



RIN Research Communications Group
NOTE FROM THE THIRD MEETING – 26 SEPTEMBER 2007

Action points in italics

Present:

Michael Jubb (Chair) (RIN)
Jeffrey Aronson (University of Oxford)
Paul Ayris (UCL Library)
Juan Bicarregui (STFC)
Bob Campbell (Blackwell and Publishers' Research Consortium)
Lee-Ann Coleman (British Library)
Fred Friend (JISC)
Jeremy Giles (British Geological Survey)
Stéphane Goldstein (RIN)
Robert Kiley (Wellcome Trust)
David Prosser (SPARC Europe)
Debby Shorley (University of Sussex)
Graham Taylor (Publishers Association)
Astrid Wissenburg (ESRC)
Michel Woodman (Department of Trade & Industry)

Apologies:

Sarah Chaytor (UUK)
Michael Mabe (International Association of STM Publishers)
Ken Peach (University of Oxford and Royal Holloway College)
Ian Russell (ALPSP)

1. Minutes of the meeting of 29 May 2007 (paper RIN/RCG/07/10)

These were approved.

2. Matters arising

[From item 3] The Executive Team reported that there had been no progress on recruiting additional members. RIN recognises the need to bring the Group up to strength, especially with regard to the two slots reserved for arts/humanities and social sciences researchers.

■ **RIN Executive Team** *urgently to seek to fill the two researcher vacancies on the Group.*

3. Scholarly communications statement of principle: next steps (paper RIN/RCG/07/11)

The checklist should be seen as a necessary basis to any further development of this agenda, including the organisation of a workshop. Members noted that it is no more than an early draft, open to amendment.

At a fundamental level, the Group reflected on what **impact such a checklist might have** in a given institutional setting;

■ **RIN Executive Team** *to produce revised checklist on the basis of comments, and to circulate to the Group asap.*

what use would be made of it? What would be its value to managers and policy-makers? These issues need to be addressed at the outset, and the document should be set out in such a way that stakeholders can easily see the benefits of applying the principles.

Some members wondered whether it would be better to provide **instances of good practice** (i.e. providing evidence of what is actually happening) rather than to pose a series of questions. However, it was felt that accumulating evidence to identify good practice in a fast-moving environment could be difficult – and moreover, there is a risk that instances of such evidence from different quarters would not always be compatible. A compromise approach would be to retain the questions, but to illustrate them in the context of the proposed series of meetings; they could then serve as a benchmark.

There was a broad view that the **fragmented structure** of the list, with distinct questions being asked of the various types of stakeholder, may not be helpful – especially bearing in mind the level of interrelationship and collaboration between the different agents. It was suggested that similar, generic questions should be put to all the stakeholders under each of the principles. This would have the advantage of providing answers that could be more readily contrasted, and generally of simplifying the presentation of the checklist.

A number of more specific points were raised in discussion:

- Do the questions on pursuit of research, as worded, add anything to the checklist, bearing in mind that these tend to state the obvious? Members agreed that they are useful because they provide the context, but could benefit from being worded more precisely (e.g. ‘how many papers have you refereed?’, rather than ‘do you respond to requests to undertake peer review?’).
- It would be useful to ask institutions explicitly whether they have a publishing strategy.
- The retaining of underpinning data for re-use should feature under the heading of curation.
- The checklist pays too little attention to non-digital material, including artefacts.

4. **Guidance on acknowledgement of funders in journal articles** (*paper RIN/RCG/07/12*)

The key question now is how to implement the guidance. It has already been considered by the PA and by the RIN-Research Council liaison group; it will shortly be discussed at the RC Research Outputs Group (ROG), with a view to getting its recommendations incorporated in due course within RC grant terms and conditions.

Members agreed about the usefulness of circulating information about the guidance at the **Frankfurt Book Fair**; more specifically, it could be included in the delegates’ pack for the STM Association annual meeting in advance of the Fair, on 9 October. This would be a useful also of raising the RIN’s profile.

Beyond that, the Group agreed that the RIN should issue a press

■ **Astrid Wissenburg** to alert the Research Council group on harmonisation of terms and conditions.

■ **Graham Taylor** to check when the guidance will be considered by ALPSP.

■ **RIN Executive Team** to prepare a handout on the guidance for circulation at the STM Association annual meeting in Frankfurt.

release, in late October or early November, as there is a likelihood of media interest.

Some members expressed concern about the use of National Library of Medicine Document Type Definitions (NLM DTDs) in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Even though the relevant recommendation is aspirational, there may be a case in providing reassurance about its applicability across the spectrum – the DTDs are generic, and should not be seen as a barrier.

The Group recognised the fact that publishers cannot guarantee that tagging services will always be free. The section on tagging (paragraph 12) might benefit from a better description of principles.

- **Graham Taylor** to confirm the name of a point of contact for the above meeting.
- **RIN Executive Team** to liaise with Group members to agree on the text of a press release.
- **RIN Executive Team** to tweak the text to reflect members' comments.

5. Forthcoming RIN study on comparative usage of academic journals (*paper RIN/RCG/07/13*)

The study is intended to address a key gap in knowledge and will be focused at journal article level. It was recognised that the project would present methodological challenges, because of the **difficulty of framing the follow-up questions** – it was understood that these would need to be set out clearly and precisely. Clarity would also be required during the commissioning process, so that prospective contractors are left in no doubt about what is (and isn't) expected.

Members suggested that the scope of these questions might need to be determined at the outset. They reflected on the case for reversing the sequence by carrying out the second-stage, qualitative work first, and of undertaking the transactional analysis afterwards on the basis of the feedback from the interviews. Might there be a case also for undertaking some qualitative work both before and after the transactional analysis?

It was pointed out, however, that the nature of much of the qualitative questioning could only be determined on the basis of the results of the transactional analysis.

Other issues for clarification include:

- the disciplinary areas to be selected;
- the usage of hard copy material;
- usage outside HEIs – the ability to analyse this would depend largely on the willingness of a selection of organisations to make their logs available; this could not be taken for granted;

Members noted a recent UCL study on the use of e-books, which has provided some useful and potentially relevant data.

The RIN Executive indicated that it had not yet decided whether the follow-up study would be an extension of the initial work to be undertaken by the same contractor, or treated as a linked but separate project.

- **RIN Executive** to refine the specification and circulate it to the Group asap.

6. Journals baseline study gap analysis (*paper RIN/RCG/07/14*)

The Group noted the gaps in evidence that could be addressed by future work, to be undertaken potentially by a range of stakeholders including JISC and the Research Councils. The RIN is open-minded about the nature of the work needed to fill any gaps. Some activity is already under way:

- **Astrid Wissenburg** to circulate the specification for the RCUK project, as soon as this goes in the public domain [*note: this has now been circulated*].

- the RIN-led income and cost flows study;
- the RCUK study on the cost and impact of open access, which is currently the subject of a call for proposals, with a view to a funding decision being reached by the end of November;
- a series of projects funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) on usage and impact; there may be of case for a follow-up, Europe-wide study that the RIN could usefully be associated with.

Members commented that there is a strong case for observatory-type projects which chart the dynamics and evolution of particular situations rather than provide a snapshot at any given point in time.

7. Programme of future RIN activities (*paper RIN/RCG/07/15*)

There was little enthusiasm among members for RIN involvement in areas around **publication ethics**. The RIN's recent initial contact with the UK Office for Research Integrity (UKRIO) was noted.

Conversely, the Group expressed significant interest in possible future work on **Web 2.0 applications as a research information resource**, maybe involving a survey of the developing landscape of the use of such applications. There could also be advantages, from the point of view of heightening the RIN's profile, of investigating a forward-looking area such as this. Questions to be addressed might include:

- How do new informal social networking methodologies affect publication?
- What impact does this have on the notion of the 'definitive version' of a given research output?
- What can be said about the reliability and often ephemeral nature of informal outputs?
- What is the value of Web 2.0 methodologies as a source of commentary and explanation?
- What is the potential for collaborative construction of tools for researchers?

Members noted the relevance of much work being undertaken under the auspices of e-science initiatives, and of the e-Infrastructure roadmap's strand on virtual research communities.

- **RIN Executive Team** to lay the groundwork for a project centred on Web 2.0 and research information, to be undertaken next year.

8. Update on current RIN studies (*paper RIN/RCG/07/16*)

This was noted without comment.

9. ERA and other European developments (*paper RIN/RCG/07/17*)

The Group noted the difficulty of **keeping abreast of European developments**, because of spread of initiatives under different strands of EU policy-making. Is there a way of joining up information sharing at a UK level? There may be problems in co-ordination because stakeholders have different agendas and

priorities. Nevertheless, it was suggested that the RIN's website could for instance act as a clearing house for responses to EU consultations, on RIN website – bearing in mind that the website is already proving a useful centralised resource for relevant material.

Information was circulated on the **EC PEER project** proposal, for an observatory monitoring the effects of systematic self-archiving. The proposal would be submitted shortly, although a final decision from the EU is not expected until mid-2008. The Group recognised the value of setting up such an observatory – which publishers say underlines their willingness to foster collaboration with libraries about orderly and consensual deposit of material in repositories. There was some confusion about whether the proposal would address the rationale for embargo periods. Concern was expressed about whether migration of use is a valid metric – some members suggested that there is no current evidence about the impact of this.

10. Other business

There was none.

Next meeting: date to be confirmed, either in December or early January