

British Library's Support for the NURLIS Projects

by David Russon

Director General, British Library Boston Spa

Speaking at the NURLIS II launch on 13th October 1993

I am delighted to help in launching the ENB "*Management Guidelines on the Provision of Library and Information Services to Nursing Professionals*". The British Library has for many years supported and encouraged improved services to the healthcare sector. We have done so through our extensive collections in London and Boston Spa, through our Medical Information Service and through the Library's Research and Development Department. I should also add that I have a personal interest in this sector - particularly where healthcare and education interact - through my involvement on the Standing Conference of National and University Libraries' Health Information Group.

In late 1991 our Research and Development Department was approached by Tony Shepherd of the Royal College of Nursing, with an outline proposal for research on the current state of nursing libraries in the United Kingdom. We were very pleased to support this financially as a possible first-stage project to establish some basic data on the national scene. The project, as most of you know, became known as the NURLIS I study. It was entrusted to Capital Planning Information, the library and information consultancy which has worked for many departments of the library since it was established in 1976. On completion of Phase I the British Library asked CPI to publish the report in its Research and development report series and I am pleased that this has since been widely read.

We were much encouraged to hear that the General Nursing Council Trust had, on the basis of the NURLIS I report, agreed to provide finances for the ENB to enable the important second stage to be undertaken. This type of partnership funding fits very well with our objectives of stimulating important and necessary research in a sector - healthcare - to which we attach a high priority. My colleague Shirley Day has been involved in the NURLIS II project advisory group and I myself was very pleased to be invited to one of the focus groups which was held in York. We believe that the work reported in the document launched today represents an extremely valuable practical tool which should stimulate further improvements in an area such as nursing which has shown itself to be at the forefront of medical library initiatives.

In conclusion, I am pleased to announce that the British Library has just contracted CPI to carry out a programme of dissemination to ensure that some of the important messages contained in this document are communicated more widely to those concerned with managing libraries and information services for the nursing profession. We have also asked the consultants to undertake a further piece of research which emerged from the NURLIS II study. While the "Passport to information" idea has, I am sure, much wider applicabilities and possibilities for user empowerment, we are happy to see that it is the nursing profession which is willing to pioneer this.

I comment the report to you.