

Employing one or more of the methods above provides some opportunity to begin pulling together the referencing side of research and the actual research process itself.

### **Legal issues and reference software**

Linking to full text and capturing references into this sort of software needs to be done with some caution. Reference software itself is promoted as storing and maintaining bibliographic information for which there is no copyright attached. Where care needs to be taken is when additional data is added such as abstracts or full text.

So here are a few areas to give some consideration to when implementing such software:

Review what the software is to be used for based on the contract for the software licence

- Does the licence allow references to be distributed outside of the organisation to where research groups are based? Or it is for in-house use only?
- Are you using the software to provide a service, for example, such as Current Awareness? You may find you are liable for any services provided if your licence covers only personal use of the software
- Review the licences for the subscription databases by checking the terms of conditions of use. Single electronic copies of data searches can often be held in semi-permanent storage for personal use on magnetic storage medium. But be careful : some licences determine how many records you can store personally – say 5000 or can share only within one organisation. Read the small print if you are to promote this software and your database collections

Copyright is infringed by an form of copying, electronic storage, if unlicensed. So, for example, you cannot distribute electronic copies of data searches as this would infringe copyright. Abstracts, articles and chapters enjoy copyright and several copyrights may co-exist.

It is useful to be clear if users frequently search and download from the same databases time after time. So familiarise yourself with terms of use and the database licences signed. Make your users aware of the issue by promoting this side of the research coin. Use the websites to ensure users can use the software with confidence or are aware of any limitations – particularly if they wish to load this type of data on the web for purposes such as promoting their research. Please read any contract you sign carefully to ensure that you are able to use the

software you require and learn the basics of relevant copyright legislation. If in doubt, check with your legal department.

In the next issue I will consider new products on the market which are of use for managing references.

## **Public Sector News**

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### **Introductions**

This column is now brought to you by ALGIS! ALGIS represents information professionals working in local government and most of our members operate information services either in local authority departments or corporately. A few work in central government and a few in the private sector. We are affiliated to the Local Authority Research and Intelligence Association which aims to promote research within local government.

### **What is happening in the public sector?**

In local and central government at present the requirements to meet the e-governments targets of 2005 and the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act from January 1st 2005 are probably highest on the agenda.

### **E-government**

In June the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) issued a snappily titled paper on e-government: Defining e-government outcomes for 2005 to support the delivery of priority services and national strategy transformation agenda for local authorities in England. It can be found at [www.localgov.gov.uk/page.cfm?pageID=186&Language=eng](http://www.localgov.gov.uk/page.cfm?pageID=186&Language=eng) . This document sets out the priorities for delivering e-government in local authorities and identifies 'required', 'good' and 'excellent' outcomes. 'Required' outcomes must be in place by the end of 2005, 'good' by 1 April 2006 and 'excellent' outcomes will be agreed between the authority and ODPM around 'promoting awareness and take-up of e services.'

The head of the new e-Government Unit, which has replaced the Office of the e-Envoy, begins his new job in September. Ian Whatmore is at present UK managing director of Accenture and will report to

Douglas Alexander in the Cabinet Office. The emphasis of the new unit has shifted from putting services online to 'transforming delivery and improving operational efficiency.' The unit will work with the Office of Government Commerce to monitor the finance of IT projects and will lead on IT strategy across government. It is also responsible for DirectGov which replaced UKOnline earlier this year.

Plans have been announced to merge the Government Category List (GCL) with the Local Government Category List (LGCL) and the seamlessUK thesaurus developed as part of the Essex County Council community information project. These three have been developed to try to categorise government and local government information. A project funded by the new Local e-Government Standards Body will attempt to bring the three together and the work will be carried out by independent taxonomy expert Stella Dextre Clarke. A consultation exercise is expected to be announced. For more information on these and other standards visit [www.govtalk.gov.uk](http://www.govtalk.gov.uk)

### Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoI) will be fully implemented on 1st January 2005. (Go to [www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm) for a copy of the Act.) From that date anyone can ask one of over 100,000 public bodies for information they hold. The Act identifies a number of exemptions but as a general rule information is presumed to be available unless an exemption applies. The really scary bit is that we will have just 20 working days to confirm whether or not we hold the information and to provide it. Clarifying the request and awaiting payment if a charge is made will stop or rather the pause the clock. On the subject of fees for supplying information, these may be charged but as yet the scales have not been agreed. The Information Commissioner's web site at the time of writing predicts that they will be agreed during the summer.

What makes preparation difficult is not knowing what the scale of the demand will be. Horror stories from other countries who already have freedom of information legislation abound but the UK Act does make provision for dealing with vexatious and repetitive requests so this should limit abuse of the legislation. In preparation for the act all public bodies were required to develop a Publication Scheme which identified classes of information which the organisation was committed to 'publishing'. If an enquirer asks for information which is already made available through a publication scheme then the responsibility under the FoI Act is fulfilled by simply directing them to the scheme. These schemes were submitted to the Information Commissioner for

approval and must be made available on the organisation's web site. The scheme for Warwickshire County Council, for instance, is a link on our home page at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk).

The implications for government and local government records management and information management could be huge especially as the legislation is wholly retrospective. Many of us, if my own authority is anything to go by, are racing to get our house in order. Another aspect that will be a challenge to many organisations is that we must respond on behalf of the whole authority and not just one division or department. In preparation for this organisations are developing information asset registers to identify what information resources they hold. If nothing else the legislation should promote the use of good information management procedures. There is lots of training on offer but ALGIS will be running a very practical seminar on Freedom of Information on 14th October 2004 at The Adlephi, the offices of the Department of Work and Pensions in John Adam Street. More information on our web site. [www.algis.org.uk](http://www.algis.org.uk)

### People's Network

A report from the MLA (Museums and Libraries Archives) shows some encouraging results from the introduction of the People's Network in public libraries, especially in the way it is tackling social exclusion issues. The People's Network: moving forward Peter Brophy MLA April 2004.

### Official Publishing

The published output of government is huge and the debate around web only publishing raises temperatures at times. Should information only be made available on the web? Is it being archived? Can it be found and accessed in 10 years time? SCOOP is the Standing Committee on Official Publishing and is part of the Information Services Group of CILIP.

Its aims are described as: 'to improve the access to, and availability of, UK official publications; to identify problems in the provision of access to UK official publications, in particular their bibliographic control and distribution; to make proposals for possible solutions to problems in the provision of access to UK official publications; to provide a mechanism for the exchange of views on matters of common interest to the library and information community concerning UK official publications; to provide a forum with The Stationery Office (TSO) for the constructive discussion of services provided by TSO for the library and information community; to take the necessary steps to keep the library and information profession informed of their deliberations.'

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Any concerns you have about the electronic delivery of official publishing can be discussed at this group. It provides a valuable forum for debating these issues and staff from The Stationery Office, HMSO, The House of Commons Library, government libraries and the British Library attend. I represent ALGIS there and am happy to take any comments or concerns you may have on official publishing to the group. The next meeting is on the 8th September 2004 so just e mail before then.