Director's Report

It is a pleasure to introduce the Annual Report for 2008, which has been a particularly important year for UKOLN. We celebrated our 30th Anniversary in April with a special event at the British Library, which was attended by over one hundred friends and colleagues. A stellar international panel of speakers developed perspectives on the information landscape whilst UKOLN staff followed with an interactive rich media timeline which outlined the key points, publications, projects and experiences of the past thirty years. The previous Directors, Philip Bryant and Lorcan Dempsey joined me in reminiscing on the highly innovative culture that characterises the organisation and makes it such a stimulating work environment.

This year we have also applauded the well-deserved success of Brian Kelly, who won the Information World Review *"Information Professional of the Year Award"*. Brian has an outstanding blog which is widely read and quoted; he is an entertaining and informative speaker and is a great example of effective outreach in action. Our wide range of communication channels, reflect the rapid pace of change in the information world. We are now routinely engaged in social network debate, we read the latest developments in blog posts and work collaboratively around wiki spaces. Conferences and workshops also illustrate the evolving communications patterns of the participants, with the "un-conference or bar-camp" approach gaining increasing popularity within the developer community.

During the year, we have updated our Web presence with a new look and feel designed to enhance access and navigation to the quality content on our site. We have also launched a suite of resources for the cultural heritage community, including introductory briefings on collection description, metadata, social networking services and digital preservation. These resources were informed by a number of regional workshops, which provided an opportunity to gather feedback and requirements directly from practitioners in museums, archives and public libraries. Other Web highlights include the *"If it quacks like a duck"* paper by Emma Tonkin on emerging search technologies, the JISC PoWR Preservation of Web Resources Handbook (with partners ULCC), and "A Desk too Far" article (the first of two) on remote working in *Ariadne* magazine by Marieke Guy.

We continue to provide advocacy, support and best practice guidance for repository managers and developers. The *Scaling Up* Feasibility Report from the final phase of the eBank Project highlighted the challenges faced in implementing a federated data repository model in one particular discipline, crystallography, and this is now the goal of the eCrystals Project, in which UKOLN is a partner. We are becoming more aware of the disciplinary differences in data curation practice through the work of the Digital Curation Centre SCARP Project and through the KIM Grand Challenge work in the engineering domain. In all cases, intense, immersive and extended exposure to practising scientists and engineers at the coalface, has been crucial in helping informaticians at UKOLN firstly to understand and then to deliver appropriate advice and guidance on standards, data documentation and preservation best practice.

This valuable experience has been shared through peer-reviewed papers presented at the 3rd International Digital Curation Conference, which was held in Washington DC. UKOLN organised the conference as the Community Development lead partner in the Digital Curation Centre, and the event was held in collaboration with the US National Science Foundation (NSF), the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, (IMLS). Conference papers have also been published in the *International Journal of Digital Curation* and we were delighted to see this relatively young journal cited in a recent issue of Nature which focussed on the "Big Data" theme.

Finally, we have successfully influenced and contributed to a range of international initiatives through invited keynote presentations, strategic advisory boards such as the NSF Office for Cyber-Infrastructure Advisory Board and through report citations in national data strategies, such as the Australian National Data Service (ANDS). Closer to home, we look forward to continuing to support the national strategies of our core funding agencies, the JISC and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council during the year ahead.
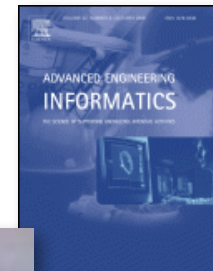
Dr Liz Lyon
December 2008

Staff News

In December 2007 Koraljka Golub became a member of UKOLN's Research and Development Team, working primarily on projects concerning metadata and interoperability. In January, Adrian Stevenson joined UKOLN, to work with the Repositories Research Team - a collaboration between UKOLN and JISC CETIS to support the JISC Digital Repositories Programmes.

In June 2008, Michael Day was appointed to the post of R&D Team Leader following the retirement of Rachel Heery. Throughout his years at UKOLN, Michael has developed deep knowledge and expertise in many areas associated with digital libraries, digital preservation, digital curation and digital repositories, and he is highly respected on the international stage.

Marieke Guy and Natasha Bishop were also welcomed back from maternity leave.

- UKOLN celebrated its 30th Anniversary with a programme of presentations looking at past, present and future highlights.

- Brian Kelly was awarded the prestigious *Information World Review* Information Professional of the Year award.

- UKOLN completed the development of a new look & feel and navigation structure for its Web site. This completed the first phase of an ongoing re-development of the UKOLN Web presence.

- A dedicated area of the new Web site provides access to a wide range of resources for the cultural heritage community.

- Funding has been secured for a number of new projects and extensions, including the JISC-funded SUE (Start-Up and Enhancement) Training Programme, the eCrystals Federation, the JISC PoWR Project and the Digital Curation Centre Summer School (DCC 101).

- From the beginning of 2008, UKOLN has been a partner in a major European Union-funded project: IMPACT (Improving Access to Text). The project consortium is developing and testing tools and technologies to support the large-scale digitisation of historical text and UKOLN is a key component of a virtual centre of competence in digitisation technologies in Europe. UKOLN leads the sub-project dealing with capacity building.

- UKOLN was a partner in the JISC-PoWR Project which produced a handbook to address Web resource preservation issues for the UK HE/FE Web management community. A series of workshops supported the creation of the handbook.

- UKOLN has led two JISC-funded projects investigating the role of knowledge organisation systems in information infrastructures. These include a scoping study into the development of terminology registries (TRSS) and a project examining the use of established knowledge information systems in social tagging contexts (EnTag).

- The 3rd International Digital Curation Conference entitled "Curating our Digital Scientific Heritage: a Global Collaborative Challenge," was held in Washington DC, USA.

- UKOLN continues to explore disciplinary approaches to research data curation through the DCC SCARP Project and through meetings and workshops.

- The first Research Data Management Forum, organised by DCC Community Development activity at UKOLN in association with the Research Information Network, was held in Manchester in March 2008.

- UKOLN organised and supported the Institutional Web Management Workshop held at the University of Aberdeen, July 2008. This event provided an opportunity for 180 delegates to hear plenary talks, participate in workshops and barcamps and engage in discussion on national initiatives and emerging technologies relating to institutional Web management.

- Work in the repositories domain continues with participation in the JISC-funded Repositories Support Programme (RSP), the Repositories Research Team and the SUE Training Programme (SUETr) for Start-Up and Enhancement repository projects.

- Monica Duke has developed a repositories search Web-service which searches over ninety e-prints repositories in the UK. This development is part of the UKOLN contribution to the Institutional Repositories Search project.

- A number of reports, research papers and book chapters has been published by UKOLN staff, including an article by Alexander Ball and Manjula Patel on the long-term management of engineering product data published in the *Journal of Advanced Engineering Informatics*, and a chapter on the long-term preservation of e-journal content in the book *E-Journals Access and Management* published by Routledge.
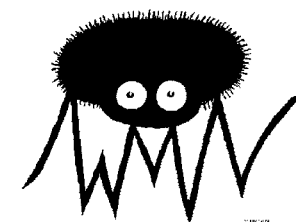
- Brian Kelly has contributed to two books published this year: *Information Literacy Meets Library 2.0* and *Web Accessibility: Practical Advice for the Library and Information Professional*.

- In February, Ian Dolphin (University of Hull) and Paul Walk (UKOLN) delivered a paper "Towards a Strategic Approach to the Integrated Information Environment" to the JISC Integrated Information Environment Committee. The paper will act as a foundation for the forthcoming technical review of the JISC Information Environment and its part in an e-Infrastructure for the UK, to be led by UKOLN.

- The *"Scaling Up Report"* co-authored by Liz Lyon was published in May 2008, which presents the results of a JISC-funded scoping study to assess the feasibility of a federated model for data repositories in the domain of crystallography.

- Ann Chapman was the author of the successful proposal by the BIC Bibliographic Standards Group to extend the MARC 21 Bibliographic Format to include information that would assist visually impaired users with resource selection.

- UKOLN staff have been invited to keynote, make presentations and have had papers accepted at many international conferences, including the ARL Forum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the International Digital Curation Conference in Washington, DC, the Joint Conference on Digital Libraries in Pittsburgh, the Fall 2007 Coalition for Networked Information Task Force Meeting in Washington, DC, the Max Planck eScience Seminar and the first DRIVER Summit in Goettingen.

ADVANCED ENGINEERING INFORMATICS

3rd International
Digital Curation Conference 2007
Washington DC, USA   11-13 December 2007

SUETr

Facts and Figures

UKOLN Funding
The chart right shows the breakdown of UKOLN funding for the period August 2007 to July 2008.
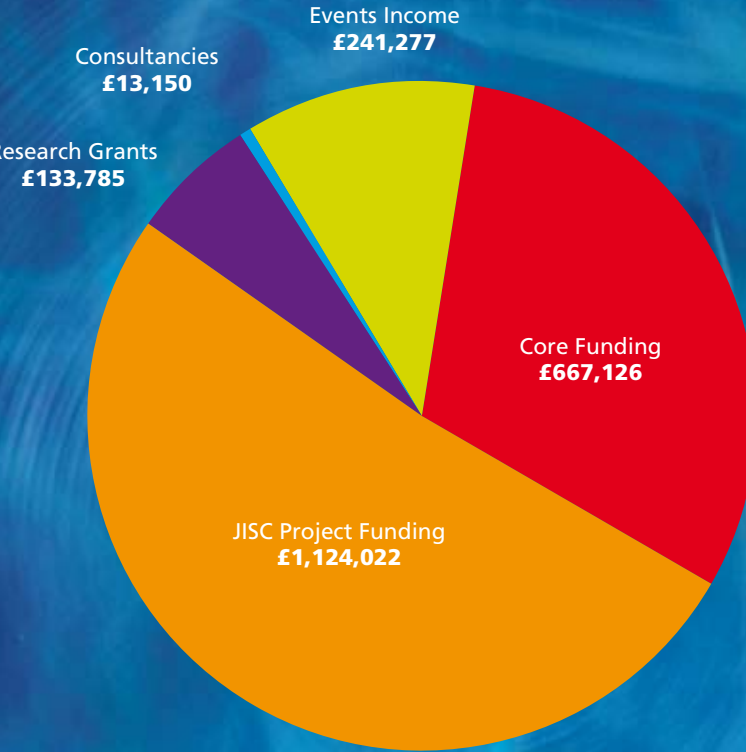
Events

A range of events took place including:
- NERC Data Management Workshop, Kenilworth, October 2007
- 3rd International Digital Curation Conference, Washington DC, December 2007
- UKOLN 30th Anniversary Event, London, April 2008
- Repositories Support Project (RSP) Summer School, The Wirral, June 2008
- Institutional Web Management Workshop, Aberdeen, July 2008
- JISC/CNI Meeting, Belfast, July 2008

Impact
- Brian Kelly was named as Information Professional of the Year by the *Information World Review* newspaper. Brian was described as *"someone who is really pushing the boundaries of information, of technology and developing the role of an information professional into something really exciting"*. His blog was awarded a prize in the UCISA competition for examples of best practices for communicating with users and was short-listed in the Web 2.0 and Business category for the *Computer Weekly IT* Blog Award 08.

- Feedback from workshops run in the MLA regions include: "A very worthwhile event & worth repeating for our colleagues", and "… clarified a lot about new web technologies - learnt lots of new extremely useful resources on the web". "We have now set up a Facebook page for our museum … as a result of inspiration from the event."

Breakdown of Funding **2007/8**

Events Income
£241,277

Consultancies
£13,150

Research Grants
£133,785

Core Funding
£667,126

JISC Project Funding
£1,124,022

UNIVERSITY OF BATH

MLA MUSEUMS LIBRARIES ARCHIVES COUNCIL

JISC

UKOLN

A centre
of expertise
in digital
information
management

Annual Report 2008