

use the year's credit towards some other form of Masters degree. Meanwhile Y is learning the work and gaining a great deal of useful experience. If necessary, we could even swap roles on my retirement, with me contracting on a freelance basis to give Y a few hours a week of study time.

As a matter of policy, my job will be advertised publicly, but at least we know now that there will be at least one suitable applicant. Y has found out that she finds the research element and academic challenge of the work of a Health Librarian to be just what she wants at this stage in her career. All in all, we believe that we have achieved a satisfactory solution to the problem of succession planning. A neighbouring region with similar problems has asked advice on the same subject so I thought it might be worth sharing our experience with a wider audience.

Further, it seems to me that it would be a practical idea for any region to keep a list of a "Bank" of Librarians and Library Assistants who may be called on for short periods such as illness and maternity leave. This might be an idea we will develop in the future among all interested Libraries.

SHINE study day

Making electronic journals work for you

Glasgow Royal Infirmary, 22nd May 2001

Alison Aiton

Electronic journals - the very words fill many librarians with horror! However, the SHINE study day which was sponsored by EBSCO, RoweCom and SwetsBlackwell, gave an opportunity for sharing of experience and some practical advice from both the higher education and NHS perspectives.

Margaret Forrest chaired the meeting and introduced the speakers, the first of whom was Judy Taylor, e-journals co-ordinator at Dundee University Library.

Judy outlined the main issues faced by libraries providing access to electronic journals: finance; accessing through intermediaries or directly; licences and conditions of use; copyright; IT; registration and authentication; and user education. She made the point that while e-journals may often be more useful for our readers, in that they provide flexible searching and desk-top availability round the clock, they certainly do not reduce the librarian's workload and are generally not cheaper. Apart from setting them up, regular checking of links is necessary. Renewals may be cumbersome and intermittent troubleshooting may be required. However, this is just the beginning and hopefully management of e-journals should become more straightforward and librarians are ideally placed to become the in-house experts, thus raising our profile and status.

Tony Kidd from Glasgow University Library then looked at the advantages and disadvantages of e-journals with reference to experiences at Glasgow. In 1997 Glasgow University library took 362 e-journals, in 2000 this had risen to 3018 and it is expected to be about 4500 by the end of 2001. They currently have about 5000 print subscriptions. The most popular titles are not surprisingly in the fields of science and medicine, with 72% of clinical medicine and 65% of biomedical and life science print titles taken also having electronic access. Academics are still reluctant to cancel print subscriptions and the problem of archiving is still difficult. If print subscriptions are cancelled, obviously the library retains back runs, but if an electronic subscription is cancelled does the library lose the rights to access years for which it has paid? Will the technology still be available to allow access in the future? Although there are services like JSTOR which provide access to back volumes at present, no-one knows what future developments may bring.

Tony finished by talking about the close relationship between academic and NHS libraries. There are problems in terms of licensing and the

different access points for journals, but he emphasised the need to move forward for mutual benefit.

The next speaker was Sandra Davies, Project Officer with Greater Glasgow Health Board talked about the Glasgow Electronic Library, which is the first Scottish NHS libraries purchasing consortium. There are several benefits in consortium purchasing: creating access to resources which no single library could afford; creating equal access to resources for all staff; and making possible the negotiation of larger discounts as a result of larger purchasing power. Glasgow Electronic Library uses EBSCO online as an aggregator to provide access to journals. Publishers' websites can create access to journals either by IP authentication (i.e. from a PC in the subscribing institution registered with the publisher) or by username and password authentication. The NHSNet firewall can prevent the IP authentication from working, but the username and password system works, though these have to be checked from time to time to ensure they remain valid. Sandra emphasised the need to promote the service to staff and to have a brand which stays in people's minds. She also felt that having professionally designed publicity materials helped to maximise the impact of the new service. The URL of the NHS Glasgow e-Library is: www.nhsglasgowelib.org.uk.

Isla Imrie and Bruce Elrick from Grampian Primary Care Trust explained how they had set up web pages for their trust. They found the web pages of Monash University (Australia) and Exeter University (England) helpful in providing advice about links and the setting up of websites. They felt that the support they had had from their management had made their task much easier. Their plans for the future include continuing to evaluate their webpages and making sure they are up-to-date and include both local and national initiatives. They would also like to develop closer links with higher education and to share more training with the University of Aberdeen.

The final speaker was Mary Lakie, LRPG co-ordinator. Mary listed the five recommendations of the SLIC report of 1998: the need for a national library adviser for Scotland; the need for a strategy rolled down to Trust level; a national subscription for core journals; a strategy for IT and co-operation with higher education. She explained how these were being addressed and described the concept for the future of one journal subscription, making journals available to all NHS staff wherever and whenever they are. There are of course financial implications for this and the problem of continuation funding when it is set up. However at present journal titles are being identified and an administrator may be appointed in overall charge.

Group discussions followed the speakers and the key points discussed were reported back to the whole group. The day finished with all the speakers being available to answer questions and a panel discussion.

Overall it was a very interesting and useful day, identifying problems and concerns and sharing experience from both higher education and the NHS.

Continuing our series of library guides the following 2 guides, one on Evidence Based Medicine Reviews and the other on ASSIA have been submitted by Liz Mailer of Harold Bridges Library, St Martin's College, Bowerham Road, Lancaster, LA1 3JD.