



## RIN Research Communications Group NOTE FROM THE EIGHTH MEETING – 13 JULY 2009

### *Action points in italics*

#### Present:

Michael Jubb (Chair) (RIN)  
Bob Campbell (Wiley-Blackwell and Publishing Research Consortium)  
Lee-Ann Coleman (British Library)  
Davina Foord (UUK)  
Jeremy Giles (British Geological Survey)  
Stéphane Goldstein (RIN)  
Neil Jacobs (JISC)  
Robert Kiley (Wellcome Trust)  
Frances Pinter (London School of Economics)  
David Prosser (SPARC Europe)  
Ian Russell (ALPSP)  
Debby Shorley (Imperial College London)  
Graham Taylor (Publishers Association)  
Mark Thorley (NERC)  
Astrid Wissenburg (ESRC)  
Michel Woodman (Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform)

#### Apologies:

Jeffrey Aronson (University of Oxford)  
Paul Ayris (UCL Library)  
Juan Bicarregui (STFC)  
Rachel Bruce (JISC)  
Fred Friend (JISC)  
Paul Gemmill (RCUK - BBSRC)  
Michael Mabe (International Association of STM Publishers)  
Ken Peach (University of Oxford and Royal Holloway College)

### 1. **Minutes of the meeting of 25 March 2009** (*paper RIN/RCG/09/04*)

These were agreed.

### 2. **Matters arising**

#### *From item 2 – matters arising*

It was felt that it would still be useful to produce a note about the place of conference proceedings within the scholarly communications.

***Ian Russell to remind Nick Evans about the drafting of this note.***

#### *From item 4 – e-books*

The views of the Group had been fed back to RESCOLINC and JISC Collections, but there had as yet not been any reaction to this.

***RIN Executive Team to contact RESCOLINC to enquire about their reaction to the feedback.***

### 3. **Transitions in scholarly communications** (*paper RIN/RCG/09/05*)

#### *Introduction:*

There is an understanding about the usefulness of forward-looking research, founded on the conclusions and evidence from recent work undertaken by JISC and others in the area of scholarly communications. The paper presented to the Group

therefore set out a number of ideas intended to help move forward the agenda, cooperatively and in a coordinated way. RIN has a role to play in this collective endeavour, particularly with a view to brokering relationships and advising on priorities. The challenge now is how to make up a portfolio of related activities. The Group's advice was being sought, although it was understood that other bodies and committees have their own interests and priorities, which clearly must be respected.

### *Discussion*

Two general points of principle were aired at the outset:

- Care would be needed to avoid unnecessary duplication of work already undertaken elsewhere. As part of the coordinated approach, it would be expedient wherever relevant to collect and make use of common data across the proposed activities.
- There was a view that referring to moves towards open access might be seen to pre-empt the outcome of such studies. It was suggested that references to 'universal access' might be preferable under these circumstances.

On the basis of the possible projects highlighted in the paper, members reflected on preferences and priorities from the perspective of their respective communities/organisations.

- There was much interest in the scenario planning suggested by the idea of a mapping of possible futures for scholarly communications over, say, ten years. Such a study could help anticipate longer term trends, facilitated by Web 2.0, towards the emergence and development of research outputs that are much more dynamic, made up of different web-manipulable components. At the same time, it was important to be aware of the risks of changes in scholarly communications methodologies destabilising the research environment – the study should pay heed to such risks.
- The Group understood the difficulty of anticipating challenges that are inherently difficult to predict; and also to apply such work across different disciplines. The Group agreed that this sort of horizon-scanning work is somewhat different from the more focused ideas suggested elsewhere in the paper. At the same time though, it was argued that even horizon-scanning could be undertaken with a practical perspective, but without making prior assumptions about the future role of key agents such as libraries and publishers.
- There was much interest around the table also on work around transition models. Members remarked that, in an evolving environment, methodologies and instruments often become extinguished – so as part of such work, it might be interesting to examine how these extinctions are coped with.
- Some members felt that an investigation of barriers to moves to e-only journals represents almost a prerequisite to other suggested projects, and should therefore be a key priority.
- The question of how to fill gaps in access to research outputs also attracted attention. Members reflected on how increased access, through big deals in particular, has affected the productivity of UK research (although care should be taken about the use of the term 'productivity', which is not the same as value). It was noted that RIN's e-journals study has started to look at such issues. Conversely, the Group noted that

researchers' search behaviour of researchers, particularly younger ones, is heavily influenced by the levels of access stemming from institutions' subscription policies. This could be restrictive, and methodological issues around access and searching might be worthy of investigation.

- The other areas suggested in the paper, generally more specific in scope, were deemed to be of varying importance. Some members felt that the themes that they address could be subsumed into the four studies, above, that clearly generated the most interest.

#### *Taking forward a set of proposals*

The consensus of the discussion was that a portfolio of four projects should be defined, focusing on (i) where we are now (projects on access gaps and on barriers to moves to e-journals); (ii) where we are currently moving (project on transition models); and (iii) where we might move to in the longer-term (project on ten-year scenario planning). Although these projects would be related, it was agreed that each necessitated a distinctive approach.

How might these areas of work be taken forward, and what partnerships might be set up to do this collaboratively? Again, the Group stressed the crucial importance of a collaborative approach between the different players represented on the Group, exploiting RIN's strong position as an honest broker; engagement with the various communities would be an indispensable factor.

- *Project on access gaps:* Research Councils, the British Library and JISC have a particular interest in this work. Issues that might be covered include walk-in usage; the place of public libraries and other information providers, e.g. those serving the needs of researchers outside academia; and perhaps the influence of information literacy in broader society (although the latter is largely beyond RIN's and even JISC's remit).
- *Project on moves to e-only journals:* JISC Collections have set out some initial proposals for work in this area; it was therefore important to ensure that there is no duplication of effort – although there was a view around the table that RIN should be very active in taking this forward, and might be better placed than JISC to do so.
- *Project on transitions towards open access:* Research Councils, the Wellcome Trust, UUK and JISC are very interested in this area, as are the Publishers Association and ALPSP – although it was felt that the success of this work would depend largely on input from individual publishers too; it was hoped that such engagement would be forthcoming. JISC had already done some preliminary scoping, although with a different emphasis. It was now important to ensure that RIN and JISC merge their efforts in this area.
- *Ten-year scenarios:* there was a significant interest expressed by Frances Pinter and several other members, as well as UUK. In addition, there was felt to be some relevance to the RCUK Digital Economy Programme, and to the work of the Foresight Horizon Scanning Centre (FHSC). It was suggested that this study should cover textbooks and monographs as well as journals. This would be an ambitious project, and there are major questions about what form it might take. In

*Astrid Wissenburg to investigate whether data from RCUK's recent open access study might be used, in confidence, for the purposes of the proposed project on transition models.*

*RIN Executive Team to discuss the ten-year scenario idea at its forthcoming meeting with the FHSC.*

particular, to what extent might the methodology be founded on a participative process, involving, say, workshops and discussions organised to draw from different perspectives, in order to test assumption? Such an approach would require highly skilled facilitation.

The Group agreed that three actions were required in the short term to take forward this portfolio of activities:

- setting out a broad scoping document;
- setting up a working group, made up of interested individuals, to flesh out some more detailed proposals;
- making an announcement of intention, in the name of all the prospective partners.

#### *Influencing strategy*

The Group was well aware of RIN's role a provider of evidence and an influencer of the various constituencies, including researchers, with an interest in scholarly communications, including researchers. With regard to the proposed portfolio of activities, members reflected on whether RIN also has a role as a body that explains emerging methodologies and develops levels of awareness about how different tools are used. The feeling around the table was that this did indeed form part of RIN's remit. It was therefore important to think of the means (e.g. the communications methods) deployed to influence and educate in the use of new methodologies.

***RIN Executive Team to act on these three short-term points.***

#### **4. Other business**

There was none.

**Next meeting: date in the autumn to be agreed**