My reason for attending this workshop was the research I am doing about e-journal usage statistics. I am trying to find out what kind of information is missing in the usage data that could help libraries. The interesting characteristic of the workshop was that it discussed the COUNTER statistics from the perspective of both individual libraries and consortia. The briefing session about e-books run by Hazel Woodward was very enlightening. I attended this session because I felt my knowledge of e-books was insufficient and this could be the future hot topic for the libraries. Furthermore, the Ciber research group, of which I am a member, intends to start some research projects about e-books and I needed to learn more about them. Hazel covered different aspects of e-books and gave us the vision of both libraries

and publishers. Engagement of new players like Google in the e-book market and the increasing interest of libraries and consortia in e-books seem to be the current features of this field. One of the surprising points in the session was that the best selling e-book in 2004 was a novel (*The Da Vinci Code*), not a text-book or an academic book as many expected. This fact indicates the interest of the non-academic market in e-books. I believe one of the problems of e-books is lack of marketing. I also attended the workshop on 'Marketing the library'.

In brief, UKSG 2005 was a very well-organized and stimulating event. I am very grateful to its Education Committee that wisely provides a few students with the opportunity to attend the conference every year. This generosity offers a good mechanism for transmitting the experience and knowledge of well established professionals to a new generation in a very friendly way.

Edinburgh Conference fringe

The day before the UKSG conference, intrepid golfing delegates attacked Dalmahoy's challenging West Course. An enjoyable day was had by all, and they are seen here at the 19th hole with well-deserved refreshment. Those not pictured include Dan Tonkery (he had gone to an ICEDIS meeting), who played despite having got off a plane from the US at 8.30 and teeing off at 10.00; Zuzana Helinsky, who suffered the indignity of British Airways destroying her golf clubs, and was on the phone haranguing them at this point; and Bruce Heterick (probably at the bar, or driving range).

Left to right: Stuart Cooper, Mark Furneaux, Michael Margotta, Charles Lusty, Lindsay Macleod, Helen Henderson, Keith Wylde

