

Editorial

BIALL Conference 2007

We gathered together in Sheffield in the middle of June to the accompaniment of pouring rain. The sound stayed with us through most of the week-end as South Yorkshire sustained the first of a number of bouts of severe flooding. One of our speakers was marooned at her hotel and her session had to be cancelled and the sight of delegates rushing from their hotels to the Conference Dinner at the Cutlers Hall in all their finery was one for the albums (or digital archives).

However, the inclement weather did not dampen our enthusiasm for what was a first rate conference. The standards of the presentations were almost uniformly high and the content was excellent particularly in regard to the opportunities offered to us by Web 2.0, and social networking. The first speaker, Rob Brown gave us some very useful tips on how to work a room and we spent the rest of the week-end ensuring we weren't standing in closed fairs! We were also exhorted to ensure that we took the lead in enterprise information management in Adrian Dale's customary thought-provoking presentation, which comprised the second Willi Steiner Memorial Lecture. We were very pleased to welcome Willi's brother Francis and his daughter Mary to the lecture.

We are publishing some of the Conference papers in this issue, and the remainder in the winter issue. Martin Farley from Freshfields, who runs his own intellectual property blog, gave an extremely useful paper on legal blogs – with case studies of different types of blogs and analysis of how successful or otherwise they have been. Kathryn Pearson's paper on her experiences of moving from information management to knowledge management and the skill sets required for the two roles is also included.

Current Topics

As a prelude to our Winter issue, when we plan to publish a number of articles on how we see law librarianship developing in the twenty-first century, Sue Lamond from Addleshaw Goddard leads the way in describing the innovative service offered by her Library and Information Service to the Business Development Directorate within the firm. This includes offering business and market research services, producing company and sector profiles and preparing pitches for future work.

Following on from Adrian Dale's exhortations to us, Derek Sturdy has written a comprehensive article on Enterprise Content management and he also stresses that we should be taking the lead in such projects.

BIALL/SLS Survey

Last but not least, we are pleased to publish Peter Clinch's latest magnum opus – the *BIALL/SLS Academic Law Library Survey for 2005/2006*. Peter had a pleasingly high response rate of 83.5% this year, below the all-time record of 85.4% set in 2003, but above last year's rate of 76.4%. For the first time, the survey included questions on the number of students following distance learning courses. Amongst his conclusions, Peter states that student numbers appear to have flattened out after considerable increases over the past few years; study space is at a premium and the student/seat ratio is worsening. Libraries are now open longer than ever but the number of student visits is not increasing. The most notable changes amongst database subscriptions has been the "meteoric" rise in subscriptions to HeinOnline and the cancellation of expensive paper specialist general encyclopaedias and specialist practitioner works in favour of electronic versions.

From Our Own Correspondent

We are lucky to have two articles from overseas correspondents in this issue. Ivo Vogel writes about the project to set up a portal to access the enormous amount of legal information available in electronic format in Germany. Dragomir Cosanici from Indiana University-Indianapolis School of Law has undertaken some exhaustive research into the citation practices of the supreme courts in the mid-West states of Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan and Ohio over a recent ten-year period, which is particularly interesting as it covers a time when the courts were moving over to using electronic resources.

Checklist

The Checklist contains so much useful information that we have called it a Checklist and article. It is by Ann Coles and Davina Gifford of Lawrence Graham and charts the progress of their move into a stunning new building. It explains what to do to ensure the move is as pain-free as possible and the key hint is not to take on battles, for example over the amount of space you have been allocated, that you cannot win!

And finally ...

The Editorial Board has recently bidden farewell to Caroline Mosley who spent several years as its Chairman. She has been unfailingly enthusiastic in promoting LIM and has provided me with tremendous encouragement and support for the past three years. The Board wishes her well in her future activities – she will be sorely missed.

Christine Miskin