Against the Grain

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International Dateline-From the UK-UK Serials Group Annual Conference, European Federation of Serials Groups

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This year the UK Serials Group Annual Conference was a combined event with the European Federation of Serials Groups, whose current chairman is Claus Vesterager Pedersen of the State and University Library, Aarhus, seem quite daunting. On the good news front, a German serials group is in the stages of being formed, but here again there are some legal issues that need to be settled in determining the constitution of the group.

David Pullinger, formerly with Nature, gave a very interesting paper on the differences between the way that science and humanities researchers use electronic journals, and Robert Welham, Royal Society of Chemistry, shed some light on the SPARC initiative. Charles Oppenheim (Loughborough University) was again in excellent form on copyright and other legal issues.

The presentation by Julia Chruszcz (University of Manchester) on NESLI was noteworthy for how little she said about the problems that NESLI has experienced in getting the project off the ground. So far only Blackwell Science have signed a full agreement, and although there is a lot of talking going on, it is now getting close to the 99/00 subscription year with not a great deal to show for the first year of effort, though I do know that both Swets (as Managing Agent) and the University of Manchester have put all their best efforts behind the project. However, they are dealing with publishers!

On the exhibitor front, not a great deal to report, though Blackwell Information Services has signed an agreement with Ingenta (ex BIDS) to develop their electronic subscription management systems. All the subscription agents are now providing quite a substantial amount of information to support their customers, relating to licence agreements in particular.

Overall a very good conference (though I am on the Marketing Committee of UKSG) which would not have happened without a huge commitment of time from Jill Tolson (UKSG), Christine Fyfe (University of Warwick), Tony Kidd (University of Glasgow) and Terry Morrow (Ingenta Ltd). The papers will be published in the July and November issues of Serials, and plans are already being made for the 23rd UKSG Annual Conference on 10-12 April 2000 at the University of Keele. There is nowhere near the same amount of room, so do look out for details on the UKSG Web site at http://www.uksg.org.