



Library and Information Science Research Coalition  
Facilitating a co-ordinated and strategic approach to LIS research across the UK

## **Report to the members of the LIS Research Coalition: March 2010**

*Period covered: 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2009 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2010*

### **1. Introduction**

A huge amount has been achieved during the first year of the Library and Information Science (LIS) Research Coalition, especially given that the Executive Secretary has been in post just 7 months from August 2009, and the part-time working arrangement equates to just 10 weeks of a full-time equivalent post<sup>1</sup>.

The Coalition is now firmly on the LIS research map with an extensive web presence, a steady stream of requests for papers, interviews and publications, the first Coalition conference planned for June 2010, and a proposal submitted to the AHRC for a workshop programme on research methodologies. The Coalition is now in a position to begin seeking new full and associate members.

At the Coalition Board meeting on 10 February 2010, Board members confirmed that their organisations would support the Coalition for a second year and priorities for year two are outlined at the end of this report.

### **2. Establishment of the Coalition**

The LIS Research Coalition was formally established on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2009 by the British Library (BL), the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and the Research Information Network (RIN)<sup>2</sup>

The broad mission of the Coalition is to facilitate a co-ordinated and strategic approach to LIS research across the UK. The Coalition aims to bring together information about LIS research opportunities and results; encourage dialogue between research funders; promote LIS practitioner research and the translation of research outcomes into practice; articulate a strategic approach to LIS research; and promote the development of research capacity in LIS. The Coalition also provides a formal structure to improve access to LIS research, and maximise its relevance and impact in the UK.

The Coalition is governed by a Board of Directors comprising a representative of each full member organisation.<sup>3</sup> The Board has met four times since August 2009. The terms of governance, together

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<sup>1</sup> Between beginning of August 2009 and the end of February 2010, the Executive Secretary devoted a total of 44 days to the Coalition.

<sup>2</sup> For details of the work that went into the establishment of the Coalition between 2006 and 2009, see: <http://lisresearch.org/about/history/>

<sup>3</sup> The Board of Directors currently comprise: Caroline Brazier, Associate Director of Operations and Services North, British Library (BL); David Ball, University Librarian, University of Bournemouth and Chair of the Library

with categories of membership are set out in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by representatives of the founding members in March 2009. The MoU also covers administrative, human resources and finance support for the Coalition, provided by CILIP.

In August 2009 Dr Hazel Hall was appointed Executive Secretary to implement the plans of the Coalition. Hazel Hall took on this role as a one-year part-time secondment, while maintaining her position as Director of the Centre for Social Informatics in the School of Computing at Edinburgh Napier University. The Coalition Board was delighted that she was announced as the winner of IWR Information Professional of the Year on December 1<sup>st</sup> at Online 2009.<sup>4</sup>

In January 2010 the Board of Directors also agreed to appoint Stephanie Kenna of Kenna Consulting Ltd and former BL Coalition Board member, to provide cover for Hazel Hall during leave of absence from the Coalition, and to take minutes at Board and other meetings.

### **3. Online presence**

The Coalition's online presence was an early priority and by the end of August 2009 people could be referred to both the Coalition Twitter feed (<http://twitter.com/lisresearch>) and the Coalition web site (<http://lisresearch.org/>). To the end of February 2010 there were 5155 hits to the Coalition web pages, with the greatest number (172) on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2009 (in the week that Hazel Hall made her first public presentation on behalf of the Coalition at the SCONUL Autumn conference 2009). The Coalition web pages currently provide: information about the mission and aims of the Coalition; contact details; the history of the Coalition's formation (including all the documentation that was formerly held on the British Library pages); links to the web sites of each of the Coalition member organisation; news and media coverage of the Coalition's activities; and an events page that links to events in which the Coalition is actively engaged. They also provide outward links to other listings for events of interest to the LIS research community. The general "links" page currently covers links to: the multiple resource listings offered by LIRG; the major funders of LIS research in the UK; UK LIS research networks; individual LIS research centres; RAE 2008. The main home page provides regular Coalition news updates as blog postings, and also presents the latest news from the Coalition's Twitter stream. The most accessed pages are "About", "Membership", "News" and "Events". As awareness of the site has grown people have made requests for further content to be added to it.

Most recent work on the web site includes a new page dedicated to the Coalition conference (see below), the setting up of conference news flashes on the blog<sup>5</sup> and a substantial posting on the success of the implementation to date and future directions.<sup>6</sup>

The Coalition currently (1<sup>st</sup> March 2010) has 339 followers on Twitter. The account is used to "twinform" (rather than "tweet" in the strictest sense) news of: newly published research reports; calls for conference paper; opening of conference registrations; invitations to tender for research

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and Information Research Group (CILIP); Professor Charles Oppenheim, Emeritus Professor of Information Science, Loughborough University (JISC); Ailbhe McNabola, Head of Research and Evidence, Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA); and Michael Jubb, Director of Research Information Network (RIN) and Chair of LIS Research Coalition Board.

<sup>4</sup> <http://lisresearch.org/2009/12/03/hazel-hall-named-information-professional-of-the-year-2009/>

<sup>5</sup> For example, <http://lisresearch.org/2010/02/04/coalition-conference-newsflash-1/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://lisresearch.org/2010/02/04/six-months-into-the-implementation-and-priorities-for-future-work/>

projects; content of latest journal issues; and RAE/REF, as relevant to the UK LIS research community. There is a moderate degree of retweeting of the Coalition's Twitter output, which is a good indication that followers are finding it useful to themselves and others. In the same way that the Coalition is receiving requests to add content to the web site, individuals are making contact to ask if the Coalition can tweet particular items to its growing user base. @LISResearch features on 38 lists: this indicates that it is valued as a relevant source of information for the LIS research community. The conference alert service "Information science conferences worldwide" at <http://www.conferencealerts.com/library.htm> directs most traffic to the web site. Many hits are also routed here through Twitter.

A SlideShare account was set up for the Coalition on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The first slides to be added were those prepared for the paper presented at the SCONUL autumn 2009 conference. These have been viewed 419 times. On the evening of Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December this presentation was apparently one of the "hottest" on the SlideShare site. The slides from Online 2009 have also been loaded to Slideshare, with 475 viewings to date.

A podcast interview with Hazel Hall recorded on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009 by Talis continues to be popular. This can be accessed at <http://blogs.talis.com/panlibus/archives/2009/09/talking-with-talis-podcast-hazel-hall-strategic-leader-at-lis-research-coalition.php>.

The Coalition also has a presence on LinkedIn.

#### 4. Promoting the Coalition

**News coverage:** On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009 CILIP distributed a Coalition media release which went beyond the usual CILIP list and in the same week, Edinburgh Napier University put out its own version. As a result, news of the Coalition was reported in a number of fora including the national press (*The Scotsman*, *Times Higher Education*), industry press (*Update*, *Information World Review*, *VIP*), online news services (e.g. *Accountancy Age*, *Computing.co.uk*) and a number of blogs (e.g. TFPL, Peter Scott). The full media release is held at <http://lisresearch.org/news/>, with a note of the media coverage of the launch and subsequent Coalition activities at <http://lisresearch.org/press-coverage/>.

**Interviews:** News of the Coalition led two immediate requests for interviews. Hazel Hall was featured on the *38 minutes* Ning in the week beginning 7<sup>th</sup> September<sup>7</sup>, and Talis recorded a podcast interview on 15<sup>th</sup> September<sup>8</sup>. In December 2009 she was interviewed for FreePint, the output of which will appear in the journal in May 2010.

Hazel Hall was also interviewed by Elspeth Hyams on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2010 for an article in the March 2010 electronic issue of *Library and Information Update*. This was used as an opportunity to promote the forthcoming Coalition conference.

**Publications:** An editorial by Hazel Hall on "Promoting the priorities of practitioner research engagement" will be published in volume 42, issue 2 of the *Journal of Library and Information*

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<sup>7</sup> <http://38minutes.ning.com/profiles/blogs/featured-member-hazel-hall>

<sup>8</sup> <http://blogs.talis.com/panlibus/archives/2009/09/talking-with-talis-podcast-hazel-hall-strategic-leader-at-lis-research-coalition.php>

*Science* in June 2010. Further articles on the Coalition have been requested by academic and practitioner journal titles.

**Conference papers:** Hazel Hall spoke at the SCONUL Autumn Conference on 17<sup>th</sup> November<sup>9</sup> and presented at *Online 2009* on 3<sup>rd</sup> December<sup>10</sup>, and the LIS Research Coalition was an agenda item at the February 2010 BAILER meeting. Hazel Hall has also attended a number of other events primarily in her Edinburgh Napier role, where she has been able to promote the work of the Coalition, most notably at the ASIST conference in Vancouver in November 2009, which she used as an opportunity to talk informally about the proposed AHRC workshop programme (see below), and at a TFPL Connect event, also in November 2009.

Forthcoming presentations about the role and work of the Coalition include contributions to:

- A meeting of HEALER, a network of researchers in health librarianship, on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010.
- The Welsh Libraries, Archives and Museums Conference 2010, organised by CILIP Cymru/Wales, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> May 2010 in Llandrindod Wells.
- The Business Librarians Association Conference on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2010 in Liverpool: opening keynote.<sup>11</sup>
- A conference on evidence-based library and information practice in 2011.

In addition, a paper has been accepted for the IFLA conference which takes place in Gothenburg between 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

### **Coalition conference**

The Coalition will hold its first conference, *Evidence, Value and impact: the LIS research landscape in 2010*, on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2010 in the British Library Conference Centre.

The conference will consider perspectives on the library and information science research landscape with reference to LIS research opportunities, the translation of research outcomes into practice, growing research capacity amongst LIS professionals, and the means of developing the future LIS research agenda in the UK. The programme will appeal to all types of LIS researchers including practitioner researchers as well as those from academia.

The conference format includes keynote presentations and break-out sessions, with further opportunities for delegates to participate actively in the discussions on the day. The opening keynote address will be given by Professor Andrew Dillon of the University of Texas. Dr Charles Oppenheim, Emeritus Professor of Information Science at Loughborough University will give the closing keynote presentation. Other confirmed contributors include: Dr Michael Jubb, Director of RIN; Ailbhe McNabola, Head of Research and Evidence at MLA; and Dr Anne Brice, Associate Director of the NHS National Knowledge Service.

<sup>9</sup> <http://lisresearch.org/2009/11/18/lis-research-coalition-presentation-at-the-sconul-autumn-conference/>;  
<http://lisresearch.org/2009/11/18/sconul-autumn-conference-17-november-2009/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://lisresearch.org/2009/12/09/lis-research-coalition-%e2%80%9creview%e2%80%9d-of-online-2009/>

<sup>11</sup> Further details of this conference are available at: <http://www.bbslg.org/2010Conference.aspx>.

There will also be a “One Minute Madness” session where 15-20 people from a range of constituencies will have the opportunity to speak for one minute on a LIS research-related topic of their choice. The time will be strictly controlled. PowerPoint will not be allowed. Each person’s name and affiliation will be shown on the screen. Delegates will be asked when booking to indicate if they would like to participate in this session.

In order to attract a reasonable audience to its first conference the Coalition Board has agreed to underwrite the cost so that the delegate fee can be kept low (£100 including VAT). There will be a small number of sponsorship opportunities. For example, LIS recruitment companies are being approached to sponsor a number of places for PhD students. BAILER has agreed to promote the competition and students will be asked to write half a page on why they wish to attend the conference. The sponsored delegates will act as rapporteurs for the breakout sessions. It is felt that a competition is more likely to attract students than a concessionary fee.

The date of the conference has been well-publicised. It is on the Coalition web pages: <http://lisresearch.org/2009/10/14/lis-research-coalition-conference-london-june-28th-2010/> (main blog), <http://lisresearch.org/events/> (events page), and in passing in the blog posting on the SCONUL conference <http://lisresearch.org/2009/11/18/sconul-autumn-conference-17-november-2009/>. The four major international LIS conference listings sites (as noted at the top of the Events page at <http://lisresearch.org/events/>) have it listed, and from the web site statistics it is clear that one of these (Conference alerts at <http://www.conferencealerts.com/library.htm>) has generated much traffic to the Coalition web site.

A committee<sup>12</sup> has been established to develop the Conference programme, make initial approaches to speakers and determine the running order for the day. Richard Hart, Event Logistics Ltd, will be responsible for much of the work related to planning, scheduling, administering, publicising, and marketing the Conference.

## **5. AHRC research networking proposal**

A proposal for the AHRC research networking open call entitled *Developing Research Excellence and Methods* (DREAM) was submitted on 25 February 2010. The bid is led by Edinburgh Napier University in partnership with the Coalition. If the bid is successful, over the course of 20 months a number of events focused on LIS research will take place in London and Edinburgh. These will involve the participation of research experts from the UK and abroad as speakers and session facilitators. At the same time an online resource will be built to support the project. In doing so, it is anticipated that the project will meet its aims of: (1) bringing LIS researchers from range of backgrounds together in a new sustainable network with researchers from related disciplines to share and explore good practice and experience regarding appropriate methodologies and techniques for undertaking LIS research and (2) addressing current challenges facing LIS research in the UK such as: building capacity and capability in the development and implementation of innovative methodologies/techniques in undertaking LIS research; raising the quality and standards of research training and practice in LIS; establishing a foundation for long-term research

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<sup>12</sup> The Conference committee comprises: David Ball, Coalition Board member; Hazel Hall, Executive Secretary; Stephanie Kenna, Consultant, Kenna Consulting Ltd; Melanie Goody, Associate Consultant TFPL; Brian Kelly, UKOLN; Miggie Pickton, Research Support Specialist, University of Northampton; and Richard Hart, Event Logistics Ltd.

collaborations across LIS and related sectors; enhancing the value and impact of LIS research output with particular reference to policy development, improved services provision, and the informing of future LIS research agendas for investment.

## **6. New members**

The success at publicising the LIS Research Coalition has led to enquiries about membership and, in its second year of, approaches will be made to those bodies that expressed in interest in becoming Associate Members during the consultation phase in 2007.

## **7. Future work plan**

The following priorities have been agreed for year two of the LIS Research Coalition:

- Stronger engagement with the public library sector.
- Creation of a wiki on the Coalition web site where practitioners can contribute information about their research projects.
- Development of a practitioner research starter kit.
- A “Meet the editor/editorial board” event organised jointly with CILIP’s Library and Information Research Group.
- A literature review on the value and impact of LIS research.

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