eLucidate

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Web 2.0

Phil Bradley

A chat about chat rooms

Everyone knows about chat rooms – but how to make the best use of them?

For my column this month I have decided to focus on the subject of chat rooms. There are a number of reasons for this; firstly, chat rooms have been around for a very long time – I started using them in the late 1980s. Secondly, they are very easy to setup and use. Third, they can be a very useful way of having a quick conversation if you are in a situation where you're unable to use the telephone. Finally, for reasons which are not entirely clear to me, people do seem to have something of a problem using them.

What types of chat room are available?

There are a variety of different types of chat room available, and one of the earliest and indeed one of the most long-lived are those chat rooms provided by IRC – Internet Relay Chat. This is a system in which people can set up a room and invite other people into it for either a short period of time or in some cases for many hours. Other chat rooms can be created by simply typing in a URL, used for a few moments and then discarded. While most chat rooms allow many people to talk to many people, it is possible to set up a chat room which is really akin to an instant messaging service such as MSN live messenger. These also have their place within this category.

As well as types of chat room, they may well provide you with different levels of functionality. Some of them can simply be used by entering the text that you want to "say" and pressing enter. Your comment is then seen by everybody else in the room. Other chat rooms however are rather more sophisticated, as they will allow you to have general chatter: you may choose to have an individual discussion with one person who is in the room although the actual conversation itself is a "whisper" that only you and the other individual can see. If you are the moderator of a chat room you can choose who is allowed to come into it, and in some instances you can also kick people out of the room if they misbehave or say anything that is socially unacceptable or you can even ban them so that they are unable to come back into

the room at all. Some chat facilities also allow users to chat using different coloured type, thus making it easier to identify. One or two will also allow you to do actions such as "Phil laughs and smiles" rather than simply saying "I'm laughing and smiling".

When you first use a chat room it can be quite intimidating, certainly if it is a room that has been around for some time as the participants will in most cases know each other and will have a shared background of common history or language. However, most chat rooms are very friendly places and they are very welcoming to people who are experiencing them for the first time. One of the most daunting things that you may experience is the speed of conversations, particularly in rooms that have a large number of people, as they will all be discussing or typing things at the same time. Because their contributions are only available in a linear fashion, you may well discover that you get mixed-up conversations that relate to something that was said but has since scrolled off the screen. If you are new to chat rooms, you may find the best thing to do is simply to say hello, explain that you're new to all this, and then sit quietly and watch until you feel confident enough to get involved yourself. As you become more confident you can start to interject comments here and there.

What can you use chat rooms for?

Before looking at some of the actual resources themselves how can you use chat rooms? I suspect that there are as many ways to use chat rooms as there are people who wish to use them. You may find that one good use for chat rooms is to gather together a small number of individuals, perhaps four or five, to talk through a particular subject rather than continually e-mailing each other about it. If your colleagues are spread throughout the country you may find this is an approach that you could use to bring everyone together for a quick conference discussion. You could use a chat room as a way of guiding people around a particular subject area or number of websites. If you are a school or academic librarian, you could perhaps set up a Friday afternoon homework club where students and staff could discuss a particular subject in a more relaxed environment. Alternatively a chat room could be used within a classroom if you wished to discuss a sensitive subject such as sex education. You could also use a chat room as a way of providing access to your expertise for individuals who are unable to get to the library or information centre. A chat room also provides a certain level of social interaction, so while the participants may not be discussing anything of professional interest they can nonetheless start to build bridges and relationships with each other.

Some available chat room tools

My preferred chat room resource is Chatzy at http://www.chatzy.com, since you can create a room without a need to register in advance, you can give the URL it creates to any of your contacts and they can simply log straight into the room. As the moderator for the room, you have a large number of options available to you, and finally the instructions are easy to read and follow.

You may wish to also explore the functionality provided by Tinychat (http://www.tinychat.com) as this not only supports text chat but if you feel brave you can use it with your webcam and/or a microphone. The chat room can easily be advertised on Twitter, so it's a quick and easy resource that you can use to get a number of colleagues together at short notice. Because of the overhead that's required for broadband access to video and audio, however, I would not suggest using this resource if you wish to have that kind of interactive chat with more than about four people. Another resource that you may wish to consider making use of is Meebo at http://www.meebo.com and the advantage that this particular resource provides you with is the ability to type in a URL or the address of a YouTube video which is then available in a frame in the chat room itself. Consequently this would be a really good tool to use if you wanted to provide a quick and dirty overview of a particular subject, or simply provide a guiding resource to a small number of websites that you wanted to display and then chat about. You could try using Chatterous at http://www.chatterous.com/, which allows you to embed chat on your site, and you can also use Instant Messenger e-mail and phone with it as well. Alternatively, explore Neat Chat at http://www.neatchat.com/, which does not require any signup or software installations; you simply use a Web browser to communicate. Yet another choice is to point your browser to Webbychat at http://www.webbychat.com/index.php which has both free and commercial versions available.

Of course you may not wish to chat with a lot of people in one go, but have no fear since there are plenty of other resources that will allow you to chat one to one. You could for example try Plugoo at http://www.plugoo.com which you can install on your own website or weblog and link to your own Instant Messenger client such as Windows Messenger, and if somebody wants to chat to you, their message, which they have typed on your site or blog, will appear as if by magic in your Instant Messenger. This is in fact the resource I use on my own website, so if you fancy trying it you are most welcome to do so. If you visit my website at http://www.philb.com, simply scroll down the page until you see the checkbox and if the little green light is on that means that I am available. The most common opening lines that I get are "hello", to which I respond, and the next line I get back, almost invariably, is "Are you a computer?". I of course say that I am a human being but when the response to that is "yes well a computer would say that, wouldn't it" it's a little difficult to know how best to proceed. Another similar resource is Gabbly chat at http://gabbly.com/, another resource that you can install on your own website. However, you can also use Gabbly to guide somebody around the Internet since you can just add gabbly.com/ to the front of any URL, and the resource will get the Web page bringing back and displayed on the screen, and will allow you to continue your chat.

Summary

That is just a small selection of chat room resources that you may wish to explore; there are however plenty of others available. As with so many Web 2 resources, it is much less about the tool and much more about the activity. I would certainly encourage you all to have a go at chatting, because as well as being a fun and rewarding way to communicate, it has the added advantage of speed and simplicity.

Online

Joy Cadwallader, Aberystwyth University (Aberystwyth Online User Group)

Please send your submissions for the next edition to jrc@aber.ac.uk.

Should we be archiving computer games? More on open access; and a BBC archive showing changing attitudes to homosexuality

BBC Archive

http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/gay_rights/

The BBC have opened a new collection of TV and radio broadcasts charting, "the changing in attitudes to homosexuality in the last 50 years". Items include an episode of the Radio 3 programme "Third Ear" about Section 28 in 1988 with actor Ian McKellen and newspaper editor Peregrine Worsthorne taking opposite sides in the debate, and footage of the first same-sex civil partnership taking place in Belfast in 2005.

British Library

From the *Independent* newspaper: http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/british-library-hints-at-video-game-archiving-plan-2125428.htm

In an article in the *Independent*, Paul Wheatley, a digital preservation specialist at the British Library, talked about the possibility of involving the British Library in the preservation of the 30-year UK videogame industry, in response to fears that games and related documents are being lost. He said the British Library "is keen to lend support, building on work already done by an initiative called the National Videogame Archive". The NVA (http://www.nationalvideogamearchive.org) is located at the National Media Museum, and is a joint project with Nottingham Trent University, celebrating videogame culture and preserving its " history for researchers, developers, game fans and the public".

Electronic Theses Online

http://ethos.bl.uk/

EThOS (Electronic Theses Online) has been enhanced by 400 UK doctoral theses on political, cultural and social aspects of the Middle East, Islamic studies and related themes, via a collaboration between the Centre for Research Libraries (CRL), a consortium of over 250 US and Canadian research libraries, and the British Library. EThOS, administered by the British Library and based at their Boston Spa site, gathers e-theses from open-access institutional repositories and digitises theses from partner universities.

European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI)

http://www.ehri-project.eu/

Launched on November 16th 2010, the EHRI is a major four-year project to "support the European Holocaust research community by giving them integrated online access to dispersed (archival) resources relating to the Holocaust all over Europe and Israel, and by encouraging collaborative research in multi-national research teams". The project has received 7 million Euros of EU funding and has 20 project partners in 13 countries, including the Wiener Library Institute of Contemporary History in London, and King's College London. Researchers will be cataloguing resources from diverse regional centres, discovering sources dispersed through migration following World War II, and translating from a range of source languages.

European Library

http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/exhibition-reading-europe/about.html

The European Library have launched a new online exhibition of over a 1000 rare, digitised books from 23 European countries called *Reading Europe: European culture through the book. Site visitors can browse by country, subject, language and timeline. The UK edition includes early copies of Lorna Doone and Castle Rackrent, and my random dip into the Netherlands found a wonderful illuminated version of The (legend of) Beatrice from 1374.*

Taylor and Francis

(JISC press release:
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/stories/2010/10/podcast115grahamwalton.aspx)

The first open-access issue of the *New Review of Academic Librarianship* has been published by Taylor and Francis in collaboration with JISC. The special issue includes papers on a business model for, and librarian attitudes to, open-access textbooks, how the research life cycle is changing libraries and the differences between different disciplines' understanding of open access. It is guest-edited by Hazel Woodward who is director of Cranfield University Press and University Librarian.

World Bank

http://wdronline.worldbank.org

The World Bank has launched a new online collection of all their development reports since 1978, providing data on key global trends, for example. in economic growth, international trade, agriculture and the environment. Site visitors can register for an free individual account for a range of bookmarking, sharing and alerting tools. The World Bank Data tab offers browsing by country (over 200), comparison indicators (over 1,200) including numbers of Internet and mobile phone users, and topic areas including education and aid effectiveness.

UK Open Access Implementation Group

(JISC press release: http://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/stories/2010/10/openaccess.aspx)

Open Access Week (October 18th-24th 2010) saw the announcement of the UK Open Access Implementation Group. JISC have been asked to produce a project plan for the group, which aims to "coordinate evidence, policies, systems, advice and guidance, to make open access an easy choice for authors and one that benefits all universities". Driving this new initiative are persisting fears in some sectors of the academic and research communities about giving free access to their research output. The group consists of Edinburgh and Salford universities, UUK, RLUK, SCONUL, JISC, the UK Research Councils, Wellcome Trust, the Association of Research Managers and Administrators UK, and the Public Library of Science.

Intranets

Martin White, Intranet Focus Ltd (martin.white@intranetfocus.com)

Reviews of new intranet publications

Martin White reports on the latest thinking on intranets from around the world, including reviews of a conference in Washington, some publications, and a new shared-content intranet website

Global Intranet Trends Report 2011

http://www.global-intranet-trends.com

In the same way that we cannot remember how we coped without a mobile phone and Internet access, it is difficult to remember how we judged intranet development progress before Jane McConnell launched the Global Intranet Trends Report, in 2006. Intranet managers and consultants alike listened to presentations at conferences about what were then regarded as exceptional intranets, and then extrapolated the comments made to the nth degree to justify investment or a consulting contract. Just as year-on-year, intranets are becoming more mature, so this report has grown in credibility and value.

This year the number of respondents reached 440, almost double the previous year. The easy route to publishing the responses would be to keep to the same tables every year and just update them. The value of this report is that it reflects the insights of a highly experienced and analytic intranet consultant. The result is that, although many of the core tables remain the same, the survey questions probe new and important issues each year, especially in the areas of social media and governance.

There have been two major changes to the report this year. First, it sets out very clearly what intranet leaders are accomplishing, defined in terms of impact on the organisation. Some of the characteristics of these leaders are that decision making for the intranet is clearly defined; the intranet, collaboration spaces and social tools are more integrated; senior management has made the intranet part of the objectives of the management team and social media is deployed more widely internally. Second, there is an option to purchase the report together with a 60-90 minute personal briefing from Jane for £940 plus VAT. That has to be the intranet bargain of the decade. This package repositions the report as a business-critical

briefing for senior management which also provides valuable information for corporate intranet managers. Each year the quality of the presentation of the report and the clarity of the writing continue to improve, essential if you are going to ensure that a copy of the report appears on the desktops of several senior managers helpfully annotated with an evaluation of how close (or how far away) the organisation's intranet is from leadership position.

I don't want to create the impression that this report is only for large global organisations. Intranet managers in smaller organisations, often working on the intranet part-time, will find much to encourage and inspire them in this report. As the StepTwo Intranet Innovation Awards http://www.steptwo.com.au/products/iia2010 illustrate, intranet excellence is about vision, user-focus and execution, and not necessarily about technology and the number of pages on the site.

I honestly don't think it is possible to write a 2011/2012 intranet strategy without using this report as a baseline. Of course there will be a requirement to undertake user research, but even then this report will help you decide where this research needs to be carried out. If your organisation feels unable to invest £470 in the report (the base price) then by definition the organisation fails to see the value of the intranet, and also fails to regard information as a corporate asset.

KMWorld 2010

Washington DC 15-18 November 2010

After a number of years in the San Francisco area, the KMWorld conference moved to Washington DC this year, and doubled the attendance over 2009. As well as KMWorld there were parallel Enterprise Search Summit, SharePoint Symposium and Taxonomy Bootcamp events. Since KMWorld had three tracks of its own, the first challenge was to work out where you wanted to be, knowing that almost certainly you wanted to be in three other places at the same time. Presentations on intranets were sprinkled on to all four events. There was a buzz about the event that has been lacking in San Jose over the last few years, and the exhibition area was quite full. The Renaissance Hotel, on 9th St, Washington DC, was a disaster as regards wifi access, whether it be in the guest rooms or in the conference area. If you are planning to stay there take semaphore flags!

Fortunately the quality of the papers made up for the terrible wifi. The opening keynote was Thomas Stewart, who ran over time, spoke through his hands, and had possibly the most boring set of slides I have ever seen. Since he is the Chief Marketing and Knowledge Officer of Booz & Company I expected more. The opening of his presentation was passable, but then it degenerated into something quite unintelligible. On the second day Peter Morville talked about search patterns (http://searchpatterns.org/) and even though I've heard him speak on

this subject twice before I was still fascinated by his analysis. He was followed by Major Sanchez from the US Air force who gave one of the best papers on KM I have heard for a long time. The lack of a hairdryer cost the US Air force $1.2B. (http://bit.ly/hql1G1) The keynote on the final day was David Snowden http://www.cognitive-edge.com/blogs/dave/ who continues to entertain and educate in equal proportion. Unfortunately he too ran over time and his presentation, which contained some really interesting material, had to be rushed at the end.

(Listen to it at http://www.cognitive-edge.com/presentationdetails.php?presentationid=72. You'll enjoy it!)

Many individual papers were quite superb, and a few were a disaster. One speaker talked about mobile access to information for 40 minutes with no reference to the location-specific benefits of the technology. There were some good intranet papers because the StepTwo Designs Intranet Innovation Awards were presented by James Robertson, with some minimal help from myself. The Enterprise Search track suffered from too many vendor presentations, a result of the fact that they all wanted to be sponsors and so had a speaking slot. Some of the best papers were in the SharePoint Symposium, and I learned much, as well as being reassured that my views on SharePoint were in line with the consensus.

There was quite a bit of twittering on #kmw10 if you want to have a look. Overall, it was an excellent conference, and I made many new friends. I ran workshops on search benchmarking and on user requirements for intranets, and as always, I seem to learn more from these workshops than I give. The conference will be in Washington DC next year, though at a different and as yet undisclosed hotel. Well worth adding it to your diary and budget, even if you are based outside the USA.

Designing Intranets

www.steptwo.com.au

Anyone who has met James Robertson will have been struck by his passion for user-centric design. This passion comes across very clearly in his latest book on intranet design. website designers have no idea how fortunate they are. They have millions of websites to comb through looking for neat design tricks, and in general websites have a focus that is just not possible or appropriate for even a small enterprise intranet. However, intranet managers have no excuse for not meeting the requirements of their users because, in theory, they could talk to every single one of them. This is clearly not practical, and the core of this book is about the use of low-cost and very practical approaches to defining user requirements, and translating these into highly usable intranet designs.

The author starts out by identifying the value of good intranet design, and comments on eight common intranet design mistakes. Then the importance of understanding user requirements and the creation of an intranet brand are highlighted, followed by the chapters that describe a range of techniques, such as the Microsoft Product Reaction cards, card sorting, tree testing and usability testing, that require the involvement of only a small number of participants and can generate excellent intranet designs in a relatively short period of time. Over 30 pages are devoted to the design of the home page. The book concludes with advice on how to launch a new design, and how to design intranet applications.

The A5-sized book is just 230 pages long, but every word is chosen with care. The production values of the book are very high indeed, which makes it such a pleasure to read and then use, with a number of case studies to illustrate the benefits of a structured approach to intranet design. James has been running workshops on intranet design for many years, and throughout the book the wisdom gained through not only teaching but listening to the problems faced by intranet managers comes shining through.

I cannot recommend this book too highly, and it should be bought by every intranet manager. Even if you are not currently contemplating a re-design I suspect you probably will after reading the book. It costs $60 plus post and packing.

Intranet Lounge

http://intranetlounge.com

The number of blogs and tweets on intranet topics has grown substantially over the last few years. James Robertson performed a valuable service for the intranet community in monitoring a wide range of blogs and integrating the best of the contributions into his own blog. Recently he decided that he could not cope with the avalanche of new postings, but now Bas Zurburg has stepped in to the breach with Intranet Lounge - an integration service with a difference. It relies on members (membership is free) to submit links to content, and members can then rate the items for value. The site is divided into four categories: management, social and E2.0, Content and Technology. Atom and RSS feeds can be set up. Some of the content is being posted by Zurburg or an associate.

Zurburg has been working in the IT business since 1991, and in Web development since 2004. This background in Web development shows in the elegance of the site, in which the display of each content item could hardly be improved. At the right hand site of each item is a thumbnail of the Web page itself, which is a very elegant way of providing a hyperlink click-through. However I am less enthusiastic about the way in which the subject tags are presented in the right-hand navigation. The subject tags are light grey on a black background,

turning to a dark red on mouse-over. This is a long way from the WAI guidelines, and comes across as a triumph of design over usability.

Already the range of content is very wide indeed, given that the site was only launched in June 2010. At present it looks as though around one hundred items have been added in the last month, but I am certain that this will increase steadily as the value of this innovative approach to content integration becomes more widely known. Zurburg deserves a round of applause from the global intranet community for the work he has put in to this highly innovative site.

Reference Management

Tracy Kent, Digital Assets Programme Advisor, University of Birmingham (t.k.kent@bham.ac.uk)

An update on freely available reference software

In times of economic constraint it is vital that, as information professionals, we look at what services we provide and where savings can be made. One area might be that of supporting reference software. There are numerous free packages around and I have highlighted some others which have been brought to my attention.

Aigaion

Aigaion is a free, web-based platform for managing annotated bibliographies. It allows the user(s) to organise publications in a self-chosen topic structure, multi-user facilities, creation of public and private notes on publications, and offers a particularly intuitive user interface. Aigaion is built on the BibTeX format with some useful BibTeX import and export facilities and RIS formats. The latest version (2.2) offers more language, support for custom fields and author aliases. Further details from http://www.aigaion.nl/

BiblioWeb

BiblioWeb is a Web-enabled bibliographic software, offering all the basic functions of bibliographic software, delivered through Web browser. A Web user can be assigned "read" or "write" privileges. Users with "read" accounts can search, browse, display, and export bibliographic records. Users with "write" accounts can add, edit, delete, import, even format document through Web browser. Biblioweb also supports a threaded discussion forum. Further details from http://www.biblioscape.com/bibliohost.htm

Literaturedb

Literaturedb is a bibliographic management software that can help you organize your literature and bibliographic references for scientific documents. It runs as a PHP website, and provides a collaborative space for storing and sharing documents and references. It uses Bibtex entry types and fields, so you can reuse references. Usefully it stores full text files (pdf, doc, etc.) for quick access.

http://www.literaturedb.com

Memento

Memento offers the ability to manage bibliographies, create and share reports and networked facilities as well. Like Aigaion, it provides import and export features for BibTex, RIS and Endnote, and can export to them as well. A particularly useful feature is the ability to create watch lists for articles, authors, keywords and receive new articles in RSS feed. Further details from http://findnwrite.com/memento/

Sixpack

Sixpack is a graphical and command-line bibliography database manager written in Perl/TK. It interacts with the supplied package 'bp' (a Perl Library, still being developed, that lets you make tools to access bibliographies), which can import and export from a number of formats including Bibtex, Endnote, Medline, Procite, and many others. It can download references directly off the Web, and open articles using external viewers. It can also interface with Emacs/XEmacs and Lyx [LaTeX with a GUI interface] sourceforge.net/projects/sixpack

WIKINDX

WIKINDX is a free bibliographic and quotations/notes management and article authoring system designed either for single use (on a variety of operating systems) or multi-user collaborative use across the Internet. It provides 36 resource types, general search and sort capabilities, a multi-user mode and a number of output styles. WIKINDX has an architecture that enables either in-line or menu plug-ins to be inserted. Write your own or download plug-ins from the sourceforge site. http://wikindx.sourceforge.net/

Public Sector News

Jane Inman, Customers and Communications Manager, Environment and Economy, Warwickshire County Council (janeinman@warwickshire.gov.uk)

The Open Government Licence; the No.10 website; and the true cost savings of going digital

Open Government Licence

The continuing push to make public sector data and information more readily available and encourage its re-use has led to development of the Open Government Licence.

The National Archives has made this easy to use licence available and is encouraging public sector bodies to use it. The licence allows for copying, publishing, distributing and transmitting information, adapting information and exploiting it commercially.

The only requirements are that users must acknowledge the source and that they do not suggest the information has any official status or that the Information Provider endorses the product or its producer. The reuse must not mislead or misrepresent the information, and care must be taken not to breach the requirements of the Data Protection Act or the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003. Details of the licence can be found at:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence

The No. 10 website

Other moves to make information available include the publication of expenditure by Department. Suitable for the insomniac the spreadsheets of figures probably provide some useful information but you would need to know what you are looking for and certainly present a challenge for journalists trying to find a juicy story of extravagant life styles.

The No.10 website carries this information under the tab labelled 'Transparency.'

The site is an interesting one, and here you will also find organization charts and business plans along with details of employees, job titles, salary scales actual salaries.

www.number10.gov.uk

Digital by default

The Government's Digital Champion, Martha Lane Fox, has recommended a 'radical revolution' in the delivery of government services through the Internet; the report has been welcomed by the Government. The aim would be to move services to online delivery to the point where digital delivery is the default option. The savings that can be achieved through this channel shift are estimated by Martha Lane Fox as more than £1.3bn for a 30% shift or £2.2bn, if 50% of contacts are conducted online.

These arguments are not new, with SOCITM having published comparable figures for the unit cost of providing local authority services over the phone, face to face or via the Web for a number of years. Their latest figures are:

- Face to face £8.23 per visit

- Phone £3.21 per call

- Web 0.39p per visitors

Source: SOCITM *Insight* (December 2009)

SOCITM also operates an online survey, which asks users when they don't find the information they require to contact the local authority. The results of this survey can help authorities measure channel preferences and calculate possible savings from ensuring information is available online.

Of course, this is all dependent on access to the skills and the technology and we still have groups of people without this access. Francis Maude has said that digitally disadvantaged will not be excluded.

Public Sector News is supplied by ALGIS in LARIA (The Affiliation of Local Government Information Specialists in the Local Authority Research and Intelligence Association) which represents information professionals providing information services to local authority staff and elected members. Jane Inman is currently Chair of ALGIS. ALGIS welcomes anyone with an interest in public sector information who feels they would benefit from being part of a community working in the same area. For more information go to www.algis.org.uk

Meeting Report: Getting the source out of the bottle: Practical implementation of open-source applications in the information sector

London, SOAS, Wednesday 16th June 2010

Judith Hegenbarth reviews this one-day event reviewing use of open-source software in information environments

This engaging and stimulating seminar began with a welcome from Tracy Kent, vice-chair of UKeiG, who had organised the day and arranged an impressive array of speakers. Martin White (chair of UKeiG) explained the outline of the day, with the first presentation an excellent scene-setting from Ken Chad (Ken Chad Consulting Ltd).

Ken spoke about the principles of open source being 'free', as really meaning 'freedom' to run, modify and redistribute software (not necessarily free in the economic sense). Many open-source software specialists work according to values that dictate openness and community. However, this is not to say that business will no longer benefit from this new approach; the new business model means that revenues come from supporting the software instead of developing it – our current economic climate suggests that this will become a more serious prospect.

The benefits of open source will mean that innovation is distributed; expertise from many areas can be drafted in. As more organisations and individuals become involved in development, the better products should become. Ken touched on the issue of copyright and open source, but suggested that often, technology drives legal change – open source could bring about one of those paradigm shifts that forces such transformation. Open- source licensing is very different to the spirit of copyright: it denies the right of anyone to exploit a work exclusively.

Ken called on the audience to embrace open source, citing bug fixing, security, customisation, translation, avoidance of vendor lock-in, mitigation of vendor/product collapse and establishment of community as important benefits. Some of the barriers he acknowledged are emotional; established hierarchical organisations in particular fear the unfamiliar and worry that open source will be unreliable and unknowable. Advocates are needed to demonstrate how successful implementation can be. He left the audience with encouragement to 'do it, its normal!'.

Matthew Hale from The King's Fund moved the seminar from discussion of the philosophical to the practical as he described the adoption of open-source software within his library. It began with developing innovations such as aggregated news and an enquiry database, in response to the need to make services as outward facing as possible, and allowed staff to work more flexibly. After this the decision to adopt Koha (originally developed in New Zealand) as a new library management system was launched. The system integrated well into existing services and allowed results to be exported onto the corporate website; users searching the site in general would garner results from the catalogue as well. Support from staff at PTFS Europe (some of whom were involved in the installation of their first proprietary LMS) was essential. Incredibly, only two months elapsed between the initial project meeting and the launch of the live system. The King's Fund experience is proof that open-source implementation can really work in a library management setting. Senior managers in the organisation are now looking at open-source solutions as truly viable.

Mark Hughes from the University of Swansea spoke about his own experience with open source, in his case for resource discovery. A local higher education partnership of three institutions had spawned a project to undertake federated searching of their catalogues and electronic resources. Mark's project team used VuFind open-source software and created a full 'next generation' interface for end users that pulls resources together. Advanced searching is also available for users with more sophisticated needs. VuFind was chosen over proprietary software on the grounds of cost, timescale, flexibility and stability. The resulting service can be viewed at http://ifind.swwhep.ac.uk. Users are able to add their own tags and comments to provide a value-added service. Users are also able to apply a significant level of customisation.

Mark reported on the benefits of implementation but admitted that it wasn't immune from commonplace issues such as a change in project team personnel. Inherited problems such as differences in cataloguing standards also proved problematic: two project partners use different classification systems, and this is difficult to reconcile. One of the partners also had a firewall issue, which has made progress slow. However, the community of users of VuFind has made it easier to find solutions. The risks of open-source software are different to those of proprietary software. So too is the cost model; while the capital outlay on the system is less, the staff costs of implementation and development are higher. More information can be found at: http://swwhepsrch.blogspot.com.

Michael Upshall, UKeiG's very own website manager outlined how the group have used Drupal to redevelop the group's website. The software is cheap, easy to use, modular and has no vendor lock-in. It is used by other similar groups, and has a large user community of expertise to tap into. Negative aspects have included an increase of security attacks and the complexity of the modular system. With the benefit of experience, Michael recommended that open-source websites shouldn't be too heavily customised as users can become locked-in by one developer. He also suggested using widely used themes (colour schemes etc) and

separating development from maintenance, as some developers see maintenance as less exciting (although it is essential).

Phil Bradley, introduced as everyman's 'Internet guru', challenged the audience to improve their online presence. He spoke about the demise of Web 1.0 and showed via his own Web presence www.netvibes.com/philbradley how resources can be brought together in one place. In his case, walls can be used for communication and resources can be collected and organised. On discussing those who feel unable to engage with Web developments, Phil suggested that it is common to continue to understand the Internet as it was when you first discovered it; if you don't get time to keep up to date, you will flounder. In these Web 2.0 enabled times, news is generated by individuals using Twitter, not necessarily by traditional organisations. Proliferation of information sources means that we need to be 'cybernomadic' and cover as many bases as possible. Phil urged the audience to check how much 'real estate' on Google they own, to discover how many sources they are using and that all these are linked. Issues of ownership, reliability and control are complex and the law struggles to keep pace with Web 2.0. Most importantly, Phil emphasised that we shouldn't get too hung up on tools – we should decide what we wish to do, and then use the appropriate tools to achieve it.

At the end of the session, each of the speakers was asked to suggest what each participant could do within the following week. The suggestions were:

- Do just one thing (e.g. explore a resource like NetVibes)

- Update your blog

- Think how you can make cultural change

- Invest in an open-source Library Management System

- Dump a preconception/sacred cow

- Take your procurement manager out to lunch

The panel also provided some valuable summaries:

- It is important to share ideas, not necessarily systems

- Open source and Web 2.0 are states of mind – this is the hardest thing to change

- We deal with risk all the time.

- Organisational culture could stop us doing great things with open source

- Protecting reputation is important to organisations and creates a fear factor – we have to use advocacy rather than heavy handed tactics to change minds.

- We have to be pragmatic at times, since the world often resists change

- We have to look at the risk of using open source against the risk of not using it.

Judith Hegenbarth is Academic Support Team Manager at the University of Birmingham

Meeting Report: How to stay ahead of the game with Web 2.0

Birmingham, 7 September 2010

Reviewed by Catherine Robertson

There were many useful tips given by Karen Blakeman during her session 'How to stay ahead of the game with Web 2.0', and lots which I will be putting into practice. One of the first things she mentioned was thinking about the content we create, and therefore own, and how we treat it. As librarians we are encouraged to share and collaborate, but Karen commented that we should also consider what it is that we are giving away, and to use the Creative Commons licence to protect it. Once material is in the public domain it cannot retrospectively be protected. This is something I had never thought about, but it's an interesting idea to keep in mind and to utilise where necessary.

The session also considered the customisation of services, such as iGoogle, where users are able to make a service look and feel the way they want. This is something the information community needs to bear in mind, as we need to be aware of user expectations in respect to our own online offerings. Scholarly resources are not yet this sophisticated, and since students are becoming accustomed to this kind of customisation in their online lives, we as librarians may well find ourselves liaising with publishers in future to bring online access to scholarly material in line with the iGoogle approach.

Reputation monitoring was also a hot topic. Once considered the domain of corporate institutions, reputation monitoring has become increasingly important on both a personal and academic institutional level. Institutions should now monitor their reputation via online services such as forums and Facebook, since it is here where patrons will often air their grievances – and where potential patrons may be discouraged from then using that institution. As professionals, it's worth us keeping an eye on how we are portrayed online and also making sure that we control what information is released about us. Individuals can also consider their own social media strategy – what do you want to share and where do you want it to go? It was interesting to hear how an individual can maintain an online presence within one tool and push this information out to other social media, rather than having to update each one individually (e.g. updating Twitter and pushing this information into your Facebook status at the same time.) as we need to have a presence where our potential audience (colleagues, prospective employers, etc) are. Many sites also allow you to monitor usage, as for example when a user arrives at your Institution's homepage. You can often tell how they

got there (e.g. from a link in Twitter, Facebook, etc) and so monitor usage and usefulness of these tools.

All in all the day was very useful, especially as there were some technologies discussed that I already use but without utilising to them to their full potential. The only downside of such an intensive session was that by the end I was feeling a bit overwhelmed, so this might be the sort of session which would benefit for being run in two parts. However, there was a great deal of useful information included that would benefit anyone in the information world.

Current Awareness

Column editor: Clare Sinclair

The current awareness column is created by a team of information specialists from the USA and the UK, who check a range of leading periodicals to make sure readers are kept informed about the latest developments relating to information management. Subjects covered include e-publishing, information access and retrieval, electronic publishing, preservation and virtual libraries.

E-Publishing

Albanese, Andrew Richard. **Betting the House on HTML5** *Publisher's Weekly* 257(29) (26 July 2010), 37-40 (http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/digital/content-and-ebooks/article/43942-betting-the-house-on-html5.html) – The news is full of reports that the "tipping point" for ebooks has arrived. New on the horizon is HTML5, a format that allows book pages to be formatted in a logical way for web browsers, eliminating the need for third-party plug-in applications like Flash. Apple, Google, and Microsoft are all behind the new version of HTML, and Scribd, a "social publisher" has joined the club. Scribd is described "as a place for people to share what they are reading, writing, and publishing, just as people use YouTube to share videos". PW interviewed Jared Friedman, chief technology officer of Scribd about what HTML5 means for ebook publishing. Scribd's decision to use HTML5 predated the public battle between Apple and Adobe for the non-use of Flash on Apple's mobile devices. Friedman points out the benefits of an open standard that is supported by most equipment, including mobile devices. Moving beyond PDF and Kindle, HTML5 will allow users to see books and articles the way publishers want their users to see it, including all of the content, formatting, and possibly advertising. Friedman claims that users will be more likely to purchase content in HTML5 since they can use it on multiple platforms, which may allow ebook publishers to make more money. The call out for the article includes four reasons why an open platform like HTML5 is important for electronic publishing: social engagement, mobile distribution, monetization, and multimedia. [KC]*

Anderson, Rick. **If I Were a Scholarly Publisher** *EDUCAUSE Review* 45(4)(July/August 2010), 10-11 http://www.educause.edu/library/ERM1048 – Rick Anderson describes the pressures that library collection development budgets face, and speculates as to how content

providers might respond to a shrinking market. He suggests that in order to maximize profits, publishers may shift to direct sales to faculty and students, which would further erode the position of the library within the university. Clearly scholarly publishing is in the process of systematic change. Anderson's piece encourages libraries to consider how their functions might change as publishing changes. [PH]*

Information Preservation

McDonough, Jerome P., Olendorf, Robert., Kirschenbaum*,* Matthew et al. **Preserving Virtual Worlds Final Report**http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/2010/cc10.21.9.html 31 August 2010 http://hdl.handle.net/2142/17097 – Video games have become an important cultural force, as witnessed by the recent release of *Halo: Reach*, which made over $200 million on its release day (compare that to *Avatar*, which made $27 million on its opening day). Preserving the virtual worlds created by video games will be one of the greatest challenges librarians and archivists face. In this incredibly rich final report of a multi-institutional research project, McDonough and his fellow researchers explain in great detail why virtual worlds need to be saved, what needs to be saved (including documentation associated with the games), and some strategies for addressing the issue. There is important discussion of the strengths and limitations of the FRBR and OAIS models when applied to video games, and thoughtful discussion of the problems that intellectual property law creates for preservation. Needless to say, the discussion of the technical problems that the group addressed is also first-rate. This is a report that may seem esoteric at first glance, but will become essential reading for anyone interested in the broadest issues of digital preservation, bibliographic description, and archival practice. [PH]*

Management

McHale, Nina. **Managing Library IT Workflow with Bugzilla** The Code4Lib Journal (11) 21 September 2010 (http://journal.code4lib.org/articles/3814) – Managing 'trouble' reports from library staff is a common issue in library systems offices. While many libraries may rely on anything from notes scribbled on random scraps of paper to fully featured (and possibly expensive) trouble ticket systems, McHale describes a system that has tweaked the Mozilla bug tracking system to handle trouble tickets instead. After using it for nearly two years, she is clearly satisfied with it and she is now sharing her solution in a way that virtually any moderately competent systems librarian could implement. Go for it. [RT]*

Ryan, Frank. **Evaluating online information services** *Business Information Review* 27 (2), 104-111 – Practical advice on some of the key questions you should ask when thinking about

taking out a new subscription. Alignment with the organisation's core business is as important as is the content of the database and technical functionality. [MDS]

Mobile Technologies

Purcell, Kristen., Entner, Roger., Henderson, Nichole. **The Rise of Apps Culture** http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/2010/cc10.21.9.html Washington, DC: The Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project, 2010. (http://pewInternet.com/~/media//Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Nielsen%20Apps%20Report.pdf –

This report makes interesting reading for libraries considering app- and mobile website development. According to the report, 82% of U.S. adults are cell phone users. Forty-three percent of these cell phone users have apps on their cell phones. However, only 68% of the users with apps utilize them, meaning that only 24% of U.S. adults actually use apps. The apps users group "skews male, and is much younger, more affluent, and more educated than other adults." The report also notes that only 38% of U.S. cell phone users access the Internet using their phones. Also of interest may be the recent Mobile Strategy Report, Mobile Device User Research from the California Digital Library, which concluded: "Based on our overall findings from this inquiry, we learned that the majority of academic ownership and use has not quite reached a tipping point of mass adoption. Thus, our general strategic recommendations are preparatory in nature."[CB]*

Virtual Libraries

Nielsen, Matthew, and Sean Park. **Free as in Internet: Using Linux and Open Source Software on Public Computers** *OLA Quarterly* 16(3) (Fall 2010), 11-15 (http://data.memberclicks.com/site/ola/olaq_16no3.pdf) - This brief article lays out the experience of the Coos County Library Service District in Oregon, which has switched the operating system on most of its public workstations from Microsoft XP to Ubuntu Linux. As older hardware began to struggle to run Windows, Park began experimenting with Linux, and the increase in speed and stability was impressive enough that the system made the decision to switch. The workstations now run the Lucid Linux (10.04) distribution, and a variety of other free and open- source software applications have been installed. This includes Open Office for the productivity suite, GIMP for photo editing, and Firefox for Web browsing. The workstations have been set up so that most patrons are able to quickly and easily find the application they need. For example, Open Office Writer has been renamed "Word Processing," and Firefox "Internet". In addition, the window manager used, GNOME, looks similar to Windows XP. While the switch has been a success, the authors also talk about some of the problems they encountered, including issues with hardware compatibility, and the

need to install some proprietary software. They conclude by offering several tips for libraries interested in following in their footsteps. [AC]*

Schiller, Kurt. **5 Trends Shaking up the Internet** *Information Today* 27 (9) (October 2010): 1, 51-52 and 54 – Discussion of some high-level innovations that will shape the Internet and how we use it over the next decade including analytics, entertainment, mobile platforms such as Android, new forms of social networking and HTML5. [MDS]

Web/Intranet Development

Chudnov, Dan. **Getting Over the Hump** *Computers in Libraries* 30(7)(September 2010): 31-33 – Chudnov is a well-known library coder who has probably done more to build a library-coder community than anyone out there. So this piece on how to become a coder is written by someone who really knows what he's talking about. He admits that he is "obsessed with the idea of librarians becoming better coders", and he sets out to do so by providing good advice for librarians seeking to get into coding. Among the things he advises: "build something you need" and "don't imagine there is a perfect solution". Also, "ask for help" and "expect to make changes". Highly recommended for anyone who may be leaning toward lifting the hood and tinkering with the engines that power our services. [RT]*

* Abstracts identified with an * next to the author initials, are drawn with permission from Current Cites, the monthly publication distributed electronically by a team of Librarians and Library Staff and edited by Roy Tennant: http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/

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Book Review: Hearst, Search User Interfaces

Marti A. Hearst: Search User Interfaces, Cambridge University Press, Nov 2009, 404pp. Price £33.00 (hardback only) and free online.

Firstly, my apologies to the author and eLucidate for taking so long to create this review, in part due to the need to do it justice, but also due to those times when I put the book down in another 'wow' moment and went off to take a look at some aspect of our own search interfaces that I realised needed attention.

I confess that before reading this book I had not heard Hearst's name, but a quick search of the literature in this area clearly shows her to be central to this field (and my lack of knowledge of the field in not having heard her name). Dr. Marti Hearst is a Professor in the School of Information at the University of California, Berkeley and was previously a member of the research staff at the highly respected Xerox PARC. Reading between the lines of the book, I hope you will see a person dedicated to her work and undoubtedly world class in her field. Even if this were not the first book in this field, it would be hard to find something more definitive in the area. Hearst masterfully weaves together academic work across time and from around the world, and is clearly on the ball in terms of current developments. She sets her own work humbly, but in its rightful place in the history of search user interfaces.

The structure of the book itself is a testament to her ideas and principles of design. From the outset we find a clearly written contents page followed by a book overview that neatly encapsulates the book's content, setting each chapter in context. Hearst also provides advice on her intended audiences. It's easy to navigate the book and it can be read cover to cover, or dipped into for knowledge and insight in a particular area. Throughout, she draws widely from the literature, and uses clear examples.

Hearst begins the book by introducing some general ideas and practices surrounding interface design. Chapter two is a natural follow-on from user-centred design, as it tackles evaluation of search interfaces. The information seeking process is the subject of the third chapter where Hearst looks at models of the process. The next three chapters cover the information seeking cycle, with a look at query specification, the presentation of search results and query reformulation. Hearst then looks at interfaces that support the information seeking process in chapter seven. The important topic of integrating navigation with search is highlighted in chapter eight, with the emergence of personalization in search the topic for chapter nine. Two chapters on aspects of Information visualization then follow, and the book is capped off with a discussion of emerging trends in search interfaces.

I fall firmly into the category of her second intended audience, the practitioner, so what value did I derive from the book? Firstly, this is not a dry academic book, it's alive! The work really drew me in, and at one point I found myself wondering what it would be like to work with Hearst. Reading the book I experienced an information parallel to the Californian Gold Rush, dashing out of the information mine with another nugget of knowledge to apply. I'm at a loss to find anything to 'criticize' with this book. The nature of the material makes it a dense read, but that's the complexity of the field rather than Hearst's lucid style. One thing which would augment the book would be some associated teaching resources which would help to make the best of this work as a practitioner. In this fast moving field, I'm looking forward to seeing a second edition.

Andrew Brown is Information Systems Librarian at the University of Swansea

New books of interest

Here are some book titles that might be of interest to UKeiG members. The list isn't exhaustive; members are welcome to suggest other books for review. If you are interested in reviewing any of these titles, or if you are publisher and you have titles that you think would be of interest to the UKeiG readership, please contact the editor. A copy of the book is provided free for you to review.

- **Improving Students' Web Use and Information Literacy:** A guide for teachers and teacher librarians, James Herring, Facet Publishing

- **Books, Bytes and Business**: the Promise of Digital publishing, Bill Martin and Xuemei Tian, Ashgate, October 2010

- **Classification made simple** (3rd edition) Eric J Hunter, Ashgate Publishing, September 2009

- **Digital Images for the Information Professional**, Melinda Terras, Ashgate 208

- **The Intranet Management Handbook**, Martin White, Facet Publishing, Dec 2010

UKeiG Training Sessions Update

When the going gets tough the tough, get training from UKeiG

UKeiG are pleased to announce their training courses for the first half of 2011. During such tough times, training is vital for information staff and not an expendable luxury. Recognising this, UKeiG have put together some practical, affordable and, indeed, innovative training courses, which aim to play a major role in addressing some of the challenges created by the current economic slowdown. The courses include:

- **Effectively influencing your Stakeholders: powerful techniques for marketing AND change management**

  Knowing how to effectively influence your stakeholders (users, senior management, budget holders, service providers, customers or collaborators) is essential in raising the profile of your Information service and ensuring changes in the delivery of e-information are successfully implemented.

  Run by two experienced trainers, Shaida Dorabjee (www.sdis.co.uk) and Elizabeth Goodman (www.riverrhee.com), they use well-tested techniques to help you develop skills in influencing your stakeholders. This course will use key components of change management and marketing to illustrate the techniques in a participative and practical day. A must for all in these challenging times.

- **Getting to grips with developing and managing ebook collections in challenging times**

  With dwindling monograph budgets and demanding users, managing and developing effective ebook collections is even more essential during an economic recession. This introductory course opens the door to a new electronic format, and is designed to support information professionals to set up ebook collections. The course explores individual and collections of ebooks and the opportunities they offer, and explores significant collection management and promotional issues that challenge information and library staff, especially in times of economic constraints. Practical exercises to support the training form an integral part to this course.

  Chris Armstrong and Ray Lonsdale have been working and offering courses in the field of ebooks, e-resources and collection management for the past 14 years, both in the UK and abroad. Both are renowned for their expertise in ebooks.

Other forthcoming courses include

- Desktop Intranets: examining the potential demand for mobile access by Martin White

- Bringing Google to heel: getting the most from Google by Karen Blakeman

A date for your diary is the 2011 Annual Seminar and AGM set for Wednesday 15 June. Watch out for more details in the next issue of Elucidate. Check the website at http://www.ukeig.org.uk/training for the latest information to help your e-information organisation through the cuts.

Press Releases

Oxford Scholarly Editions Online (OSEO)

8 Nov 2010 – Oxford University Press is proud to announce a major new digital publishing initiative: an online collection of OUP's scholarly editions in the humanities, which will go live in spring 2012.

Oxford's line-up of scholarly editions is unrivalled in its breadth and quality. They comprise authoritative texts of poetry, drama, and fiction, from all periods of English literature, and of other important writing from across the humanities. Such editions are the bedrock of humanities scholarship – the primary sources upon which scholars rely for research and teaching.

Demand for such primary sources to be made accurately and reliably available online has been growing as more and more research and study is done outside the physical confines of libraries, and with *Oxford Scholarly Editions Online* (*OSEO*) OUP is able to respond to this demand.

An academic editorial board will oversee the project to ensure that it matches the high standards of scholarship embodied in the original print editions. Michael F. Suarez, S.J., Director, Rare Book School and University Professor, University of Virginia, is its editor in chief. He recently edited the acclaimed *Oxford Companion to the Book*. The board also comprises: Professor Gordon Campbell, Professor Christopher Cannon, Professor Emeritus Desmond Clarke, Professor Emerita Marilyn Deegan, Dr Nicholas Halmi, Professor Laura Marcus, Professor John Morrill, Professor Lisa Rodensky, and Dr Andrew Zurcher.

Sophie Goldsworthy, Editorial Director for Academic and Trade publishing, comments: "*Cutting through the mass of data available online continues to present a very real challenge to scholars and students alike, and is nowhere more difficult than in the case of primary texts, with the sheer volume of unevaluated and often simply inaccurate editions online. By marrying technological developments with one of the most traditional forms of scholarly endeavour, OSEO will enhance the discoverability and accessibility of some of Oxford's most prestigious and authoritative content. We are extremely proud to be embarking upon this project alongside such an eminent editorial board, jointly committed to ensuring that we deliver nothing but the highest quality content in a way that fulfils the needs of the widest possible readership.*"

The intention is to launch the site with 150 editions of works originally written between 1485 and 1660 – including Shakespeare's plays, poetry by John Donne, and the letters of Thomas Hobbes – and to add tranches of content covering other chronological periods until it contains

many hundreds of editions of works of different types – drama, poetry, and all kinds of prose, from diaries and correspondence through to philosophical speculation, sermons, history, biography, and fiction. Through this initiative OUP will be making many classic editions widely available.

London Libraries to share stock management and acquisitions

Enfield and Havering library services are now sharing stock management services across the two boroughs. The innovative new arrangement means that one stock manager covers stock acquisition, performance and disposal, for Enfield and Havering, boroughs which have roughly the same population size, demographic, and funding levels. The arrangement has been made possible as both are members of the 12-borough strong London Libraries Consortium[1] which services a population of three million across London.

Madeline Barrett, Libraries Strategy & Performance Manager, Enfield Libraries says, "This initiative wouldn't have come about without our regular meetings as members of the London Libraries Consortium. The consortium seeks service changes which will help us to provide better resources to library users, in a more efficient and cost effective way. We estimate that our shared stock management arrangement has the potential to save around £35k per annum across two boroughs alone, and the consortium is now considering further ways to share operations and stock between members."

Ann Rennie, Library Services Manager at Havering Library Service, explains, "Our stock manager had reached retirement age, which coincided with our reassessment of the most cost effective and efficient way to operate stock services. Discussions with the London Borough of Enfield, a fellow partner in the London Libraries Consortium, showed that we could share their stock manager. Managers and staff in the consortium share knowledge and experience on a regular basis, which allows us to implement efficiency and service improvements far more quickly than we could as individual authorities."

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[1] The London Libraries Consortium members are: Barking & Dagenham, Brent, Ealing, Enfield, Hackney, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth.

Mark Bennett has been in the joint post since May 2010 and handles budget control, supplier performance, contract monitoring and stock services. As he was previously employed in the role at Enfield, he had all the required skillsets of experience in acquisitions and stock control, knowledge of the consortium's library management system (Axiell's OpenGalaxy) and electronic procurement using EDI (Electronic Data Interchange), performance and budget control including the use of payments interfaces between OpenGalaxy and corporate finance systems, stock management and RFID; consequently he was able to move seamlessly into the joint role without any training. He is also involved in the renegotiation of local and LLC stock contracts covering purchase of stock and associated 'added value' services such as supplier selection, EDI provision, RFID tagging, shelf-ready stock and direct branch delivery.

Mark says, "Shared working across two boroughs and 26 libraries presents an ideal opportunity to benchmark processes and to gain a way of working which takes the best from both boroughs. The Enfield/Havering pilot presents the opportunity to directly apply this to form a broad best practice template for consolidated stock management which other LLC members can adopt or develop. For users this means that they will gain better access to stock, stock will be rotated more efficiently and purchased to better suit our readers' interests and requirements."

The consortium has recently purchased SmartSM, stock performance improvement software, which accesses the OpenGalaxy LMS and takes stock information for analysis. Mark will be using this data to identify areas for development such as which branches have too much or too little of particular categories or authors. The data will be used to develop supplier selection profiles and measure performance of those, ensuring a more evidence-based case for stock management and purchase. As most consortium members will use OpenGalaxy's library management system and SmartSM, they will be able to benchmark and share stock performance data between themselves to identify areas for enhancement.

About *Elucidate*

Elucidate is the journal of the UK Electronic Information Group. It is published five times each year, in February, March, May, September, and November. It aim is to keep members up to date with developments in the digital information environment, as they affect professionals. The magazine is provided free to UKeiG members.

Notes for contributors

Elucidate welcomes articles or ideas for articles in the areas covered by the magazine. We are always on the lookout for feature writers, reviewers both for books and for meetings, as well as respondents to articles. Sadly, we don't pay contributors, but contributors retain copyright of their articles and can republish their articles elsewhere.

Brief for feature articles

If you are writing for *Elucidate*, please follow these simple guidelines:

About the members

Our membership comprises information professionals involved in the dissemination and/or delivery of digital content and services. Our membership base is two-thirds academic, one-third commercial, as well as some public libraries. A key benefit of the group is that meetings and forums provide "crossover" insight from one area to another: members see it as a way of keeping up to date in areas outside their core. Few other organisations provide this kind of cross-sectoral awareness. The focus of the group is the UK, in the sense that authentication concerns tend to be around JISC tools such as Athens and Shibboleth. But the issues of digital provision are of course global. The most popular training courses we run are on search tools – Google and others; ebooks and how to deal with them. Other popular strands include intranets, content management, bibliographic software, and ebooks.

Technical level

Although members rate themselves highly for technical awareness, they are typically users rather than creators of technology. Articles should not assume understanding of technical terms without explanation.

Length of article

Feature articles should be in the region of 1500-2500 words. Each article should be prefaced by a short summary (around 50 words) that can be used when displaying on public search engines an outline of the article, and to display on the non-member section of the website.

What to write

A key aspect of UKeiG is that it provides insight from one area to another – members see it as a way of keeping up to date in areas outside their core expertise. Because the membership is quite disparate, ranging from pharmaceutical information professionals to public librarians, you should not assume readers are as familiar as you in the subject area.

The most valuable viewpoint you can give is that of an end user. UKeiG is not a place for theoretical debate, but a forum where peers can share their experiences and understanding. So, if it worked for you, tell others. If it didn't, tell others why not.

How to submit

Please e-mail your article to michael@consultmu.co.uk. Articles should be delivered in Word or in an ASCII format. Images are welcome – they may be in gif or jpeg formats.

Rights

By submitting an article to *Elucidate*, authors grant UKeiG the non-exclusive right to publish the material in any format in perpetuity. However, authors retain full rights in their content and remain the copyright owner.

About you

Please provide a 10-20-word biographical summary about yourself to appear at the end of the article.

Editorial process

Your article will be copy-edited for spelling and for sense. If there are major changes to the article we may return it to you for your comments and approval, but most articles require only light corrections before appearing in *Elucidate*, and do not need a further review by the author.

Brief for book reviews

Book reviews are typically 500-750 words. Because UKeiG is independent of any publisher, we are not obliged to have favourable reviews. If you think a book is poor, then by all means explain why. Members and non-members alike are welcome to suggest books for review or to submit reviews.