



RIN Research Communications Group NOTE FROM THE FIFTH MEETING – 10 JUNE 2008

Action points in italics

Present:

Michael Jubb (Chair) (RIN)
Paul Ayris (UCL Library)
Juan Bicarregui (STFC)
Bob Campbell (Wiley-Blackwell and Publishing Research Consortium)
Fred Friend (JISC)
Jeremy Giles (British Geological Survey)
Stéphane Goldstein (RIN)
Aaron Griffiths (RIN)
Robert Kiley (Wellcome Trust)
Janice Leung (UUK)
Michael Mabe (International Association of STM Publishers)
David Prosser (SPARC Europe)
Ian Russell (ALPSP)
Allan Sudlow (British Library)
Graham Taylor (Publishers Association)
Astrid Wissenburg (ESRC)
Michel Woodman (Department of Trade & Industry)

Apologies:

Jeffrey Aronson (University of Oxford)
Ken Peach (University of Oxford and Royal Holloway College)
Debby Shorley (University of Sussex)

1. **Minutes of the meeting of 28 January 2008** (*paper RIN/RCG/08/08*)

These were agreed.

2. **Matters arising**

From item 2 – Group membership: Unfortunately, the RIN Executive Team had still not been able to identify a social scientist to sit on the Group, although it was hoped that a researcher from the arts/humanities community would soon be appointed.

From item 3 – scholarly communications toolkit: there had been no further progress on the development of this idea, but with its additional resources, RIN would soon be able to take the project forward.

From item 2 – acknowledgement of research funders: information about the RIN guidance has been disseminated by various stakeholders, including publishers and funders, over the past 2-3 months. Research Councils were not intending to publicize the guidance as such, as they had effectively incorporated it in their respective terms and conditions. RIN is looking at the possibility of monitoring take-up of the recommendations; the working group would be re-convened in

- **A Wissenburg** to enquire about a possible representative from the social sciences community

about a year to check on progress.

3. Taking forward the conclusions of two recently-completed RIN projects (paper RIN/RCG/08/09)

Cost and income flows of scholarly communications

Much interest in the concept of the **economic model** was expressed around the table. Members agreed that it would be useful to have the freedom of changing the assumptions contained in the model, and on that basis possibly to develop alternative scenarios; for instance, some would like to see opportunity costs incorporated in any future modelling and/or overhead costs associated with arranging author-side payments in HEIs. It was understood that, by definition, any economic model is necessarily bound by sets of assumptions, which tend to be open to challenge from different quarters.

Members agreed that the model could usefully be offered, in the first instance to experts such as John Houghton. Beyond that, it had a potential use as a basis for discussing policy implications with relevant stakeholders – although there was room for considerable debate about what these implications might be. Such a debate could be initiated in the context of one or more workshops, which RIN was planning to organise during the autumn. Members felt that careful thought was required regarding the nature and scope of these events; there might be a case for an expert seminar, founded on micro-studies to test out some of the assumptions.

Publication and quality assurance of research data outputs

The Group identified with the key finding about the gap in expertise relating to the management and curation of data, which posed important questions regarding infrastructure provision. This was likely to be a key issue for the UK Research Data Service feasibility study. Members raised a number of points:

- Effective curation of data by researchers requires a major cultural change on their part, for which incentives (and maybe also penalties associated with requirements to deposit) are required.
- In order to set out a case for any high-level policy and strategy development, there is need for a greater understanding of the value of research data. At present, there is relatively little knowledge about this value, nor about the different value associated with various sorts of data produced across the scholarly spectrum. Policies would have to reflect the varied and fragmented nature of these data.
- Does effective sharing of data depends largely on clarification about their ownership, and the rights associated with this? Members noted that there are *sui generis* rights associated with databases, i.e. the expression of data, but not data themselves – but even that isn't always clear, as demonstrated by the RIN's research findings. Nonetheless, the report suggests that ownership isn't a serious factor in researchers' views about data sharing. They are far more concerned about the relationship of their data with their reputations, and conceivably about the exploitation of their intellectual capital.

- **RIN Executive Team** to look to formulate instructions and guidance in the use of the model.

- It was important to emphasise that the report relates specifically to research data – there is scope for misinterpretation if this isn't made clear.

Dissemination plans

The Group approved the approach to dissemination suggested by the cover paper for this item, and agreed about the importance of ensuring that dissemination issues are considered at the outset of projects. It was also useful to bear in mind international dimensions when considering implementation strategies.

4. Planning for three forthcoming RIN projects (paper RIN/RCG/08/10)

Web 2.0 and its relevance/usefulness to researchers

Some members were sceptical about the priority to be given by RIN to such a project; they pointed to suggestions that use of Web 2.0 tools is associated with minority (albeit enthusiastic) communities, and moreover ones that are not growing. In this context, RIN might want to consider the work undertaken by Mark Ware, on new models of scholarly communications in chemistry, for the Publishing Research Consortium.

The very definition of Web 2.0 also poses a challenge which requires addressing as it would determine the scope of the project. RIN would have to take heed of a couple of important distinctions regarding the use of Web 2.0: between users in their roles as users and contributors; and between its purpose as a communication medium and as a tool for setting out outputs.

However, notwithstanding the difficulty of gauging an activity that is implicitly informal, the Group felt that there is a case for investigating what is happening regarding changes, both positive and negative, in behaviour in information seeking. Members noted the British Library event on Web 2.0 in September, forming part of its TalkScience series of discussions¹.

It could be valuable to engage with the e-science community, where useful experiences might be drawn from.

REF and RAE

Members recognised that the verification of bibliometric data could represent a potential problem for HEFCE. At the same time, Research Councils have identified some factors likely to be of concern to the research community, including agreement by researchers about the meaning of bibliometric data, and the importance of ease of data collection (or alternately, of existing methodology for doing so)

The RIN Executive Team was clear that project work in this area should be primarily about helping HEFCE to implement its policy, and to guard against risks associated with such policy (i.e. assessment systems that might undermine innovation in the development of scholarly communications), rather than to influence HEFCE policy itself.

Other possible work

The Group briefly considered the case for more general

- **RIN Executive Team to contact Mark Ware as part of consultations for the framing of the project.**

¹ For information about TalkScience events, contact TalkScience@bl.uk.

research, building on some existing RIN work, for instance on data publication, and on the extent to which researcher outputs are being recognised and rewarded.

The Group also pointed to the usefulness of taking advantage of opportunities afforded by stakeholders' policy initiatives, and the brokering role that RIN could play in such contexts.

5. **Preservation of e-journals** (*paper RIN/RCG/08/11*)

The premise here is that there isn't a strategic view, in the UK, about the path(s) to follow to ensure long-term preservation of e-journals. Current arrangements are messy, and there could be a case for development of a more coherent framework that all or most key players could sign up to.

A large part of the problem may be the lack of resources to develop such a framework. Moreover, the problem is not exclusive to the UK, and needs to be addressed internationally; hence one of the questions to be addressed by the study is whether there is a case for adopting national solutions.

Preservation of e-journals is a pressing issue for university libraries, which goes to the heart of their mission to provide digital copies on demand. This is recognised even at European level; the EU Commission is therefore keen to encourage work in this area.

The Group agreed with the idea of drawing together views from various quarters to frame the scope of this project.

- ***RIN Executive Team to approach Peter Tindermans (PARS) to help with the framing of the project.***

6. **RIN update** (*paper RIN/RCG/08/12*)

Members noted expansion in RIN's staffing complement. In this context, it would be important to use RIN resources to try to maximise the impact, as well as the outputs and outcomes, of its work. For this purpose, it was suggested that RIN might need to be more specific at times about precisely who its outputs are directed to; at present, this can sometimes appear vague or generic.

7. **Other business**

There was none.

Next meeting: date in early to mid-Autumn to be confirmed

(Best to avoid week of 13th October, and also last week in October)