Press Releases & News

2009 Wheatley Medal Announcement

12 September 2009: At the annual dinner of the Society of Indexers conference at York University, SI President Professor John Sutherland presented the Wheatley Medal for an outstanding index to Rudy Hirschmann, representing the members of the Einstein Papers Project, for the indexes in volume 11 of *The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein* (edited by A J. Kox et al., Princeton University Press, 2009).

The Wheatley panel this year had the pleasure of judging a selection of books which covered a wide range of topics, and the winning books reflect this breadth of subjects. All three were exceptionally good, with the competition between the highly commended index and the winner of the Wheatley Medal being extremely close. They are both works of exceptional scholarship, dealing with complex topics and large corpuses of knowledge.

The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein is published in 11 volumes, and the indexes are extremely comprehensive for such a massive work, exhibiting a high quality of indexing. 'For a team indexing project, the consistency of the indexing is excellent', said the chair of the judges, Jill Halliday. 'The volumes are multidisciplinary, calling on a wide knowledge of subject matter, all of which was handled with considerable skill. The editorial team is to be congratulated on producing outstanding indexes to such a complex work.'

Barbara Hird was highly commended for her index to *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c.500—1942* (edited by Jonathan Shepard, Cambridge University Press, 2009), The judges considered this index to be a work of real labour to an extensive text. 'For a complex period of history, the level of detail in the index is outstanding,' said Jill Halliday, 'and the organization of information is excellent.'

Jan Ross was commended for her index to *Principles and Practice of Pediatric Infectious Disease* (edited by Sarah Long *et al.,* W. B. Saunders, 2009). The judges found this index to be full, thorough and comprehensive. 'It is a substantial index,' said Jill Halliday, 'and, for the large size of the text, it's easy to use.'

The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein is one of the most ambitious publishing ventures in the documentation of the history of science. Selected from among more than 40,000 documents contained in the personal collection of Albert Einstein (1879–1955), and an additional 30,000 Einstein and Einstein-related documents discovered by the editors since the

1980s, *The Collected Papers* provides the first complete picture of a massive written legacy that ranges from Einstein's first work on the special and general theories of relativity and the origins of quantum theory to expressions of his profound concern with civil liberties, international reconciliation and scientific collaboration, education, pacifism, and disarmament.

The Cumulative Index published in volume 11 of the series was compiled by the entire editorial team, located at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, CA. Its lead authors were: Dr A. J. Kox (editor and professor of history of science at the University of Amsterdam); Dr Rudy Hirschmann (IT Manager, software engineer and literary historian), Dr Tilman Sauer (editor, historian of science, and lecturer at Caltech and the University of Bern), and Dr Diana K. Buchwald (general editor and professor of history at Caltech).

Launch of InChI Trust

21 July 2009: The InChI Trust, a not-for-profit organisation to expand and develop the InChI Open Source chemical structure representation algorithm, is formally launched this week. Originally developed by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), the IUPAC International Chemical Identifier. (InChI) is an alpha-numeric character string generated by an algorithm. The InChI was developed as a new, non-proprietary, international standard to represent chemical structures.

The Trust aims to develop and improve on the current InChI standard, further enabling the interlinking of chemistry and chemical structures on the Web. The connection with IUPAC is maintained through IUPAC's InChI Subcommittee.

The InChI algorithm turns chemical structures into machine-readable strings of information. InChIs are unique to the compound they describe and can encode absolute stereochemistry. Machine-readable, the InChI allows chemistry and chemical structures to be navigable and discoverable. A simple analogy is that InChI is the bar-code for chemistry and chemical structures. The InChI format and algorithm are non-proprietary and the software is open source, with ongoing development done by the community.

"The goal of the InChI Trust", says Project Director Stephen Heller "is to continue to develop the InChI and InChIKey, the condensed machine-searchable version, as a tool to enable widescale linking of chemical information."

The InChI Trust was formally incorporated in the UK in May 2009, and now has six charter members: The Royal Society of Chemistry, Nature Publishing Group, FIZ-Chemie Berlin,

Symyx Technologies, Taylor & Francis and OpenEye. Further organizations and publishers are in the process of joining the InChI Trust.

"Nature Publishing Group is delighted to be a charter member of the InChI Trust", says Jason Wilde, Publisher for the Physical Sciences, Nature Publishing Group."We view the ongoing maintenance of the InChI algorithm, and the resulting adoption of InChI, as important for the development of chemistry communication. The interlinking that the InChI offers between journal content and databases ensures that chemistry is the first truly web-enabled scientific discipline."

Since the introduction of the InChI in 2005, there has been widespread take-up of InChI standards by public databases and journals. Today, there are more than 100 million InChIs in scientific literature and products. These include the NIST WebBook and mass spectral databases, the NIH/NCBI PubChem database, the NIH/NCI database, the EBI chemistry database, ChemSpider, Symyx Draw and many others.

The initiative serves chemists, publishers, chemical software companies, chemical structure drawing vendors, librarians, and intermediaries by creating an international standard to represent defined chemical structures.

Open educational resources programme launches

Today June 24, 2009 the Higher Education Academy and JISC launch its Open Educational Resources programme, helping to drive open innovation across the UK.

This week’s announcement by David Lammy (Minister for Higher Education and IPR) to create an online innovation fund and the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP’s celebration of the Open University show the importance of accessing and opening up digital education resources.

Open Educational Resources (OER), funded by HEFCE and run by the Academy and JISC, aims to make a wide range of learning resources created by academics freely available, easily discovered and routinely re-used by both educators and learners. OER could include full courses, course materials, complete modules, notes, videos, assessments, tests, simulations, worked examples, software, and any other tools or materials or techniques used to support access to knowledge. These resources will be released under an intellectual property license that permits open use and adaptation.

Dr John Selby, Director of Education and Participation at HEFCE, said, “Significant investment has already been made in making educational resources widely available by digitising collections of materials and enabling people to reuse and adapt existing content to support teaching and learning. “This new initiative will test whether this can be done much more generally across higher education. It will give further evidence of the high quality of UK education and make it more widely accessible.”

There are three separate strands of projects. The subject area and individual strands of the programme will be overseen by the Academy. David Sadler, Higher Education Academy Director of Networks said, “A positive student experience depends on having access to resources. Students and academics will benefit from this move to make more content available.”

JISC is managing the institutional strand, and have overall responsibility for the management of the programme. Dr Malcolm Read, Executive Secretary at JISC said, “JISC believes in open access and opening up the UK’s resources. This is the first time that a project of this nature will have been undertaken on this scale, collaboratively across an entire national educational sector. Its success will enable researchers, academics and learners to benefit from world class learning resources.”

The programme will make the equivalent of 5,000 undergraduate modules of existing learning resources freely available online. Projects will be working towards being able to sustainably release a much larger pool of resources over a longer period.

The funded projects will run for 12 months and will end on 30 April 2010.

Find out more about the funded OER projects visit http://www.jisc.ac.uk/oer.

Digital lifeline for UK universities

Tue 23/06/2009: British universities will lose their leading international standing unless they become much more radical in their use of new technology, a JISC commissioned report says today.

British universities occupy four of the top ten world rankings and the UK is one of the top destinations for international students. But the “Edgeless University”, conducted by Demos on behalf of JISC, suggests that a slowness to adopt new models of learning will damage this competitive edge.

The research showed that the recession has put universities under intense pressure as threats to funding combine with increasing demand. A wave of applicants is expected to hit universities this summer as record numbers of unemployed young people seek to 'study out' the recession. The report says that online and social media could help universities meet these demands by reaching a greater number of students and improving the quality of research and teaching. Online and DIY learning can create 'edgeless universities' where information, skills and research are accessible far beyond the campus walls.

Malcolm Read OBE, Executive Secretary for JISC, which supported the research, said: 'The UK is a leading force in the delivery of higher education and its universities and colleges have been punching well above their weight for some time. Safeguarding this reputation means we have to fight harder to stay ahead of developments in online learning and social media, and embracing the Web 2.0 world.

'This is a great opportunity for UK universities and colleges to open up and make learning more accessible to students who would not traditionally stay on in education. 'Edgeless universities' can transform the way the UK delivers, shares and uses the wealth and quality of information its institutions own.'

The report also calls for universities to acknowledge the impact of the Internet by making academic research freely available online. Author of the report, Peter Bradwell, said: 'The Internet and social networks mean that universities are now just one part of the world of learning and research. This means we need their support and expertise more than ever. Just as the music industry may have found the answer to declining CD sales with Spotify, universities must embrace online knowledge sharing and stake a claim in the online market for information.'

The report makes a series of recommendations for opening up university education, including making all research accessible to the public. It says teaching should be placed on a more even footing with research in career progression and status and teaching which uses new technology rewarded.

Read the full report at www.jisc.ac.uk/edge09.

In from the Cold

8 June 2009: Access to over 50 million items held in trust by publicly funded agencies such as libraries, museums, archives and universities are being prevented from being available online due to current copyright laws.

'In from the Cold', a report by the Strategic Content Alliance and the Collections Trust, shows that millions of so-called 'orphan works' – photographs, recordings, texts and other ephemera from the last 100 years – risk becoming invisible because rights holders are not known or easy to trace. The report was commissioned to find the scale and impact of 'orphan works' on public service delivery.

The UK's rich primary resources are being 'warehoused' at public expense – with little or no prospect of them being delivered online, to the public without additional costs and/or risks being imposed on the public purse.

The report shows how the UK is in real danger of losing 20th-century materials due to the current copyright laws, the levels of resources needed to trace the rights for each orphan work and the potential lock down of access to these important works. Of the 13 million works represented in the on-line survey, it would take in the region of six million days to trace the rights holders, around 16,000 years.

Naomi Korn, Strategic Content Alliance's Intellectual Property consultant and author of the report said, "Many orphan works, like documentary photographs and sound recordings are of low commercial value but of high cultural and historic importance. The desire for a Digital Britain is not restricted to broadband connectivity alone. It requires us to minimise the overheads in terms of time, money and effort to unlock low commercial value but high education and cultural "orphan work" content for the benefit of the British people from the archives of all kinds that they fund.

"JISC and The Collections Trust are working with organisations across the public sector to create awareness of the issues, as well as toolkits to help people navigate the complex world around copyright, but there is a real need to engage effectively with the issues surrounding the potential for legislative change; enhancing professional skills and practice; and improving policy alignment in collaboration with the Creative Industries."

Nick Poole, CEO of The Collections Trust said, "The Culture sector has the potential to kick-start future economic and social welfare, but only if we can use resources at our disposal and

share them with the public. This report is an urgent call-to-arms for Government and policymakers alike to look again at current copyright law and make change happen before it is too late."

Over 500 organisations took part in the online survey to establish the impact of orphan works across the museums, archives, libraries and universities.

To view the report go to www.jisc.ac.uk/publications.