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International Dateline

by **Anthony Watkinson** (Visiting Professor in Information Science at City University, London, England; Phone: +44 1993 811561; Fax: +44 1993 810067) <anthony.watkinson@btinternet.com>

When I visit North America I find certain puzzlement about whether Europe is an entity to be looked upon as an analogue of the United States of America or Canada, a federation of states or provinces. Over here we are not sure either and this applies in particular to those Europeans who are resident in the UK. Do we still make our own decisions or have we merged our sovereignty?

What does it look like in the information environment across Europe? There certainly are European initiatives. For example SPARC Europe has emerged as an outgrowth of **LIBER** (www.kb.dk/liber/umbrella/sparc.htm) and **LIBER** is the "principle association of the major research libraries of Europe." Rumour has it that this worthy organisation fought off a strong bid from the UK for the privilege of being the host. Another pan European body, **EBLIDA – European Bureau of Library Information and Documentation Associations**, having spawned first ECUP and then the facetiously named **TECUP** has now followed up with **The Frankfurt Group** (www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/frankfurtgroup/). This is a consensus forum for academic and research information representing the key players in the information chain and has already produced a "statement" on the vexed question of Value Added Tax, a candidate for "harmonisation." If we look at information provision for the

purposes of European lobbying the International Association of **Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM)** is often more prominent than the **Federation of European Publishers (FEP)**, which is the delegated body for the national associations. As the Dutch run much of the **STM** sector in Europe it is not surprising that the secretariat of the **STM** association (www.stm-assoc.org) is based just outside Amsterdam.

Nevertheless, in spite of the existence of these powerful players at a European level, this International Dateline will concentrate on UK initiatives, which in practice seem more relevant and more advanced than most programmes in other European countries and attempts at co-operation across international boundaries. Laws are still made internationally. Funding comes from national governments.

These initiatives are also, characteristically, government initiatives. Across Europe there is nothing like the distrust of "big government", which is such a common feature of American life and politics. Even **Mrs Thatcher** did not stamp out what to many Americans have to be viewed as "socialist" practices. In the following sections I shall look at some latest developments in the context of **JISC**, big government in the UK impinging on education. The acronym will be explained below. There are lots of others which I shall try to side-step. It is bad enough to try to keep up with acronyms in one's own country and no one should be forced to remember foreign ones.

The other theme is co-operation across

the information chain, which again is characteristically European. There is no lack of library activists, although it has to be admitted that most of the running in the "pricing wars" came from the USA. In Europe however for a variety of reasons publishers and librarians find it easier to talk at a representative level and there have been some developments from these conversations which are good news for both sets of players and the authors and users that both serve.

What is JISC?

This may be one of those questions that you were not aware that you had asked. However for those interested **JISC** stands for the **Joint Information Systems Committee** of the national bodies funding higher and further education in the UK. In UK parlance higher education is education leading to a degree in colleges and universities while further education is basically VoTech. The origin of **JISC** springs from the seminal **Follett Report** of 1993 (<http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/services/papers/follett/report/>), much cited and little read, and the emphasis is on centralised infrastructure and services provided for the teaching and learning community with the Internet seen as the mechanism for delivery. The current jargon is **ICT** – information and communications technology, which is not quite synonymous. **JISC** has now embarked on its second five-year strategy. A huge generalisation might be that a period of experimentation, particularly through the **eLib** programme, which was to my mind often misguided, has now given way to heavy investment in provision. At the same time the co-operation with the publishing

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range of music selections has asked about making CDs of the selections for the students to use. He has created a CD for his classroom presentations and these include selections from a large number of sources. Last year he wanted to copy that CD for each student in his class and have the bookstore sell copies to the students at cost. The library convinced him that this was problematic, but he still wants to make three to four copies of his presentation CDs and put them on reserve in the library. Is there a problem if the library permits him to do this?

ANSWER: Under the *Guidelines on the Educational Uses of Music*, it is permissible to make a musical anthology for aural exercises, and the faculty member's in-class use appears to be such. The guidelines permit only one copy to be made, but one could argue that three to four copies still comply with fair use.

QUESTION: As a individual, I am interested in republishing some 18th and 19th century books from a nearby research library and converting them to text. Do I need explicit permission from the library to scan these older books, convert them to text, and republish them?

ANSWER: If the work was published in the United States prior to 1923, the copyright has expired and no permission is required from the copyright holder to digitize the work or to republish it because it is in the public domain. However, the research library may refuse to lend its copy to use for this digitization project because of concerns about potential damage to the artifact, but the library does not hold the copyright. Thus, you do not need permission from the library for republishing, but you do need its permission to use library book copies in the manner in which you have described. The library's interest is in preserving the books. 🐼

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sector begun as PA/JISC, known in America particularly for the much-praised model license (<http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/services/elib/papers/pa/licence/Pajisc21.html>), has been continued as the PALS committee, the rather coy acronym for the **Publishers and Libraries Solutions** Committee (<http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/services/elib/papers/pa/licence/Pajisc21.html>). Perhaps the biggest enterprise of this co-operation has been the vendor-based usage statistics working group (<http://www3.oup.co.uk/central/pals/progress%2010-aug-01.htm>) now international and internationalised. More on PALS and its development below. The JISC Website is one of the most Byzantine known to man or woman, but JISC operatives are working on it.

JISC and the Distributed National Electronic Resource

DNER is recognised even by its staffers as one of those turn-off acronyms. Teams are seeking a catchy name. Perhaps they need EU help. The European Commission is fabled to employ a person, whose sole tasks is to think of meaningful acronyms for boring projects. The Website (www.jisc.ac.uk/dner/) explains the aims succinctly. These are to build both an ex-

tensive portfolio of collections, that are quality assured, coherent and familiar to users as well as an information environment within which these collections can be searched, accessed and incorporated into learning, teaching and research. You do not need to be a rocket-scientist to recognise how difficult this all is. How do you manage quality control for example? The good news is that the JISC people are treating these questions with realism. The site only hints at the scale and complexity of the concept, which is way ahead in terms of ambition of any other national project. The mission is to enable users to find the great majority of what they want through a huge gateway or super-portal leading to a variety of gateways or portals appropriate to subject and level of enquirer and enquiry. The intention is that a seamless user experience built on serious research on user behaviour is matched with an integrated information environment providing a variety of resources reflecting user needs. PALS has now become in effect the mechanism for co-operation across the information chain to realise these objectives as far as published materials are concerned. Big words do not always mean big results but watch this space. In this matter I am an optimist.

JISC and e-Books

You have to drill down in the JISC/DNER Website to find out what resource

provision can mean in reality. I have chosen one type of resource. Particularly interesting to ATG readers is likely to be the activities of the so-called **JISC/DNER eBook Working Group** (www.jisc.ac.uk/dner/ebooks/). There is an excellent "issue paper" by Hazel Woodward (a Charleston speaker) and Louise Edwards, also from trend-setting Cranfield university. It is perhaps the best survey now of e-books in the educational sector. There is a recognition built into the project that sometimes published content, maybe not cheap and maybe from large commercial companies, may be a better resource than the free sources of, for example, editions of classical texts. One aim of the working group is to secure cost-effective access to a comprehensive and relevant collection of electronic books (loosely defined) for universities and colleges. This brokering function has proved remarkably successful and a number of offers are out for consideration by individual institutions. There is no doubt that publishers, disturbed by the collapse or near-collapse of a number of e-initiatives in 2001, have been encouraged by positive and flexible approaches. Nor is it just a matter of latching on to the Big Deals now emerging in this sector. There has been a real attempt to help smaller players find out what might be wanted by libraries and what could become commercially viable.