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Development of university libraries in developing countries: experiences in the Central 'Marta Abreu' de Las Villas University (UCLV), Cuba

By José Rivero Díaz

Much has been said on the transformations that are taking place in the world of information, changes that have led to expressions such as 'the information society' or 'the knowledge society'.

Change is characteristic of this new era, and future graduates must be trained to adapt to these changes, and to assimilate the new developments and knowledge effectively and efficiently. Within a saturated information context this means being able to search for, locate, select, organise and use critical information; to recognise the need for information, to recognise information resources, to know how to look for information, to identify critical information, to manage, filter and structure the results, to know how to use the information wisely and creatively, and how to publish the results.

Libraries are better prepared than other university organisations to lead these changes. To do so they need to take into account the requirements 

About INASP

The mission of INASP is to enable worldwide access to information and knowledge with particular emphasis on the needs of developing and transitional countries.

We work with partners around the world to encourage the creation and production of information, to promote sustainable and equitable access to information, to foster collaboration and networking and to strengthen local capacities to manage and use information and knowledge.

Our objectives are to

- Improve access to scientific and scholarly information
- Catalyse and support local publication and information exchange
- Strengthen local capacities to manage and use information and knowledge
- Foster in-country, regional and international cooperation and networking
- Advise local organisations and agencies on ways to utilise information and publishing to achieve development goals.

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of available Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the strategic aims of the university, and the management of information necessary to achieve these aims.

The UCLV 'Chiqui Gómez Lubián' University Library confronted this transformation process by activating a highly participative strategic planning process, a re-engineering study that focused on new working requirements, and by training designed to ensure staff could deal with these changes.

In this way, the library changed from having a vertical, function-based centralised structure, to having a horizontal, decentralised, process-oriented structure, focused on the needs and expectations of collective users rather than individuals. Main processes are now automated and the library employs an information management structure that guarantees proactive working methods. So, from being a monolithic central structure, the new library acts as an online library, integrated into a system of 11 other libraries.

At the request of the library, the Rector approved a scientific and academic working methodology that manages all the stages of the lifecycle of scientific and academic information. This involves the use of a student-centred learning model where the presentation and analysis of situations and problems comes before the search for the information needed to provide solutions and to reach decisions.

A Management of Scientific and Technological Information Plan was devised for each subject, designed to guarantee gradual training in information skills over the course of each year's study. During the first year the workshops focus on information skills, where participants are introduced to the library services and also shown the skills they need to acquire. Between the second and the fifth year, two information projects are planned that become real documental investigations on specific areas. The induction workshops are provided by the libraries themselves, whilst the information projects are guided by the teachers (who act as tutors) and the libraries (that act as advisors). In this way the libraries have taken on both teaching and advisory roles.

The library continually perfects methodologies and instruments required to carry out studies on user information needs, working with a network of collaborators that allow it to be more efficient when offering information services.

An IT group was formed with two consultants and a designer to support the library services. They also provide backup for three Student Scientific Groups who voluntarily carry out software design and implementation tasks that the library requires.

The services offered by the library include:

- a joint catalogue of the 11 libraries;
- a virtual library of the library's digital resources;
- an online reference service and resources directory;
- journal databases that allow users to request online document delivery;
- software Desiderata allows requests for the library to purchase a book or an article from a journal;
- a centralised information service using RSS; and
- a database of unpublished primary documents generated at UCLV.

Other services being implemented include support for a University Encyclopaedia, support for publishing university journals using Open Journal Systems (OJS), and software is being developed to assist the organisation of scientific events.

Essential to these transformations has been the computer and network infrastructure that the Library has been able to obtain with the assistance of the Flemish Universities Council (VLIR) in Belgium, and access to the databases

offered by the INASP initiative PERI (Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information).

In conclusion, our experience has shown the importance of the following:

- rethinking all library activity, taking into account the potential of ICT, the university's strategic aims, and the necessary information and automation systems;
- carrying out a strategic planning exercise to define strategies, objectives, actions and monitoring indicators;
- achieving a flexible structure that is as level (horizontal) as possible, process-oriented, and centred on service provision;
- receiving support from university management to promote and lead change in teaching and investigation;
- designing services that meet user expectations and information needs;
- employing Information Management Systems and perfecting methods and instruments to define the needs and information interests of collective users;
- building an efficient network of collaborators;
- creating an archive for all information (published or otherwise), generated by the UCLV community;
- reclassification of the roles of all library staff to assimilate instruction and consultancy into their work; and
- managing change via a democratic and participatory process, allowing each member of the system to play a decisive role.

Professor José Rivero Díaz

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Health researchers and health policy-makers to talk at last

'Why have policy-makers so often ignored the best evidence for improving the health of their people? And why have researchers failed to get their messages through to the politicians?' asks Robert Walgate, who will moderate *HR4D-net*, a new platform for debate among those concerned with health research for development, launched by INASP and the Global Forum for Health Research.

For more information see:
www.inasp.info/health/HR4D-net

Sign up for *HR4D-net* by sending an Email including your name, organisation, country and brief description of professional interests to join-hr4d-net@dgroups.org or complete your profile at

www.dgroups.org/groups/HR4D-net/

Preparing authors, publishers and librarians to work together building open access digital libraries

By Dominique Babini

Providing web access to full-texts and e-publications has dramatically changed the way research results are communicated and used for research, teaching, study and policy within developing regions. Building collaboration between the authors, the publishers and the librarian communities can provide innovative solutions to online publication and dissemination. Within Latin America and the Caribbean the CLACSO social sciences academic network is using a digital library model to provide a publishing platform for its member journals.

Extending the digital library model project into Central America and the Caribbean, CLACSO has organised and run nine training sessions for 79 participants in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Cuba. Florencia Vergara, with the



CLACSO training session

assistance of Paula Sadier and Flavia Medici from CLACSO were responsible for these presentations and training sessions.

The sessions included
(i) *A general presentation (half day):*

- E-publishing trends.
- Web access to e-publications: institutional websites and portals.
- Quality issues in journal publishing.

- Basic concepts about how to build a digital library with the open source software, Greenstone, to disseminate full-text documents with full search facility in metadata and in the full-texts.
- How to participate in a cooperative digital library of full-text documents.



(ii) *Practical session (half day):*

- Preparation of e-texts for publication: preparation of HTML and XML formats of the text, introduction of metadata in each text.
- Uploading prepared e-texts to the cooperative digital library in Greenstone (www.greenstone.org).

After attending the general presentation, each participating institution can send new metadata and full-texts for hosting on the CLACSO database/website. For those attending the practical session, a manual and an interface has been prepared to help in the processing of each article from PDF or Word to HTML and XML, and adding metadata to the XML.

As part of the same project, a collaborative book about e-publishing, digital libraries and portals for the social sciences ('Edición electrónica, bibliotecas virtuales y portales para las ciencias sociales') has been prepared in Spanish, with the following contributions:

I: e-publishing

- Introduction to open access (Peter Suber, SPARC Open Access Newsletter)
- Strategic planning for online edition (INASP: Pippa Smart)

- First steps in journal e-publishing (ALPSP: Sally Morris)
- How to prepare PDFs with open source 'Open Office' (CLACSO)
- Editorial quality and visibility of journals, the experience of Latindex (LATINDEX)

II: virtual libraries for social sciences

- Open access to social science produced in Latin America and the Caribbean: virtual libraries, portals and virtual library networks (CLACSO)
- How to develop a virtual library with open software Greenstone – the case of a virtual library for CLACSO's Virtual Campus (CLACSO)

III: regional open access portals for the social sciences

- CLACSO's network of social science virtual libraries (CLACSO)
- SciELO methodology for quality journals open access publication (SciELO)
- REDALYC network of scientific journals from Latin America, Caribbean, Spain and Portugal: a balance of three years (REDALYC)

This book will be distributed during July and August free of charge to librarians and editors of CLACSO's 173 research institutions in 21 countries of the region, and also to a selection of library schools in the region. The book will also be available, open access, in the CLACSO virtual library which receives over 100,000 visitors each month (www.clacso.org.ar/biblioteca).

For more information about this project, see Babini, D. and Smart, P., 'Using digital libraries to provide online access to social science journals in Latin America', *Learned Publishing* **19**, 107–113, 2006.

The Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) is a 35 years old social sciences network gathering 173 social science research and teaching institutions from 21 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. See www.clacso.org.ar

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The CDS/ISIS software as an omnipresent tool for Latin American libraries and documentation centres

By *Egbert de Smet*

One of the striking facts, when looking at the many libraries and documentation centres of Latin America, is the 'omnipresence' or at least strong dominance of the software called CDS/ISIS. From Chile and Argentina to Nicaragua and Honduras in Central America (and also further north in Mexico) one will find this software in many variations being used by librarians, science projects and documentation centres.

To be more precise, one will find many members of this 'family of software', since there have been many offspring since its launch in

the 1970s by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Unfortunately CDS/ISIS suffers from many misunderstandings, but it has claimed a strong position in Latin America due to the many merits of the system.

The awkward name originates from the two merged softwares at ILO, 'Central Documentation System' and 'Integrated Set of Information Services'.

Originally developed for mainframe computers, in 1985 UNESCO redeveloped it for PCs, after which it grew and became popular in the

developing world and some other regions of the world (e.g. Eastern Europe). It has been partially adopted by other UN agencies, mainly FAO and WHO (by its Latin American division, BIREME/OPS based in Brazil).

As an example of its adoption, BIREME has rewritten the entire software (preserving the open standards), and uses it for handling and providing all its medical bibliographic information databases on CDROM and the Web (currently more than 24 million records and thousands of accesses on the servers per minute). They have also

developed a webserver and Dynamic Linking Library (DLL) which is provided to users for a small fee. Other products have been developed based on these BIREME-products (e.g. OpenMarcoPolo, an integrated web-based library system).

Another, newer development came from the FOSS movement propagating Free and Open Source Software within the 'sourceforge' community. OpenISIS, which ended up being a 'server' software (called Malete with a newer version 'Selene' being prepared), can be found in Bolivia and Cuba. It is also used elsewhere.

While CDS/ISIS is not a library system, library systems can be (and are in many cases) based on it. Typically it is used in universities, along with the existing library system, in scientific projects where the documentation needs to be maintained in a more 'in-depth retrieval approach', than are usually available in library systems.

The case of Bolivia shows a typical mix of ISIS-based solutions, often running within the same university but in different library branches, unaware of the shared software origins which in principle would offer opportunities for cooperation and further development. DOS-based applications work alongside Windows-based ('WinISIS') solutions and various web-based approaches either based on OpenISIS, BIREME's 'wwwisis' or the Polish 'isis3w' (developed for FAO).

While most members of the software family are freely available to the whole world, nowhere does it dominate the scene as much as in Latin America. This is partly due to the developments by, and leading role of, BIREME/OPS, but the real question is why it is not that dominant in other areas where purchasing power of libraries and documentation centres is low (e.g. Africa). This may be due to its lack of prestige and the high degree of self-reliance needed to run the software successfully, which is one of its main characteristics: a 'do-it-yourself' software.

The system is also often perceived as old-fashioned and 'for poor people only' and this is reinforced by its presence within situations with poor hardware conditions – in which it operates very well thanks to its efficient design.

This perception hinders further application, which is regrettable since the database approach used by ISIS makes it easy for librarians to resolve bibliographic data problems in inventive ways without the help of highly trained computer specialists – making it a highly useful system for places without dedicated IT support departments.

One reason for the lack of adoption and development for more integrated and bespoke tasks is that the users of the system usually have only operational knowledge, and not the technical, functional knowledge of the internal mechanisms of the system which would enable them to adapt and integrate the software for more sophisticated uses. This could be seen as an opportunity for UNESCO to promote capacity-building using this software, and its rich medium-level tool called the ISIS Formatting Language.

Currently UNESCO and BIREME are working to develop a new database engine to cope with recent standards and software technology. This long-awaited initiative will hopefully allow the software to survive yet another era in this changing ICT landscape. Thousands of libraries and information centres all over Latin America will welcome this development enthusiastically as it will provide continued support to their automation systems already using the ISIS software.

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For more information on the CDS/ISIS software, visit
http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2071&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html



Bill & Melinda Gates
Foundation Access to
Learning Award
(ATLA) 2007

If your library or similar organisation provides access to information using computers and the Internet free of charge to users, we should like to hear your story.

We invite you to apply for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's annual Access to Learning Award. This award recognises excellence in providing access to information through computers, at no cost to the user. The recipient will receive an award of up to US \$1 million.

The award is administered by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) and application forms are available at

www.inasp.info/ldp/awards

or contact Rebecca Priestley
(rpriestley@inasp.info).

**Deadline for the 2007 award is
31 December 2006.**

Research at public universities in Nicaragua and the capacity for publication of results

By Freddy Alemán

Research at universities in Nicaragua is a fairly recent development. Before 1979, university research was scarce and inconsistent. In view of these difficulties, some research initiatives were started with the funding of non-governmental organisations, mostly in the area of social science.

In the period between 1980 and 1990 the revolutionary government created the National Council for Higher Education (CNES, Spanish abbreviation), which in turn organised the subsystem of Research and Postgraduate studies, promoting the creation of structures to govern these activities throughout the country. Nevertheless, the predominant model continued to be that of academic research and the release of scientific information was centred on the presentation of research work carried out by students.

The 1980s marked the beginning of important programmes for cooperation in research between Nicaragua's public universities and those in Europe. Human and technical capacity for university research began to be consolidated during this decade, thanks to the support and assistance of the governments of Eastern European (former Soviet Union and communist block countries), central European (Germany and Austria) and Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden.

The year 1990 represented, in terms of Nicaragua's history, the end of the war that had devastated the country for a decade and the beginning of the transition to an era of peace, an essential condition for the development of science and the arts. The year 1990 also has a special significance for Nicaraguan higher education, as this was the year in which the Independence of Higher Education Institutions Act was approved and became law, establishing the principles that now govern the

development of higher education institutions.

This law created the National Council of Universities (CNU), which organises and advises universities and centres of higher technical education. Within the CNU is the Research Commission, which organises activities that create a scientific environment at Nicaraguan universities. In carrying out this task, the CNU's research commission has worked hard to create a National Research System (SINIES).

The difference in human capital between the CNU universities and other universities is now significant. Human resources who, due to their qualifications or their dedication, can take on responsibilities in the process of research have mainly been concentrated at universities which are members of the CNU.

In the specific case of universities, one of the prerequisites for conducting research is having human resources whose working hours are devoted to work on behalf of the institution.

However, it is not only the number of people involved but also the research skills that they have which is important. An indirect indicator of the acquisition of these skills is the academic level reached. Full time university students who have reached the level of MSc and PhD mostly work at universities which are members of the CNU.

One aspect of research in Nicaragua is the absence of a programme to promote research. There is not, at governmental or CNU level, any programme to encourage the participation of students in the process of generation of knowledge. This is now one of the main priorities of the CNU and one of the main responsibilities of the newly approved Higher Education Research System (SINIES).

Another aspect that has had relatively little development is the funding of research. Members of the university community have always said that part of the budget of higher education institutions should be assigned to help fund research projects.

The publication of the results of university research in Nicaragua is one of the main problems faced by higher education institutions. The main form of publishing the results of research has been through monographic theses or diploma works, which are requirements for the graduation of students. Although some of these works are accepted by peer-reviewed scientific journals, there is no real push to achieve this. Most reports from research carried out at Nicaraguan universities are kept in the libraries of these institutions, which makes it difficult for these results to become known to the international scientific community.

Universities and other higher education institutions do not currently have journals which are included in international data bases such as the Science Citation Index (SCI). However, there are peer-reviewed publications at some universities

Scholar's Copyright Project

Science Commons launches the Scholar's Copyright Project – making it easy for faculty to retain the freedom to archive their scholarly works on the Internet. Already available on their website are 'Author Addenda' – a suite of short amendments that authors attach to the copyright transfer form agreements from publishing companies. The Addenda ensure, at a minimum, that scholarly authors retain enough rights to archive their work on the public Internet. For more information see

<http://sciencecommons.org/>

which could reach international quality standards.

The international databases that include the publications of authors belonging to Nicaraguan institutions show little scientific production. Compared with other Central American and Latin American nations, Nicaragua is one of the lowest in terms of the number of publications that are sent to journals included

in the well known international databases (SCI, Pascal, Medline, Biosis, etc.).

In order to improve the quality of academic research carried out at Nicaraguan universities, it is necessary to have access to up-to-date research information, and to support publication of research with methods for publishing and storing research publications in electronic

format, increasing its visibility and preservation for the future. Hopefully both these wishes are going to be provided by the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) as from 2007.

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The Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) in Cuba

By Concepción Díaz Mayans and Luis Bermello Crespo

As part of its promise to provide better IT resources to the national academic community via the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the Ministry for Higher Education in Cuba has organised Cuba's entry into PERI, with the assistance of the Flemish Inter-University Committee (VLIR: Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad).

The Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI), which is a programme run by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), is designed to support the production, access to, and dissemination of information for investigators from developing countries, via employment of ICTs.

PERI began its work in Cuba with the Workshop for the Training of Trainers, in the Las Villas Central University in October 2004, financed by the Flemish Inter-University Committee, and involving 24 Cuban and 4 foreign specialists (Belgium, United Kingdom, Nicaragua, Honduras). This workshop led to the subsequent training of more than 500 specialists in access to the resources provided by PERI in the universities, investigation centres and other institutions involved in the project in Cuba, via 25 courses given all over the country. These trainers also provided training for over 6,000 users. As support for this recruitment,

various brochures were produced and distributed, and a PERI Portal was set up with other support materials, information, access to databases, etc.

PERI in Cuba is run by a National Committee, composed of the National Coordinator and Executive Directors, which carries out institutional monitoring activities, recruitment and statistical research. The resources and activities included in the Project have been widely promoted on the intranets of participating organisations, by publicity in magazines and other publications, and via conferences at scientific events. Experiences in Cuba were also presented at the 2006 International University Congress. Between October 2004 and May 2006, the two meetings organised for Latin America have both taken place in Cuba, with the participation of representatives from Bolivia, Nicaragua, Honduras and Cuba.

Through PERI, Cuban academic institutions have access to the following publications and services: Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, Fuente Académica, MedicLatina, MasterFILE Premier, ERIC, MEDLINE, Newspaper Source, Regional Business News, Health Source: Consumer Edition, Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition, Clinical Pharmacology, Mary Ann Liebert Inc., Bech Tree

Publications, British Library Direct and National Academic Press. In 2005, users from 20 universities, 10 investigative centres and 14 information centres and libraries accessed databases and carried out 36,510 work sessions that included 121,772 searches, downloading 43,275 articles and 80,636 summaries.

The scientific and academic resources that it has been possible to access via PERI have not only led to a considerable increase in the amount of information acquired by universities, but also by the entire Cuban academic community as a whole. The regular monitoring of the use of the resources available through PERI for Cuba has made it possible to systematically analyse the usage of each participating institution, which has in turn contributed to the production of higher levels of usage. This flow of updated, authorised, high quality information, most as full text of documents, represents an incredible source of knowledge available to our academy which, undoubtedly, is bound to have an impact on results in scientific and educational activity.

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PERI in Bolivia: the need to further regional collaboration and networking

By W. Patricia Escobar Salguero



Delivering electronic information resources as envisaged by PERI in Latin American countries – such as Bolivia – in response to their increasing demands for support of local efforts to produce, disseminate and gain access to scholarly information and knowledge, implies both an opportunity and a challenge.

In this large and diverse region one can find – at the same time – disparities and similarities in many instances: cutting-edge experiences on scientific information aspects in some countries (such as Brazil and Mexico) and very fragile information environments in others (such as Bolivia or Honduras), with the common denominator of sharing the same language deeply rooted in their past histories.

So, for effective and efficient functioning of programmes like PERI, ahead lies the challenge to mobilise those regional capacities to support the smaller countries, plus the opportunity to promote further collaboration and networking within the region.

Regional capacities to support Bolivia

By quickly mapping the Latin American region for existing institutions and/or initiatives that may be potential partners/tools in delivering PERI activities in Bolivia and other small countries in the region, the three largest institutions/initiatives are as follows.

The Latin American Council for Social Sciences (CLACSO), an international non-governmental organisation with headquarters in Buenos Aires, Argentina, that – among others – promotes the development of research and teaching in the many areas of social sciences. Information provision and documentation as well as publication support (including e-publishing), are part of the main lines of activities

and programmes undertaken for the benefit of more than 150 research centres and graduate programmes on social sciences from 21 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

LATINDEX, is the Regional Online Information System for Scholarly Journals from Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal. This service has been established by a network of regional institutions with the overall objectives of dissemination, enhancing visibility and increasing quality of scholarly publications and journals produced in the region through a resource-sharing approach.

The LATINDEX site (www.latindex.org) provides three sources of information: the Directory, the Catalogue and the Index of Electronic Resources, which provides direct access to an increasing collection of online full-text journals. LATINDEX also has a role to catalyse other collaborations in periodical publications; provide training support to editors; organise workshops on scientific editing, and advise on different aspects of scientific publications.

SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online), a model for cooperative electronic publishing of scientific journals on the Internet, has been conceived to meet the scientific communication needs of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

SciELO is a product of partnership among specialised institutes (BIREME, FAPESP) as well as national and international institutions related to scientific communication, and is intended to provide an efficient way to assure universal visibility and accessibility to regional scientific literature, mostly on health and medicine.

Regional collaboration for delivering PERI

As said, PERI in Latin America will be very much about bringing together regional expertise and also fostering further networking and participation.

The PERI training agenda in small or low-impact countries like Bolivia, may rely in the pool of specialists behind the ongoing networks and initiatives. Training in subjects such as licensing, e-publishing, management of scientific journals and other related topics may be delivered by engaging in collaborative schemes.

Likewise, seeking full participation of Bolivian institutions in the SciELO and LATINDEX initiatives may be the way in which PERI contributes to strengthen local publishing and to enhance dissemination and visibility of research results in Bolivia.

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For more information about:

CLACSO www.clacso.org/

SciELO www.scielo.org/

LATINDEX www.latindex.unam.mx/

2nd Librarians' conference, Honduras

By Cecilia García

The Association of Librarians and Documentalists of Honduras (ABIDH), held the 2nd Librarians' Conference from 12 to 15 June in the City of Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

The Conference had the following main objectives: (a) professional training and updating of the profession; (b) strengthening the links in terms of cooperation and exchange between centres in order to promote their development; and (c) establishment of alliances with international institutions and organisations to help improve national capabilities.

The conference was attended by 92 participants from different information units and geographic areas of the country, among which were representatives of university libraries, the national library, school libraries, specialised information centres and international organisations.



Facilitator at recent Honduras workshop

The subject matter was varied in order to cover the interests of the participants, and it was dealt with by distinguished speakers from Honduras and abroad, among whom was Egbert de Smet, from the INASP initiative, PERI in Latin America, who gave a speech entitled 'INASP-PERI resources: information at the service of research'. This was an opportunity to get to know those present and promote the value of these resources for the country. The attendees showed their interest with many questions asked, and were told that the programme's organiser, the National Autonomous University of Honduras, will contact them to establish a plan of action and common work.

Other equally important subjects were discussed, including:

- Education and training in library and information science, the development of collections (Dr William Jackson, USA);
- Conceptualisation of reading, its promotion, material and authors for children and young people (Luís Bernardo Yepes, Comfenalco Antioquia, Colombia);
- The use of patent information in the life cycle of a project (Maidelyn Díaz, Cuba);
- The role of libraries in the information industry. (Javier Saldarriaga, Universidad de Manizales, Colombia);



A recent workshop in Honduras

- Information technology in libraries (Victor Cid, USA);
- Virtual education: a training alternative (Cecilia García, the National Medical Library);
- Emotional intelligence (Eduardo Vallecillo, Honduras);
- Information resources of the National Library of Medicine (NLM) (Victor Cid, Washington, USA);
- Riecken Foundation and its work with community libraries;
- Professional ethics (Alina Patricia Díaz, Arias Banco Central, Honduras); and
- The 21st century librarian (Oscar Saavedra, México).

From participant evaluation it was made clear that the conference was highly relevant, in view of the country's need for training and the lack of up-to-date information resources. There was support offered to the activities planned by ABIDH, and requests that future similar events could be planned.

Cecilia García

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Call for Chinese and African management and library and information science research proposals: 'Increasing the effectiveness of the knowledge creation and transmission process'

Emerald is pleased to be offering two separate research grants up to £6,000 (US\$10,500 equivalent) each, for Chinese and African research. The winners will also be among the first to benefit from the Emerald Research Support Service, designed to help researchers every step of the way with their project by providing help and resources.

For more information visit the Emerald website

www.emeraldinsight.com/info/researchers

China Scientific Data Sharing Program (China-SDSP)

By Fu Xiaofeng

As a key component of the National Facility Information Infrastructure (China-NFII), the China Scientific Data Sharing Program (China-SDSP) aims to strike a balance between the demand and supply of scientific data, maximising the efficiency of the nation's investment in science and technology to enhance the original scientific innovation capability and its international competitiveness.

In 2001, the Meteorological data sharing pilot project was launched, which heralded the start of the scientific data sharing program in China. By the end of 2002, 5 other data sharing centres and 3 networks had joined the pilot project. These were the Survey data sharing centre, Hydrology and Water Resources data sharing centre, Seismology data sharing centre, Forestry data sharing centre, Agriculture data sharing centre, Earth System Scientific data sharing network, Modern Agricultural Technology and Rural Development data sharing network,

and Sustainable Development Information sharing network. China-SDSP has expanded its work among over twenty ministries and commissions. At the end of 2003, China-SDSP office had finished feasibility demonstration of the executive plan, and in April 2004, China-SDSP pilots working conference was held in Beijing. In Sept. 2004 and Oct. 2005 the China-SDSP office organised testing and evaluation on the pilots.

In terms of policy-making and standardisation, a working group for data sharing has formulated the 'Guidelines of Data Submission from Key National Programs' and their interpretation. They have begun researching the framework of relevant laws and policies, investigated the conceptual design for data classification for sharing, and finished the draft of 23 standards for the programme.

To date we have finished the 'Development Planning of China

Scientific Data Sharing Program (2006–2010)' in which the overall considerations, principle and objectives, architecture, strategic arrangement and major tasks, and supporting conditions and facilities of China-SDSP are narrated clearly.

In order to improve theory and technology in scientific data management and sharing, an international seminar was held in Beijing in June 2004. The key topic was scientific data protecting and sharing strategy. Active communications with EU and USA have also been developed.

The China-SDSP website has been established (www.sciencedata.cn), which provides a platform for access to data and information, and which will play an important role in propagating China-SDSP.

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dLIST – A central repository for Library Information Science (LIS)

By Subbiah Arunachalam

The 'Open access movement' is gaining momentum. But the pace of development varies from field to field. Years after Paul Ginsparg (then at the Los Alamos National Laboratory), set up a central archive for certain areas of physics research, came CiteSeer (computer science), Cogprints (cognitive sciences) and RePEC (economics). The first central archive for Library and Information Science (LIS) dLIST (Digital Library of Information Science and Technology) was set up at the School of Information Resource and Library Science and the Arizona Health Sciences Center Library, University of Arizona, in 2002.

dLIST is a cross-institutional, subject-based, open access digital archive for the Information Sciences. The outputs of scholarly research can all be deposited for free retrieval. An international advisory board, editors, faculty in Library/Information Schools and librarians, ensure that dLIST positively impacts and shapes scholarly communication in LIS. This vision to serve as a trusted archive and dynamic source for scholarly communication in all aspects of Information Sciences recognises that our cultural heritage institutions are also critical information infrastructures and vital to the modern knowledge economy and society.



Open access repositories such as dLIST are even more important for LIS because very few LIS journals are open access (OA). Only two of the more than 50 LIS journals indexed in Social Science Citation Index are OA. More information about OA services for LIS can be found under the Publications hyperlinks at <http://dlist.sir.arizona.edu/information.html>.

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Open access survey of Africa-published journals

By Daisy Ouya

There are at least 400–500 current scholarly journals published throughout Africa, the largest proportion emanating from South Africa and Nigeria. Africa has remained behind not just in the OA debates but in electronic journal publishing in general, although some training of African journal editors in electronic publishing has taken place, notably by INASP, and slowly increasing numbers of African journals are available full text online.

The extent to which African journal editors are willing to open up access to their content will influence the global spread and wealth of the OA knowledge base. This survey investigated the opinions of African journal editors on OA publishing in general, and in particular their views on opening up access to their content to the global scholarly community.

Questionnaires were sent out to 230 sub-Saharan African journal editors from African Journals Online (www.ajol.info). 48 surveys were returned between June and August 2005. The 21-item questionnaire asked questions about the existing journal status, to assess the journals' sources of income, staffing profiles, how they were indexed, and author/subscriber bases. It then asked about the understanding of Open Access publishing, and for opinions on how – and if – this model could be introduced to their journals.

Results highlights

- Few journals were indexed in internal systems, and so suffer from poor visibility outside their immediate community.
- The majority of the journals relied on funding from grant bodies, institutional subsidies or membership fees. Most journals relied on a mixture of funding sources. Very few received noticeable support from subscription or from author fees (possibly due to high bank charges incurred in transferring small amounts of money either

to, within, or between African countries).

- Much of the editing and production work is done by volunteer staff. Most of the journals had one editor paid an honorarium, and, on average, 4.2 volunteer staff.
- All the journals indicated that their articles came predominantly from African authors, but subscribers were more geographically diverse.
- Forty-three editors responded to the 'yes/no' question as to whether they had heard of the term 'open access': 28 said yes, and 15 said no.
- Understanding about Open Access was mixed, with some confusion and misunderstanding.
- Opinions about OA could be summarised as cautiously optimistic. Many editors said they faced the dilemma of desiring global visibility while not wishing to risk their journals' survival. Whereas the benefits were clear, funding and sustainability concerns, were high.

Report recommendations

- Training and information on electronic publishing and new journal publishing models should be provided to the African journal publishing community and to the decision-makers that support these publications.
- Practical demonstrations of OA "in action" within the African continent should be supported to provide data and case studies to assist informed decisions.
- There is a need to expand awareness about OA to researchers, publishers and authors in the region, and then to solicit opinions about open access self-archiving in a more closely targeted survey.

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The full report is available as an infobrief on the INASP website:
www.inasp.info/pubs

IN-debate

INASP are launching a series of Email debates on information access in developing and transitional countries.

A provocative topic will be suggested with each issue of the INASP newsletter, and a moderated Email discussion group kept open for 2 months to discuss the subject. A short summary of the discussion will be published in the next issue of the newsletter.

We encourage all readers to participate, and to voice their own opinions, concerns, ideas and hopes. We hope IN-debate will stimulate discussion and lead to greater understanding of concerns and viewpoints, and help INASP and other organisations to better support information throughout the developing and transitional countries.

IN-debate I:

Are journals published in developing countries worth the effort?

Why continue to struggle to publish journals within developing countries? Are they a good use of local resources?

Why not rely on the western journal publishers to do the work?

What do you think?

Please voice your own opinion to the discussion list.

Sign up for IN-debate discussions by sending an email including your name, organisation, country and brief description of professional interests to join-IN-debate@dgroups.org or complete your profile at www.dgroups.org/groups/IN-debate/

Carol Priestley steps down as Director of INASP



At the end of June 2006 Carol Priestley stepped down as Director of INASP, the organisation that she has led since its inception by the International Council of Science (ICSU), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and UNESCO in 1992.

With the mandate to improve access to information and knowledge through a commitment to capacity building in emerging and developing countries, Carol's vision and understanding of the field of information development directed INASP with a focus on working with partners and

networks, encouraging the creation and production of information, fostering collaboration and networking and strengthening local capacities to manage and use information and knowledge.

When asked to identify particular highlights of her time with INASP, Carol selected the building of networks in library and book development, Health Information Forum-net (HIF-net); African Journals OnLine (AJOL), and the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI).

At all times, her focus has been working towards a world where all people are able to access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge necessary to drive sustainable and equitable development. It is not exaggerating to say that she has contributed a great deal towards this goal.

INASP has grown quickly over the past few years and Carol has decided that it is time to step down and let a new director shape the future. INASP owes a great deal to Carol, and we are sure that we speak for the many hundreds that have worked with INASP over the years when we thank her for her leadership of the organisation.

Carol will continue to work with INASP as Head of Special Projects, currently working with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on the ATLA project (see elsewhere in the newsletter).

Institute for Electronic and Electrical Engineers IEEE

The Institute for Electronic and Electrical Engineers (IEEE), the world's leading technology society/publisher, has agreed to participate in PERI. Access will be to the IEEE/IEE Electronic Library (IEL), the flagship database which provides access to almost a third of the world's current electrical engineering and computer science literature, and features content from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and the Institution of Electrical Engineers.

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INASP – New publishing resource

A new resource pack for journals is now available free to all journal editors. It can be downloaded from the INASP website at
www.inasp.info/psi/resources.shtml

Electronic Publishing and Open Access Workshop

2–3 November 2006 Bangalore, India

The Indian Academy of Sciences, the Indian Institute of Science and the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation are jointly organising a two day workshop on Electronic Publishing and Open Access. There will be delegates from China, Latin America and India.

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The next *INASP Newsletter* will be published in November 2006 and will be a themed issue on the subject of training. If you would like to contribute to its contents, please write to the editor at the Oxford address. Contributions must be received by **1 September 2006**.