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The E-Resources Management Handbook

by **Graham Stone** (Library Electronic Resources Manager, University of Huddersfield) <g.stone@hud.ac.uk>

Introduction

Ten years ago, UKSG¹ published the *Serials Management Handbook*,² edited by UKSG's present chair **Tony Kidd** and **Lyndsay Rees-Jones**. The publication provided an overview of best practice in the area of serials management.

In 2005, UKSG was approached to publish a second edition. However, the committee felt that even after five years, the world of serials management had moved on, as had the remit of UKSG. The original book touched on electronic developments, but acknowledged that the majority of serials information was delivered to libraries via print.

The remit of the UKSG is to:

- facilitate community integration, networking, discussion, and exchange of ideas
- improve members' knowledge of the scholarly information sector and support skills development
- stimulate research and collaborative initiatives, encourage innovation, and promote standards for good practice
- disseminate news, information and publications, and raise awareness of services that support the scholarly information sector

It was felt that any new publication needed to reflect these aims in addition to developments in the e-resources industry. Originally, it was envisaged that the new publication would be a member benefit, however, it was soon decided that open access was the way to go and the *E-Resources Management Handbook*³ was born!

The handbook is now in its fifth year and contains 30 chapters to date, all available as open access. It is hoped that by constantly adding chapters to the handbook, it will continue to provide relevant information covering developments within the wider electronic information resources industry. The handbook is designed to order the chapters by publication date; this way it not only keeps up with changes, but also provides a snapshot of developments in the industry over time.

The Editorial Board

In 2007 **Rick Anderson** (well known to *ATG* readers) reviewed the handbook in *The Charleston Advisor*,⁴ describing the ten chapters as "collection of essays dealing with a variety of topics related to ERM from different perspectives." **Rick** made a number of very valuable comments about the relevance of some of the chapters to a worldwide audience. The UKSG Committee welcomed the critique and no sooner had the article been published, **Rick** was approached to become part of the editorial team as our "American correspondent."

Scope

The scope of the handbook is to provide chapters which cover the whole range of issues and challenges facing the e-resource industry and are contributed by experts in the field. It includes the full range of UKSG membership, including chapters for librarians, publishers, agents, and everyone in between. Chapters are particularly useful for students studying librarianship, indeed the latest chapter by **Lizz Jennings** at the **University of Bath** entitled "Electronic resources management for electronic resources librarians: a bibliography,"⁵ was commissioned directly from **Lizz's** MSc after an email to lis-e-resources.⁶ The handbook is aimed at those new to the industry or simply for those who want to catch up with the latest developments in e-resources.

Chapters in the last two years have included introductions to peer review, journal impact factors and the role of the editorial board. UK copyright and the semantic Web have also been comprehensively covered.

E-resources management is a fast-paced industry. This means that some chapters can date very quickly. The editors periodically check those chapters that may need a newer version. So far two chapters — the first by **Jenny Walker** on new resources discovery mechanisms and the second by **Angela Conyers** on usage statistics and online behaviour — have been updated. **Angela's** chapter was also accompanied by a new chapter on the current developments and future plans of COUNTER by **Peter Shepherd**. While the revised chapters allow readers to keep abreast of the latest developments, the older chapters are still listed so that library and publishing students can see the rapid development over a relatively short space of time.

Thought Leader Interviews

In 2008 it was decided to commission five "thought leader" interviews with leading experts in the industry. A list of five questions were drawn up, ranging from the icebreaker — "How long have you been in the industry and what is the most significant change you have seen?" — to the more demanding — "Where do you see the industry going in the future?" The handbook approached **Catherine Jamieson** to interview a number of professionals from varying backgrounds — **Stephen Abram**, **SirsiDynix**; **Martin Marlow**, (then at) **Ingram**; **Peter McCracken**, (then at) **Serials Solutions**; **Jim Mouw**, **University of Chicago**; **Alison Mudditt**, (then at) **SAGE**.

The resulting interviews make fascinating reading, giving a range of very different perspectives on the information industry at the time. It will also prove interesting to revisit the interviews in a few years time to see whether the predictions for the future were true.

NASIGGuides

With **Rick Anderson** on board it was decided to see if any of the authors of the *NASIGGuides*⁷ would be interested in also publishing in the handbook. To date, three guides have been revised and co-published on the NASIG Website and in the handbook — **Trina Holloway** on cancellation workflow; **Joseph Thomas** on a beginner's guide to working with vendors, and **Glenda Griffin** on how to survive as a new serialist. A cursory glance at the *NASIGGuides* Website shows there are more interesting guides to come in the future.

Usage

Since the handbook was first published there have been over 22,000 full-text views, with the top five all time-favourites being:

1. A general overview of the e-resource industry by **Chris Armstrong** and **Ray Lonsdale**
2. Usage statistics and online behaviour (1) by **Angela Conyers**
3. The vital link: the role of the intermediary in e-resources by **Rollo Turner**
4. Licensing and negotiating: exploring unfamiliar ground by **Nol Verhagen**
5. Impact factors — the basics by **Jo Cross**

While the top four are the four oldest chapters, **Jo's** chapter on the impact factor is relatively new to the handbook.

Usage and popularity of the handbook is growing, with approximately a quarter of all downloads coming in 2010 alone. This year's top five most downloaded chapters so far are:

1. Usage statistics and online behaviour (2) by **Angela Conyers**
2. A beginner's guide to working with vendors by **Joseph Thomas**
3. New resource discovery mechanisms (2) by **Jenny Walker**
4. Cancellation workflow by **Trina Holloway**
5. E-resource management and the Semantic Web: applications of RDF for e-resource discovery by **George Macgregor**

It is reassuring to see the two revised chapters in the top three clearly showing that the updated versions are proving useful. The *NASIGGuides* are also well used. The chapter on the semantic Web by **George Macgregor**, a lecturer in Information Management and a member of the Information Strategy Group based in the Information Management & Systems section of Liverpool Business School, **Liverpool John Moores University**, was a departure for the handbook, but it does go to show that there is significant interest in this area.

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Forthcoming Chapters

The next chapter to be published will be "Show your true colours: devising advocacy for an institutional repository" by **Mary Betts-Gray** and **John Harrington** at **Cranfield University**. This chapter will be a very practical introduction to advocating open access repositories.

Other chapters in the pipeline include usage statistics from the publisher's perspective, an introduction to open access, a view of library consortia, and a guide for publishers on what libraries do and do not like when talking to suppliers. Finally it is also hoped that the chapter on intermediaries and e-resources will be revised for 2011.

It is possible to sign up to get notification of new chapters when they are published by following the link on the **UKSG** Website at <http://www.uksg.org/serials#handbook>.

Ideas For New Chapters

The editors are always looking to commission new content for the handbook. If there is something that you think needs to be included in the *E-Resources Management Handbook*, the editors need to hear from you. Contributions are welcome from around the world and from any aspect of the e-resources industry, commercial and the non-commercial sector alike. Chapters are typically 4,000 to 5,000 words long, and because the handbook is an open access publication, authors sign a license to publish, rather than a copyright transfer agreement, so that copyright is retained by the author(s).

*The author would like to thank all of the editors of the handbook over the past five years, **Jayne Burgess, Jill Taylor-Roe, Jessica Feinstein** and **Rick Anderson**, all of the contributing authors, and **Ally Souster** and **Alison Whitehorn** at **UKSG** for making the handbook*

*what it is today. Finally, a great big thank you to **Hazel Woodward** and **Helen Henderson**, outgoing editors (in every sense of the word) of *Serials*⁸ for backing the original idea.*

***Graham Stone** has been working with e-resources for over 15 years. He is Library Electronic Resources Manager at the **University of Huddersfield** and is responsible for the management of the Library Electronic Resources Team and University Repository. A member of the **UKSG** Committee since 2001, **Graham** is **UKSG** Secretary and a member of the *Serials* and *Journal of Electronic Resource Librarianship* editorial boards. He is editor-in-chief of *E-Resources Management Handbook* and has recently written a chapter on resource discovery for the Facet publication *Digital Information: Order or Anarchy?**

Endnotes

1. **UKSG**: <http://www.uksg.org>.
2. *The serials management handbook*, Ed. **Kidd, T.** and **Rees-Jones, L.**, 2000, London, **Library Association**.
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