

SCONUL Representative Report 2009

Introduction

This paper provides JCS members with an update on a selection of activities that SCONUL is currently involved in.

1. The Library Systems Landscape Environment

It was reported in last year's SCONUL representative report that JISC and SCONUL were collaborating in an horizon scan study related to the library management system and related systems landscape environment. The study report¹ was published in April 2008 and was followed by a community engagement event in June 2008. Themes that emerged from the report and subsequent community event included:-

- The level of concern at what is perceived as inadequate core systems functionality, typically in relation to the handling of digital resources and the lack of interoperability with key corporate systems, leading to duplication of effort and sub-optimal service delivery
- Dissatisfaction with the low level of visibility and exposure provided by the institutional LMS in relation to the costly resources purchased and licensed by academic libraries on behalf of their user communities
- The lack of integration between the LMS and other relevant institutional resources outside "traditional" library print and digital resources (e.g. archives and other heritage collections held in university museums and galleries as well as, increasingly, institutional digital assets such as research outputs, research data, learning objects etc.)
- Open source LMS developments are emerging and, whilst not yet sufficiently developed to offer a viable alternative immediately, may offer significant potential for the future.
- The desire for SCONUL and JISC to take a leadership role.
- The potential to consider shared service options as a means to liberate effort and resource

This work is currently being taken forward through two related initiatives including the TILE study² and a shared services initiative (see below).

2. Shared Services Initiative

In early October 2008 SCONUL submitted an expression of interest to HEFCE under its shared services programme. Project funding was approved in December 2008. The feasibility study, which is being taken forward in collaboration with JISC, seeks to address the following questions:-

¹ Available at http://www.sconul.ac.uk/news/lms_report/lmsstudy/

² See <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/resourcediscovery/tile.aspx>

- What, if any, opportunities exist to develop a shared service response within the current Library Management System (LMS) landscape for UK higher education libraries
- What, if any, opportunities exist to develop a shared service response for a next generation open source LMS landscape for UK higher education libraries
- Whether there is a viable business case to support any such opportunities
- How any such shared service opportunities might be structured, delivered and governed

It is hoped that the study will begin in March 2009 and that the final report will be submitted to HEFCE at the end of November 2009.

3. Libraries of the Future Horizon Scan Programme

SCONUL, JISC, Research Libraries UK (RLUK), RIN and the British Library are collaborating on a two year horizon scan initiative and Professor Derek Law was appointed as the Programme Consultant at the end of 2008. The overarching aims of the programme are to:-

- To gather and analyse information about current and future trends that are likely to have an impact on the future of academic and research libraries in the UK and Ireland; and
- To formulate strategic responses to help ensure that libraries continue to develop and sustain effective levels and types of service to support students and researchers in the HE and related sectors.

The programme, *inter alia*, will:-

- engage with and draw insights from a range of library and information professionals, along with users and other stakeholders
- gather evidence through such interactions on the trends, challenges and key drivers for the development of academic libraries and their services, and their use by students and researchers.
- develop and test scenarios to assess the effectiveness of current policies, processes and services in the light of potential future developments, and to highlight the choices facing decision-makers
- develop a vision for the future development of academic and research libraries and their services at local, national and international levels, and define the steps, along with the policy advice, guiding principles, behaviours and resources, that will be required to enable that vision to be delivered

4. The Learning and Teaching Agenda

SCONUL has established a small task and finish group to help widen its impact and influence in relation to the range of learning and teaching support that its members provides. One objective is to reach beyond the important but specialist activities which are already well supported and acknowledged around information literacy and wider skills.

The group is chaired By Professor Sue McKnight (who was recently awarded a National Teaching Fellowship) and held its first meeting in November 2008. It is intended that the group will help shape a SCONUL learning and teaching agenda to enhance support for members.

5. The Access Agenda

SCONUL continues to work with partners (including JISC, Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association and the UK Access Federation) to assure effective access to resources for Higher Education users and to make accessible licensed resources in keeping with complex licenses and compliances. SCONUL is committed to the dual maintenance of access and compliance which can be opposing forces. The aim is to enable the opening up of access wherever possible and so to ensure that HEIs are able to support their core business of learning teaching and research whilst also permitting the development of international agenda and business and community activities.