

University of Sussex

Library Consultative Group

Notes of the 82nd meeting held on Wednesday, 5 June 1996

- Present: K. Berggreen (Bookshop), Ms. E. Craig (Library Clerical & Related staff), R. Discombe (Computing Service), Mrs. R. Dragneva (CCS/SEI), Ms. M. Duru (AFRAS SJC), G. Gillingham (MAPS SJC) Ms. A. Gormley (ENGAM SJC), Dr. R. Howes (Library), Dr. L. John (BIOLS), Dr. L. Martell (SOCS), C.P. Ravilious (Library, Chair), M. Reuter (BIOLS SJC), Dr. J. Rusted (EP/BIOLS), Dr. G. Wraith (SMS)
- Apologies: Mr. T. Arvanitis (COGS), Ms. C. Culver (Students' Union), Prof. B. Graham (EURO), Ms. S. Hinchliffe (CCE), A.N. Peasgood (Librarian), Dr. F. Watts (BIOLS), Dr. M. Howard (CCS),

637. The notes of the 81st meeting were confirmed.

638. Matters arising.

635. The Library Unit Plan was still in course of development and various suggestions made at the previous meeting were being incorporated.

639. [The Librarian's Report](#), February to May 1996 was noted.

The construction of the Library extension was continuing, though it appeared that since the report was written work had fallen a little behind schedule. Temporary screens and corridors on the first and second floors, erected during the spring term, would remain in place until the extension with its own fire escapes was in use. A similar protective screen would be installed on the ground floor during the summer vacation. Most affected would be AV viewing and listening facilities, which would be relocated; there would be minor respacing of the Short Loan collection, and adjustment to the locations of photocopiers and catalogue terminals. A quantity of very low use stock at present stored in the vicinity of the central Stage 3 staircase, which was scheduled for demolition, would be removed during the coming vacation to the Lewes Store, while some stock now at Lewes would be transferred to container storage for approximately one year; no material in active use would be rendered inaccessible by these developments.

The refurbishment of the existing building, and the assimilation of the extension in the 1997/8 session, would involve a complex, disruptive series of changes, and the Librarian's report asked the Group to give its views on the acceptability of a brief period of closure to enable the most noisy and disruptive work (the demolition of the Stage 3 staircase and the building of a new stair at the south end of the present Library) to be carried out as quickly as possible, probably in the early part of the summer vacation of 1997. It was stressed that the operational case for such a closure had not yet been made: it was simply one of many eventualities needing to be considered. No immediate objection to the notion of a short closure in such circumstances was made by the group, though opening for part of each day during such a period was mentioned as a possible palliative of the worst effects of closure. It was also suggested by one member that some library services (like book borrowing) might continue while others were closed.

Some aspects of the Library's financial position remained unclear, but it was expected that services and purchasing during the next year would be retained at around their present levels; the Periodicals Review - to be conducted next Spring - would, however, almost certainly result in a reduction in subscriptions, the rate of inflation for periodicals being much higher than that for books. There was much dissatisfaction in the Library community over periodicals prices. The HEFCE-sponsored Pilot Site Licence Initiative was welcome equally as a source of discounted prices, as a step toward the wider availability of electronic journals, and as a relaxation of some of the restrictions on study packs; however the present experiment was to last for only three years and to cover only three publishers' output. In general the price of electronic journals was at present the same as that for the hard copy equivalent.

The Library's attempts to publicise electronic journals through subject groups had not been uniformly successful, the literature being distributed in some groups but not in others. All the relevant information was now mounted on USIS, and the current list of journals was also

available from Robert Howes. The slow accessing of the Academic Web Site would be improved and the implications of making it available across campus looked into. Confusion about different versions of Adobe Acrobat, the software involved, would be dealt with by the Library and Computing Service.

640. USCS initiative on Individual User Identifiers on Computing Service PCs. The Group noted the paper taken from the Report from the Computing Service for School meetings. For most people able to use Computing Service PCs there would be no problem in using Library services, but the Library's external users would be given only limited access to PC based services.

Most general purpose PCs in the Library were the responsibility of the Computing Service; they would be gradually updated as finances allowed.

641. The group received two reports on projects with earmarked funding:

- 1) Reading List System: TLDF 95/T28 ([LCG/82/6\(1\)](#))

The Group received a report on the continuation project to enter full details of reading lists onto the Library's Reading List System, including an evaluation of what were perceived to be its main benefits. Inclusion of all reading lists on the system had now been achieved, and there had been an increase of 70% in Reading List searches of the Library catalogue. While the number of such searches relative to those using individual book titles was modest, each Reading List enquiry resulted on average on the scanning of seven catalogue records, a much higher number than in Title or Quick searches. The system, in short, was functioning in the way expected. The role of the system in helping the Library to obtain high ratings in the Teaching Quality Assessments was also noted.

It was suggested that the system in its present state, though accessible to those with PCs and modems at home, could be more attractive if available to people browsing Netscape, and that there could be some saving in labour if some of the information available for reading lists were also available to other users, e.g. the Bookshop and individual academic units. The Library was aware of the potential of using the WWW and Netscape, and one of the Library contributions to a recent FIGIT (Follett Implementation Group for Information Technology) initiative had been the concept of a system involving reading lists with hypertext links to the catalogue, etc., available in just such a manner. Unfortunately, funding at national level had not been forthcoming. It was noted that the Geac computer's life span was limited, and that a replacement PC-based system was likely to be more hospitable to the kinds of functionality proposed.

The Group's overall view of the Reading List System was highly favourable, and several first-hand reports of its usefulness were forthcoming. Its success depended crucially on a regular flow of lists from tutors and course conveners, who were encouraged both to submit their lists in good time and to provide updates on changes or newly included items. It was stressed that issues arising from the final report of the Reading List System Steering Group had yet to be discussed in the Library, and that no assumptions regarding the continuance of the system could be made in advance of that discussion. However, the support expressed by the Group was very welcome.

- 2) Library Support for Research Projects: RDF 95/R12 ([LCG/82/6\(2\)](#))

Two basic premises were to be explored: whether it was possible for the Library to introduce services to help researchers save time, and whether there were alternatives to ever more expensive journals as sources of current information. In fact, work had concentrated so far on (1) enhancing ILR (InterLibrary Requests) and Document Delivery services for obtaining journal articles not held in the Library and (2) facilitating access to selected information resources available on the Internet. Neil Jacobs, the researcher working on this project, had interviewed researchers on campus about their use of the Internet and after further interviews would report again in October.

642. There was no other business.