Editorial

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This issue completes *LIBER Quarterly*'s coverage of LIBER's Annual General Conference at Aarhus, which took place from 29 June until 2 July 2010. Here is a summary of what you can expect in this issue:

Michael Jubb of the UK Research Information Network (RIN) raises some fundamental issues that merit quoting in this editorial:

> 'There is a growing recognition among senior managers in universities as well as information professionals that both academics and students require better support if they are to handle information resources effectively. But effective support depends increasingly on a mixture of subject specialist and information expertise; and there is no consensus on how moves of this kind might be initiated, nor on how professionals of this kind might be organised and where they might be located within institutional structures.'

> 'A minority view among senior managers is that libraries and librarians are key to these kinds of developments: that they already understand and have a broad view of the issues which other players lack, and that some of them are already involved in providing relevant services as well as acting as partners in pilot projects. A more widespread view is that while many librarians have talked about developing their contribution to the research effort in these ways, there are only weak linkages between the expertise and the services now needed and the traditional skillsets of librarians. Even those who take a more positive view acknowledge that if librarians are to develop their roles in this way, there will be a huge need for training and capacity-building; and that might involve re-envisioning and rebuilding the role of subject specialist librarians.'

And as if that were not enough, budget cuts add to the pressure.

John MacColl of OCLC also takes a wider view at the role of research libraries. He summarises recent OCLC research which looks at the research environment with the scholar at its centre. Scholars increasingly make use of social networks on the Web. Though often riddled with errors, such networks offer vast quantities of content and refreshingly quick and flexible ways to share information. MacColl concludes that 'the institutional repository is unlikely to have much affinity appeal to researchers, but if heavily policed, and if it comes with a lot of mediated labour, it may still attract more deposits than the subject repository.' MacColl advocates a strategic role for libraries in curating, advising on and preserving the *manifold* outputs of research activity — 'and largely without reference to the library'. On another sobering note MacColl concludes that 'reform of scholarly publishing, open access, the population of repositories and other such high library priorities are very much second order activities for academics.'

RIN contributes to the debate by exploring various methods to assess the value of the digital library, tentatively concluding that more expenditure means more content means more scholarly output. Giuseppina Vullo adds a review of various evaluation methods and tools, concluding that 'several assessment methodologies have been built and the interdisciplinary research is growing, while a broadly accepted model is still lacking.'

Developing new electronic services is another way of meeting the demands of the 21st century. Sara Aubry (BnF) and Maria Hvid Stenalt (Aarhus) demonstrate how national/state libraries expand into web archiving and preserving audiovisual collections respectively. Once again the challenge seems to be to prove the value of activities such as web archiving, as most users are yet to be born.

As opposed to national libraries, research libraries tend to focus on the scholarly output of their institutions. Maria Cassella (Turin) proposes a number of performance indicators (PI's) to prove the value of institutional repositories, while Iva Horová and Radim Chvála (Academy of Performing Arts in Prague) focus on the more technical issue of developing a workflow for including non-text materials in the repository.

The University of Patras in Greece ventured into e-publishing as a means to both serve the scholarly community and generate additional income, as described by Panos Georgiou and Giannis Tsakonas.

Ellen Simons (Avans University of Applied Sciences) and Ana van Meegen & Imke Limpens (Free University Amsterdam) focus on the educational aspects of librarianship: a new learning centre for Avans and making use of serious gaming to improve students' information literacy skills at the Free University of Amsterdam. Will games be the answer to the Net Generation's short attention spans in combination with libraries' staff cuts?

This issue is completed by a paper that was not presented at the Annual General Conference but at the bi-annual gathering of LIBER's *Groupe des cartothécaires* from 15 to 19 June in Tallinn. Lucyna Szaniawska describes how the National Library of Poland improved access to its map collections.