The practical is a commitment to upgrading the ICT infrastructure for many institutions, with the welcome recognition that academic and support staff skills also need to be improved or developed in order to make better use of the technology. The Department of Education has recognised the need for managerial support and has formed a Merger Unit to oversee, support and monitor the process, including the provision of expertise in the key areas of finance, legal, human resource matters, academic and student issues, governance, and ICT development.

A start has been made but the journey towards coherent and comprehensive higher education provision will be long.

The Librarians' Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC 2005) at Imperial College 4th-6th April 2005
Organised by CILIP Community Services Group – Information Literacy and supported by ASSIGN

Jane Secker and Maria Bell

LILAC (http://www.cilip.org.uk/groups/csg/csg_il g/events.html) was a new conference organised by the CILIP Community Services Group sub-group on Information Literacy (CSG-IL), and supported by ASSIGN. As Committee members of these respective groups we joined the conference organising committee just over a year ago, full of enthusiasm for this event, and not without some anticipation. As a new event, LILAC had to be entirely self funding and while we had both been involved in organising one-day events, a three-day event of this scale that attracted international delegates and

librarians from across the sectors was rather daunting. We worked with an excellent committee: different people took responsibility for specific areas (papers, sponsorship, social events) and there was, of course, a lot of advance planning. The conference went smoothly and LILAC proved to be an inspiring and exciting event. This is a brief report on the conference, including a summary of each of the six keynote sessions and some information about the parallel sessions. Further information will be made available on the LILAC website, including presentations and papers from the parallel and keynote speakers. There are also three short reports on LILAC available from Sheila Webber's Information Literacy Weblog (http://ciquest.shef.ac.uk/infolit/).

Opening Keynote Address: Harnessing technology to the needs of education: what roles so library and information services play?
Diana Laurillard, Department for Education and Skills.

Diana Laurillard, the e-learning guru, formerly of the Open University gave the opening keynote paper. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published its much anticipated strategy document on E-learning on the 15th March 2005, entitled *Harnessing Technology: transforming learning and children's services.* This strategy is wide reaching across the education sector, and argues that technology and systems needs to be joined up throughout the lifespan of the learner. This was one of the first public occasions on which Diana spoke about the document, which had been published following a wide consultation with the education community.

Diana initially highlighted the specific problems of engaging with the library community as a whole, as libraries are represented by several government

departments of which DfES is just one. However, she went on to examine ways in which the library community could use the strategy document to promote their roles.

Diana looked at the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)/National Science Foundation (NSF) projects, including DART (based at the London School of Economics and Columbia University) as examples of librarians and learning technologists working together using technology in appropriate ways. The strategy document refers to "e-skills" rather than information literacy, but she felt that librarians play an important role in this area and need to work to define "e-skills" and build an appropriate curriculum. She also felt that librarians have a lot to offer as they tend to be good at collaboration. An important part of the strategy is building a common infrastructure and librarians will play an important role here as they understand the value and importance of open standards.

More information about the strategy is available on the DfES website (http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/e-strategy/).

The Higher Education Academy
Eddie Gulc and Liz Thomas

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) was formed from the merger of the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, (ILTHE), the Learning and Teaching Support Networks and the National Coordination Team (which was funded through the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund). It was founded in May 2004, but launched in October. It is concerned with all staff that manage the student learning experience. Eddie Gulc is a Senior Advisor for e-learning and stepped in to replace Lawrence Hamburg at the last minute. Eddie's talk focused on the role of the HEA.

Liz Thomas is a Senior Advisor for Widening Participation and her talk was very relevant to the audience. She looked at what widening participation is, how it relates to student diversity and what librarians can do to take this forward. Liz described some case studies and questioned the audience on how to take this forward. Both Eddie and Liz also expressed an interest in attending the next CSG-IL Meeting and discussing this further with the group.

Questions from the floor asked for comments on the recent SCONUL/HEA report, *Learning Outcomes and Information Literacy,* but neither of the speakers was familiar with this report (http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/inf_lit/papers/outcomes.pdf).

Between the 'e' and the 'i'
Sheila MacNeill, Learning and Teaching Scotland and CETIS

Sheila MacNeill is a Learning Technologist working at Learning and Teaching Scotland, primarily developing web-based resources for the schools sector. She is also seconded for three days a week to work for the Centre for Educational Technology Interoperability Standards (CETIS). Sheila talked about the Google factor and identified the many 'e's and 'i's that exist including: education, e-learning, edutainment, embedding, information, ICTs, the Internet and something she called "initiativitis" where there are many initiatives launched about things. She felt there were many parallels between her work as a learning technologist and that of a librarian. However, she felt there was a need for a common language. Teachers, for example, do not know what information literacy is, although it is in the school curriculum, called something else. She felt that inevitably any project that uses ICTs must involve information literacy.

Sheila described five projects she has worked on recently that use technology and looked at how information literacy was embedded in them. All the projects were developed for schools and were often role play-based. There is a range of resources that can be used by the teachers to help support them. Where teachers were not given technical support and a lot of information they found that they didn't like the ICT projects. They found teacher support needed to be high, but that kids were "digital natives" and were highly motivated to use technology. They are looking to embed information literacy into their next project on climate change, to get children to start asking questions. Sheila also described a new project that they are undertaking with Glasgow Caledonian at LT Scotland, to look at children in disadvantaged areas and build an ICT/information skills matrix.

Sheila also highlighted interoperability as being extremely important and noted that the JISC was funding several projects that were highly relevant to librarians, such as those in the digital repositories strand. She concluded with some of the challenges she saw: the need for a shared vocabulary between teachers and librarians, the need to get the message out and recognise the skills of the library sector. She ended by asking "Do we really understand what information literacy is?"

Parallel sessions
Empowering the learner against all the odds
Susie Andretta, London Metropolitan University.
Susie described her attempts to transform her students into self-directed learners and the challenges she faced at LMU, where they believed attendance at lectures should be compulsory. She described the three pillars supporting information literacy as: making students responsible for their learning, a campus wide approach with IL integrated into the teaching and learning strategy and the shifting role of educators to facilitators for learning.

Two for the price of one: collaborative delivery of information and Blackboard skills to distance learners
Moria Bent and Sophie Brettell, University of Newcastle.
Moria described the development of a course taught jointly by Newcastle and Thailand, for Thai students, and how the library staff in Thailand were supported using a Blackboard course to help develop their teaching skills. She also talked of the benefits of working in a cross functional team (Sophie is a learning technologist, Moira is a librarian).

Search interfaces for dummies?
Sally Rumsey, LSE.
Sally looked at the trend for "dumbing down" search tools and questioned whether this now means we don't need experts to help us search. She looked at basic and advanced search functions in major search engines, and functions such as personalisation and federated searching. She also argued that the Semantic Web may solve many problems, but asked, "Will we ever get there?"

Engaging children with multimedia
Andrew Lewis, Windsor and Maidenhead Public Libraries.
Andrew certainly engaged his audience with the various multimedia educational games that have been developed to encourage children to use the computers in the public library. The games were educational, but fun for children, and encouraged the adults to change their perspective about libraries and librarians. More information is available at http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/libraries/.

Breaking down information barriers – the university libraries role in Widening Participation
Judith Stewart, University of West of England.
Judith described a fascinating project at UWE to encourage children from WP backgrounds to attend university and the role of the library in challenging their perceptions about higher education and libraries more generally. As well as bringing children into school's she also goes out into schools to talk to the kids and works with the school librarians.

Connecting the educational silos: the potential for the information literacy framework
Alan Bundy. University of South Australia.
Alan pointed out that the UK is somewhat behind the US and Australia in terms of information literacy as the first Australian conference on IL was 12 years ago. However, he felt the conference was a catalyst for developments in the UK. He argued that education is never neutral, it domesticates or liberates, and we want education to inspire minds and to get people to question. Alan sees Information Literacy as an issue for everyone, but argues that librarians need to take it up, and be daring. Information can be transformational, and we need an information literacy strategy not just an ICT strategy. Alan raised the idea of establishing an International Institute for Information Literacy and felt the UK would be an ideal place to establish this organisation. He issued a real challenge to librarians, to be daring and to recognise they have a real contribution to make in contributing to educational change.

Conceptions of pedagogy for information literacy in two disciplines, English and Marketing
Sheila Webber. University of Sheffield.

Sheila discussed a recent project funded by the AHRB which examined the conceptions held by academics about information literacy, how they actually teach it, and whether there are disciplinary differences. She used a research method called "phenomenology" which looks at different ways people experience a phenomena. Much of the data were collected through interviews with academic staff. They are finding that there are disciplinary differences, and as part of the ongoing data analysis will be categorising academic staff and providing different approaches for different types of staff. She warned us to beware of false assumptions when asking if our academic staff are information literate.

Closing Session
LILAC ended on a highly positive note. There were many ideas submitted to the closing plenary about how we can take forward information literacy and how we engage with librarians in other sectors. The organising committee were well aware that many of the delegates had come from the Higher Education sector and there was a real need to bring in delegates from other sectors as information literacy is an important issue for us all. There was also a need to develop an information literacy strategy that would cross all the sectors. How can we build appropriate information literacy programmes in higher education without knowing what is happening in schools, further education and the public sector? There was also a real feeling that the UK should work hard to establish an International Institute for Information Literacy.

The University of Leeds have provisionally offered to host LILAC 2006 and the Organising Committee will be meeting shortly to review the event and study the feedback in order to inform

their planning for next year. We hope to see many more people at LILAC 2006!

Outguessing yourself!

Chris Armstrong, Information Automation Limited

As librarians and information people, I suppose that we are steeped in the organizing knowledge and managing information tradition, and it is second nature to catalogue, file and store. When we come across a new resource or an article that we may want to read, or read again, later we store it away – either physically or virtually.

Of course, we develop strategies for coping with the information overload that we call down on ourselves. We organize bookmarks into groups or folders and we do the same with emails; we use Reference Manager or Procite, … and, increasingly a whole gallery of new tools like Furl, which stores web pages in an online archive, and Spurl, which stores bookmarks online so that we may use them from any PC at which we happen to find ourselves. Both Furl and Spurl also facilitate the sharing of resources.

In the last issue of *eLucidate*, Mary Ellen Bates (http://www.ukeig.org.uk/content/newsletter/elucidate/eLucidate2-1.pdf) wrote about Furl (http://www.furl.net/index.jsp). I first used Furl about six months ago … and just like a child with a new toy, I 'furled' web pages at every opportunity for the first few weeks and then – so that I could find them again, without trouble, when I needed them – organized them into folders too. This, of course, as some sort of magic addition to my normal, and quite extensive set of bookmarks. You have probably guessed that I never returned to most of them again! Since then I have discovered Spurl

(http://www.spurl.net/), del.icio.us (http://del.icio.us/), de.lirio.us (http://de.lirio.us/rubric), Connotea (http://www.connotea.org/) and others. Some, like Connotea, are targeted at the "scholarly user".

Essentially, these tools allow users to store bookmarks online, share them with the world at large or mark them as private, flag them as 'Explicit' (Spurl), categorise them (place them in folders) and/or tag them with a few keywords – both of the latter so as to enable easy retrieval and the grouping together of similar items, and finally to use RSS to alert you to changes or new material in the same category that has been added by some unknown user. A sort of focused serendipitous retrieval!

These new tools have themselves been categorised! But, in keeping with their essentially uncontrolled nature, no single name has emerged. At the Information Architecture Summit in March 2005, the panelists in the Sorting Out Social Classification session highlighted a number of terms beside 'social classification': folksonomies or folk classification, ethnoclassification, and distributed indexing were all suggested. The central theme being the creation of a central resource by its users.

To me, there seems to be a couple of small troubles with these tools. These are more in the nature of 'worries' than major failings, but they are worth discussing, nevertheless. Despite its apparent derivation, folksonomies are not very closely linked to taxonomies – there is, at present, no control over the tags that users add. I may use 'publishing' while you use 'publishers' and someone else uses 'publisher' – your choice may be for 'keywords' while others use 'descriptors' or 'controlled vocabularies' – I may use IA or CM where others go for 'information