

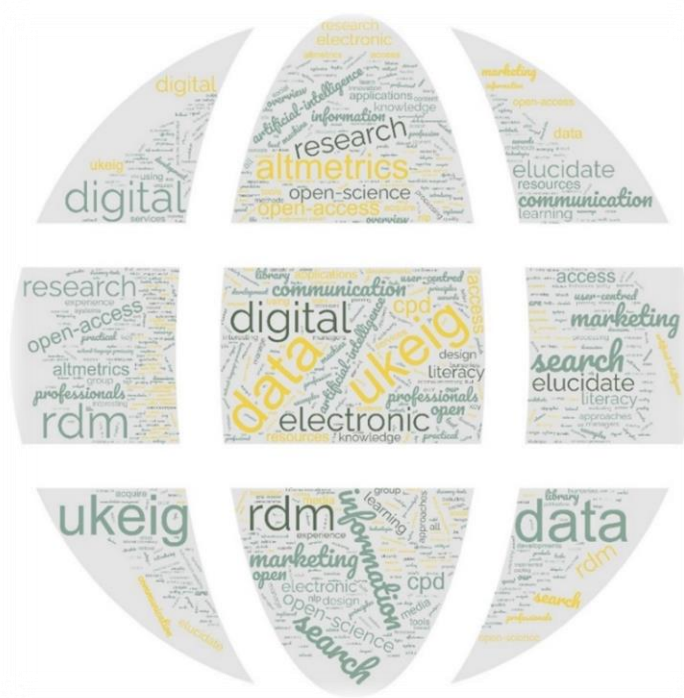
Editorial

Welcome to the UK e-information Group's open access journal eLucidate.

We're delighted to publish this eclectic issue after an extended hiatus. It embraces diverse topics including Information landscapes, technological ecosystems, enterprise discoverability, humanities open data conundrums, research marketing and communication, web search analysis for the public good and that elephant in the room ... artificial intelligence (AI).

UKeiG - formerly known as the UK Online User Group (UKOLUG) - was launched in 1978 as a special interest group of the Institute of Information Scientists (IIS) to satisfy the overwhelming interest in online search skills. It was instrumental in ensuring that the information community in the UK could take advantage of digital information services. UKOLUG's inaugural conference was held in York in 1984 and UKeiG continues to provide CPD courses, 'state of the art' networking events, bursaries, international awards, newsletters and reference guides sharing expertise, good practice and 'how to' advice.

UKeiG showcases and celebrates digital knowledge and expertise, ensuring that members from all sectors are savvy with R&D and innovations across the information industry. Core topics in our portfolio include digital literacy, effective information retrieval and search technologies, enterprise search, social media, research support, scholarly communication and publishing. Many of these topics are explored in this issue.



Our 2022 online CPD programme comprised nineteen three-hour courses and workshops for members, non-members and CILIP employer partners, and attracted over 550 delegates. Topics included: AI, natural language processing, search usability and research data management. The blooming paradigm of AI is driving an exciting new direction and agenda. Generative artificial intelligence and AI-assisted chatbots as disruptive technologies are omnipresent in the news, impacting on everything from digital task assistance to research, teaching, learning and education. The media hype and onslaught about AI text-generators like ChatGPT and the ability to produce high-quality essays or scholarly papers with minimal human intervention has been relentless, verging on hysterical. The frenzied debate touches on every aspect of the work of the library and information science community, with relevance to inaccurate, misleading 'fake news' and the critical appraisal of content validity, data quality and management, ethics, intellectual property, plagiarism and legal compliance. Online in the '70s, CD-ROM in the '80s and the World Wide Web in the '90s were perceived to pose existential threats to the profession. So, here we go again...

Are we staring disintermediation down the barrel of an AI gun?

In February 2023 [the Guardian](#) reported on the 'built-in bias', 'offensive' and 'badly wrong' answers of AI tools, including politically extreme, racist and sexist output. 'Generative AI is doing some extraordinary things, but it's still not remotely intelligent. It doesn't understand the outputs it's creating and it's not additive, in terms of insight or ideas.' Another [opinion piece](#) declared:

'ChatGPT is causing a panic now – but it'll soon be as mundane a tool as Excel.'

We delve into some of the repercussions of AI in this issue of eLucidate. Will it take your job? I'm inclined to agree with an AI pundit on BBC Radio 4 earlier this year who answered: 'Probably not, but someone who uses it better than you will.'

Open science and open access (OS/OA) as a disruptive technology is also an essential part of UKeiG's portfolio. UKeiG Chair David Ball has written and presented extensively on the emergence on OS/OA, Open Monographs, Open Data and Open Peer Review. He emphasises that this developing paradigm goes way beyond STEM subjects and impacts on social science, arts and humanities. 'The concept of Open Access to research outputs has been common currency for many years. The rapid growth of the Internet has made different publication models easily available. More recent thinking has expanded the concept of openness even further, to Open Science, which aims to transform science by making research more open, global, collaborative, creative and closer to society. All academic disciplines are embracing this approach. The shift is extremely important for the development and exploitation of research, and hence for the professionals who support it.'

In UKeIG's inaugural column in the March 2023 issue of CILIP's Information Professional magazine, David writes about open access monographs, and we share his insights.

In January 2023 Conrad Duncan reported on an [Imperial College London-led study](#) that 'loyalty card data on over-the-counter medicine purchases could help spot ovarian cancer cases earlier.' Apparently 'almost three hundred women found that pain and indigestion medication purchases were higher in women who were subsequently diagnosed with ovarian cancer, compared to women who did not have ovarian cancer. This change in purchases could be seen eight months before diagnosis.' Professor Ingemar J. Cox presented UKeIG's sixth annual Tony Kent Strix Award memorial lecture in late 2020 - 'Analysing Web searches for public good: inferring the health of populations and individuals.' He expounded the benefits of information retrieval research for epidemiological purposes and we're showcasing some key aspects of this fascinating topic in this issue.

During the July 2021 UKeIG members' event, delegates were presented with the outcome a major research project, a 'private passion' and 'labour of love' that has attempted to map and preserve the rich history of the Institute of Information Scientists. Past IIS Presidents Dr Sandra Ward and Martin White unveiled the fruits of a significant collaborative effort - '[Evolution and impact: a history of the Institute of Information Scientists 1958 – 2002](#)' - set against the backdrop of two World Wars and the explosive increase in scientific research and scholarly publications.

The IIS was founded in 1958 and eventually merged with the Library Association to form CILIP in 2002. Somewhere along the way the Institute archives went astray. There was significant concern that the professional collective that had established information science as both a profession and academic discipline in the UK 'risked going unacknowledged in the future.' While the British Library holds copies of IIS journals, conference proceedings and books, the Covid lockdown prevented access to these collections, so colleagues with a shared history of participation in the IIS 'unearthed our personal archives of Inform newsletters, The Information Scientist, the Journal of Information Science, academic papers, books, reports, conference proceedings and memories.' Multiple iterations of drafts were circulated for accuracy. The core of their research was the compilation of a detailed chronology that articulated a roadmap of key dates and achievements.

The IIS was 'dynamic' and 'punched well above its weight.' It:

- Drove the formation and development of the information profession
- Pioneered the development of information science education and training
- Stimulated research and development
- Set demanding standards for the qualification of members and academic courses
- Fostered networks that created a cross-UK information community
- Organised impressive conferences, a publications programme, seminars and courses

- Delivered a forward-looking agenda which flexed as its operating environment changed
- Ensured IIS action to influence critical external developments
- Gave information scientists a professional identity.

The late [Jason Farradane](#) pioneered the creation of the IIS, developing the professional scope, objectives and governance structure of the Institute and coining the term 'information scientist.' He first made an impact on the library and information science community with a paper on the 'scientific approach to documentation' presented at a Royal Society Scientific Information Conference in 1948. He was instrumental in establishing the first academic information science courses in 1963 at the precursor to City University, London, where he became Director of the Centre for Information Science in 1966. UKeIG's award in his honour still exists today and is given in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the library and information profession.

The 2020 winner was Thomas D. Wilson (Professor Emeritus, University of Sheffield, UK), primarily for his pioneering work in open access through the foundation and editing of the international electronic journal Information Research.

Professor Wilson was 'honoured and delighted,' to receive the award. 'I occasionally met Jason Farradane at conferences. I was teaching indexing at the time, so we had common interests to discuss. Having known the man makes receiving the award even more special.'

He opened UKeIG's seventh annual Strix Memorial lecture in December 2021 with a celebratory presentation - 'Managing information to serve the information user.' It explores the essential link and convergence between information management and information behaviour, asking the fundamental question: how can we manage information effectively if we don't know how people seek and use information?



The library and information science community has its share of inspirational research pioneers building a corpus of knowledge to influence and construct the future. Intuitive search interface design, the psychology and mechanics of information retrieval and

information seeking behaviour are key development priorities. In December 2021, Ian Ruthven, Professor of Information Seeking and Retrieval at the Department of Computer and Information Sciences, University of Strathclyde, presented the seventh annual Strix Memorial Lecture entitled: 'Google's what you use when Alexa doesn't know the answer, Uncle Ian.' It was inspired by an innocent comment made by his young niece.



People create their own models of how information works for them. Information seeking behaviour is social and shaped by life, so there are infinite iterations of queries and limitless perceived solutions to perceived problems.

We explore Ian's work and his observation that there is so much potential to progress research by placing information seeking and retrieval within the broader societal and cultural framework of what people or populations want from or do with information.

I hope that this issue of eLucidate leaves you with an abundance of thoughts to mull over. Please share your opinions and feedback and join us in discussions on social media. You can find us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) and also visit the [UKeiG](#) webpage for regular news and updates. Our JiscMail discussion list – [LIS-UKEIG](#) – is an invaluable networking forum and, if you want to receive our monthly e-newsletter, you can also register for free UKeiG special interest group membership via the CILIP web pages.

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Postscript

The response to the 2022 call for nominations for the Tony Kent Strix Award was excellent, due to a comprehensive publicity campaign that reached out to an international audience. UKeiG was pleased to announce that the joint winners, in recognition of their outstanding practical innovation or achievement in the field of information retrieval were:

- Iadh Ounis, Professor of Information Retrieval, School of Computing Science, University of Glasgow, and
- Dr. Ryan White, General Manager and Partner Research Director at Microsoft Research.

The judging panel congratulated them on their prolific and significant contributions to information retrieval research and development on multiple fronts, most notably the search experience. Their high impact publication records and scholarly contributions are peerless and international support for their nominations was overwhelming across the information retrieval community. They presented at the 8th Tony Kent Strix Annual Memorial Lecture on February 23rd, 2023, and will be featured in the next issue of eLucidate.

A date for your diary - Thursday June 29th, 2023 - 1 pm - 4 pm

UKeiG plans to launch a call for nominations for the 2023 Tony Kent Strix and Jason Farradane Awards at its June 29th, 2023, Zoom members' forum. There will also be a special announcement about a third international award.

A key theme of this year's forum will be the changing research communication landscape. Andy Tattersall, Information Specialist at The School of Health and Related Research (SchARR) at The University of Sheffield, and an author of one of this issue's articles, asks: 'Could Artificial Intelligence help us communicate research better?' Another theme of the afternoon will be arising publishing platforms and long form open access publications. A full programme and the opportunity to book online will follow shortly. Non-members are also encouraged to attend. There will be a short AGM and overview of the Group's business activity over last year.

May 2023