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Contents

Editorial	2
<i>Patrick Ryan</i>	
Hikkadauwa Library Project Closure	3
Alice Laird, CILIP GLIG Tsunami Working Party	
Balancing qualifications against competences – dual importance	5
Alison Raisin, Group Marketing Manager, Corporate Centre, BERR	
Five things that government librarians can teach the profession	9
Peter Griffiths, CILIP President	
ESDS keen to strengthen links with librarian community	13
Lorna Balkan, Outreach and Promotion Officer, Economic and Social Data Service	
CDL Update	16
Graham Monk, Chief Librarian, DWP	

Editorial

As guest editor for the journal over the next three issues I hope to retain readers' familiarity with the journal as well as introduce an element of change. The familiarity rests with the paper edition. While change rests with an electronic version which will be available on the CILIP website.

As a pilot, the electronic version will run for at least three issues. It will not be the same as the printed version in look and feel. But more obviously, as traditional constraints do not apply, each issue though based on the same template may differ in the articles it contains, there being less space restraints.

The number of articles we have depends on you the reader. The hardest part of this newsletter for the contributor is the writing of the articles, but for the editor it is getting contributors to write. On the contribution side I am looking for articles that are informative, jargon-free and indeed challenging.

As a profession we have a lot to say, but I fear when it comes to putting pen to paper we tend to be less forthcoming. Innovation and creativity comes from stepping outside the comfort zone, challenging accepted practice and declaring alternative points of view.

To make this Newsletter vibrant now, and in the future, I would welcome articles that make us think about our profession, its value and if need be, evaluate why we are in it in the first place.

Patrick Ryan
Editor

Hikkadauwa Library Project Closure

We thought readers might be interested to read a transliteration of the letter received from Upali Amarasiri, Chair of the Tsunami Library Committee, Director/NILIS. Not only is it a strong note of thanks to contributors and a tribute to the activities of the Committee and but also a powerful endorsement of the Librarian's project skills of which the profession can be proud.

Dear Ms Laird,

Thank you very much for your letter dated 28th April 2009 on the Hikkaduwa Library (tsunami) Project. We are indeed delighted that Hikkaduwa Library (tsunami) Project came to a successful conclusion. One look at the two different pictures of the library - After tsunami and after renovation - anyone can see a world of difference which is worth more than a bulky report. Government Libraries and Information Group of CILIP can be very proud of its achievements in restoring the tsunami damaged Hikkaduwa Public Library. You have selected a worthy project and prepared a manageable, quality, development plan, raised the necessary funds with some innovative methods, had a constant communication with the NLDSB, Tsunami Library Committee and with the client, always followed the proper procedure, insisted on progress reports, sent officials to check and verify the progress independently and perform all other quality managerial techniques in carrying out the project.

As the Chair of the Tsunami Library Committee and the former Director General of the National Library of Sri Lanka and NLDSB let me thank the GLIG whole heartedly for the wonderful achievement. Today this small town in the southern coast of Sri Lanka has a quality library and information centre. Both the residents in the area as well as the tourists coming from all parts of the world are benefiting from the library.

The former Chair of the GLIG, those members who worked tirelessly on the project, the present Chair and all the contributors deserve a BIG THANK YOU from all of us in Sri Lanka. Hikkaduwa one of the best tourist destinations in South Asia will remember your generous gesture for a long time to come. The library community in Sri Lanka, the National Library, NLDSB, SLLA, NILIS and all the other major library organisations greatly appreciate your project. In my opinion the Hikkaduwa Library project is one of the best tsunami projects in Sri Lanka. The usual complaints about similar endeavours - wastage of resources, unnecessary spending, unaccountable spending, and poor constructions etc - are not part of this project.

We wish you all the best and also the wisdom and courage to undertake similar worthy projects in any part of the world in the future when the need arises. We will happy to be a part of the project to show our gratitude.

Hikkaduwa Library before and after the renovation



Figure 1 - The flood-damaged library shortly after the Boxing Day tsunami 2004



Figure 2 - The piled-up damaged stock in the library after the tsunami



Figure 3 - More damaged stock in the flood-damaged library



Figure 4 - New furniture, purchased with GLIG funds, in the children's library



Figure 5 - The popular newspaper room in the newly renovated library



Figure 6 - The librarian with new stock in the newly renovated library

Balancing qualifications against competencies – dual importance

Alison Raisin, Group Marketing Manager, Corporate Centre, BERR

I can almost hear the collective sharp intake of breath - competencies as important as qualifications?! However, before you start creating a waxen image and sticking in the pins just pause and consider. Librarians are not alone; we are now part of a broader Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) profession in government, one that in the main is in its infancy, and we need to look at what we want this KIM profession to achieve, not just what we can achieve within the broader profession. Professional competence is not just a matter of qualifications, though they help; it is in recognition of this that CILIP introduced the ACLIP and widened the routes to MCLIP. Before we go too far in to the debate perhaps a reminder of the context in which we must work would be appropriate.

- The majority of government librarians do not consider their professional role to be in a library. In fact the figures show we already consider ourselves to be KIM professionalsⁱ with 20.6% in information management, 12.7% in inter/intranet, 8.6% in knowledge management and 4% in records management.
- Librarians are only one of a number of small specialist disciplines that make up the new KIM profession recognised under Personal Skills for Government (PSG). Assuming the CDL Community, for want of a better term, is around 350-400 we represent 10% or so in a KIM profession of 3,809ⁱⁱ. The rest of the KIM profession is made up of the ‘usual suspects’ such as records managers, who will be considered part of the KIM profession whatever organisation they work in, but there are others who may or may not be considered KIM, depending on how the organisation is structured, e.g. those working in information assurance.

So, there we are: professionally qualified librarians with a strong and long standing community as part of a much wider KIM profession where our colleagues have arrived there through a number of different routes, some planned and some by chance, and in the main with no sense of being part of a professional community, or even a professional.

ⁱ CDL TEFG Baseline survey on career development / succession planning 2006

ⁱⁱ 2008 figure from Government Skills, the sector skills council for central government, who have been compiling figures for the size of the various professions within the PSG framework,

However, put another way what we have are library posts at or above EO equivalent where only someone with CILIP recognised qualifications (itself a small sub-set of the KIM qualifications available at degree level and above) can apply and a lot of other KIM posts that they can move into because they have the experience and skills required, while those with the equivalent skills in other areas of KIM cannot move into libraries because they don't have the relevant bit of paper. It sounds much more unfair put that way and that is a poor start to the building of a strong KIM profession.

What do we want for the KIM profession as it develops? Speaking personally, I want to see us evolve in to a profession that provides professional advice and support to the business of government in the same way as the other professions, e.g. economists and are recognised as the people to go to for anything relating to the management of knowledge and information resources, which would put us on a par with HR, ICT and Finance (all also now professions under PSG). I want us to have the same status as these professions, not just be the paper shufflers stuck out in the sticks. The Knowledge Council KIM Professionalism Programme will play a key part in this evolution and they are looking for the following outcomes:

- KIM practitioners recognise themselves as part of a professional community
- KIM practitioners know what skills they need to develop and what opportunities exist, and can apply their skills in a variety of roles
- Departments have the tools they need to develop KIM capability
- Departments are developing a pipeline of KIM skills for the future

Of these only the first one is not directly about competencies, and even that one requires recognized competencies in order to build the community. Where does that leave qualifications then? A quick look at the civil service jobs websiteⁱⁱⁱ and you will see that non-graduates can expect to start as junior staff, or put another way, at EO level and above we would expect to recruit graduates, people with proven ability to research data and information, analyse it and come up with options at the level required by the civil service.

If that Degree is in KIM it gives us the knowledge framework that we need to practice. It gives us the theory and principles behind what we are doing so we understand the why rather than doing it by rote and shows us how those same principles can apply in a variety of environments so, for example, the principles of arranging information can be applied in a library catalogue, a database, a web page or in a record plan. Alongside this we gain a sense of

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/jobs/index.aspx>

professional identity and worth, the ability to reflect on what we have learned, and a commitment to KIM. This raises some interesting questions for CILIP and the range of courses it accredits given they only recognise some of the degree and post graduate KIM courses! Another question is CILIP accreditation relevant for KIM posts outside libraries, or even for government libraries now so many have moved from the traditional model? These are critical questions that need to be thought through carefully; unilateral action in one department to move away from CILIP accredited qualifications will mean their staff are not eligible for equivalent posts in other departments unless they become Chartered^{iv}. This all raises another interesting point, to what extent can a small group influence the direction CILIP moves?

Having touched on the issues around qualifications for entry in to KIM posts, what about those already in post and with no qualifications? The Competence Framework recommends that 1.3.1, Professional development of the KIM Community, is applicable to all. Developing an awareness of the broader profession can be done in lots of ways, of which formal qualifications are one. We could go down the route that HR and Finance are going and require staff to gain qualifications, and pay for them to do so. That brings us back to the question of what qualifications should we require and at what level, which in turn should be informed by the decisions on entry criteria for KIM professionals. We could look at encouraging a mix and match of modules from university KIM courses, which would gain the individual academic credits. Another option may be NVQs as they are work-related, competence-based qualifications

Going forward the competencies and qualifications issue is going to arise whenever we look at processes in relation to recruitment and selection, and assessment, in any department with specialist pay allowances then it will impact on the pay negotiations and the identification of KIM posts. It will need to be considered as we do career development interviews and look at training needs. Most critically we will need to be thinking not just of what we need in our own department but what impact that may have on moves between departments. It is going to make us think hard about our profession and what we bring to KIM. It is not going to go away.

^{iv} One route to chartership is a non-accredited degree plus substantial professional experience

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Five things that government librarians can teach the profession

Peter Griffiths, CILIP President

Were you at the Government Library Information Group (GLIG)'s 2009 AGM? If so, you will have witnessed a spectacular failure of IT which took something away from my carefully prepared talk, and left me unable to use some of my illustrations to explain why I think that GLIG has some really useful skills to share with the profession at large. So I'm grateful to your editor for the opportunity to explain more in this article. I've called it "Five things" but you will probably think of more.

1 – How to work in a political world

Like it or not, any kind of public life in the UK has become increasingly political over the past 25 years; so has much private activity. There is a plethora of legislation and regulation that affects information, and more that affects the areas where information managers and librarians work (such as health, the environment, transport, prisons, business, home affairs and so on). Since I have become involved with the wider aspects of LISKIM (a rather cumbersome abbreviation, but less awkward than Library and Information Services, Knowledge and Information Management) over the past 15 months I have been surprised to find that many colleagues are both uncomfortable with and sometimes confused by the political world that government librarians take for granted. In the world of government libraries and information we understand how Westminster works: for a start we know which Department does what, and understand Ministerial responsibilities. Colleagues have to be reminded that Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) does not control the entire domain of libraries (or for the academic sector that there is a world outside the influence of Department of Innovation Universities and Skills (DIUS). The point escapes many that to get a solution that benefits our profession you have to understand who all the players are and how they relate to one another.

Another requirement for working in the political world is to understand how government deals with the issues it faces. Consultations, campaigns, rebuttal and response serve mainly to bewilder. How do you find out what issues in the information field are under consideration and how do you respond?

When do half a dozen committed people writing identically to a department become a campaign, so that their concerns don't get considered further and they get a stock letter in reply (which may upset them)? Who understands how lobbying may differ from campaigning? Government librarians, that's who.

2 – How to write so that decision makers read and act

Sometimes it seems that librarians have forgotten Ranganathan's fourth lawⁱ: Save the time of the reader. They are fine when it comes to e-mail and filling in templates, but ask them to sustain a commentary or an argument over a series of related issues or compile a report and many will produce over-detailed rambling documents. (I may be over-generalising here but we have all seen this kind of amateur-looking document). The problem is that we have a complex professional subject area to get across, and many people with a handle on the resources have already decided that the library is going to contribute (a lot) to balancing the books. Therefore the point must be made: up front, unambiguously, and in approachable language.

Sadly, the Local Government Association does not understand information management to judge by their list of words that public bodies should avoid in order to communicate clearlyⁱⁱ: it headlines the word "taxonomy" as one to be avoided, and in its list of alternatives it states "taxonomy : why use at all?". Well, because the word has a clear and defined meaning in information management would be one good reason, but don't let that get in the way of a story. My point is that we may have to remind people that we use meaningful professional vocabulary in a way quite opposite to Humpty Dumpty. To cite President Obama, words must mean something; and ours do.

But let's get back to the plot. In government we have an agreed format for presenting arguments and information; it's called a Submission and though its content has expanded over the years it provides an excellent template for anyone who wants to get decision makers to take note. In the classic manner it tells you what it's going to tell you, then it tells you, then it tells you what it's told you. In other words it has an executive summary (the Issue); a short argument (the Consideration); and a long argument (usually in annexes which contain the tedious stuff and the detail that may not be read at all).

A submission tells you how urgent the issue is, though you may need the LGA to explain the difference between "pressing" and "urgent". It recognises that busy people don't read beyond the first page, so it puts all the important stuff there so it can't be missed. Government librarians have this excellent tool at their disposal, and should share it with professional colleagues as a way of getting their arguments across whilst making sure they haven't forgotten to include anything important.

3 – Seeing the big picture

Government libraries are pretty unique in the way that they lead us to see the big picture. Maybe this is because government has moved so much of the furniture around over the years, especially in the last ten years when it got tired of merging and de-merging whole departments and started moving bits of them around. So government librarians have two kinds of skill – one of knowing (or being able to find out quickly) who had responsibility for a subject over time, so that it's easy to track continuously through the history of a topic; the other of knowing how various departmental responsibilities fit together, and where the answer is likely to be found to any particular aspect of a given topic at a stated time. (For example, where is the boundary between the responsibility for archives at The National Archives (TNA) and Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and Museum Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and DCMS? Who else has responsibilities, such as the Information Commissioner?) I think this need to see the big picture makes government librarians particularly good at understanding complex relationships, and how partners contribute to resolve complex problems.

4 – The link between libraries and information

The *Information Matters* strategy document is a published description of how libraries (and professional library skills) link to information and knowledge management (and their professional skill sets). The competency framework published by GKIMN, building on the CDL KIM skills, is novel because it provides an integrated framework showing how library and information skills relate to one another in a co-ordinated framework. This opens up enormous possibilities for professional development and creates new career opportunities for us. We've grown used to this in government circles but it's still radical thinking for many people in our profession. Many people still feel uncomfortable that MLA has responsibility for three areas – museums, libraries and archives – that to them appear to be barely related at all.

But libraries and records have been associated in government for many years – the FCO linked them in the 1960s – and people with library qualifications have been setting archives and records policy throughout that time. We have a duty to explain.

5 – Tenacity and endurance

Not least, we are tenacious. We know how slowly things can move in government (and how quickly when they want to get an initiative noticed). So we are used to the long game. Much in the way that Sir Humphrey Appleby kept a set of draft policies ready for incoming ministers in *Yes Minister*ⁱⁱⁱ, we keep plans ready either on paper or in our heads so that we can take advantage of opportunities, of the moment when someone is in a position of influence who understands the issues about information and will champion our causes when supported in return with

accurate and relevant knowledge. If a career in government libraries has taught me anything, it's that career civil servants tend to last longer than career politicians. (A debate about the exceptions can wait for a social occasion; suffice it to say that some politicians have proved to be remarkably durable, and some civil servants remarkably temporary, but as a generalisation it will do nicely). Endurance and the experience that goes with it mean we play that long game well.

[If you want to see how the long game works, try to guess the year of this exchange in Hansard: the answer is in the footnote, along with the names of the speakers (one of which would have made the question).

- *XX* asked if there would be any objection to throw open the library at the Foreign Office to the public?
- *XX* said, the library at the Foreign Office consisted of a certain number of works connected with history and international law for the use of that department, and also of despatches written and received at the Foreign Office, which were at the end of each year bound into books and put aside on the shelves of the library. After a certain period, say 10 or 12 years, these records were transferred to the State Paper Office, where they remained under the custody of the Keeper of the State Paper Office. Now, with regard to the library of the Foreign Office, if any one wished to see printed books there, or large blue books that were not to be found in the British Museum or any other library accessible to the public, they, of course, could be seen; but, with regard to many of those books, and the manuscripts of despatches sent and received, they were documents which of course from their nature could not be shown to everybody who might express a desire to read them.]^{iv}

These are my five things – what would yours be? Maybe, if the IT is working, we could discuss that at the next GLIG gathering.

i Refresh your memory by reading: McMenemy, David (2007). "Ranganathan's relevance in the 21st century". *Library review*, 56(2), 97-101 (accessible via the Emerald journals on the CILIP website)

ii *LGA urges the public sector to ditch jargon to help people during the recession*, LGA media release 18 March 2009. [<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=1716341>, verified 7 April 2009]

iii "Humphrey then produced draft proposals to implement my policy [on open government] in a White Paper. I was flabbergasted. The efficiency of the civil service is quite astounding. All of these draft proposals are available to me within thirty-six hours of the new government being elected and within minutes of my arrival at my office. And on a weekend!" – Hacker, James. *The complete Yes Minister*, edited by Jonathan Lynn and Anthony Jay, London, BBC, 1984 [editors' foreword dated September 2019], p16.

iv Ashley Pellatt, Lord Palmerston, 8 June 1854

ESDS keen to strengthen links with librarian community

Lorna Balkan, Outreach and Promotion Officer, Economic and Social Data Service

The Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) is a national data service jointly funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), that provides access to, and support for, a wide range of economic and social data. The service is aimed at researchers in further and higher education, and beyond, including the public and voluntary sectors. Resources of interest to the researcher in government departments and agencies include: the large-scale government surveys, such as the General Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey, academic surveys; and qualitative in-depth interviews. These datasets are available free of charge to non-commercial users. Additionally, some high-quality socio-economic macro data, such as the World Bank's World Development Indicators, have recently been made accessible to parliamentary researchers and statisticians at the House of Commons and House of Lords libraries.

While providing a help desk and organising workshops and conferences for researchers on a regular basis, ESDS relies on its network of social science data resources (SSDR) site representatives at key institutions to promote its services and activities and to answer front line enquiries within the library about the service. In the past site representatives were mostly academics in social science departments, but increasingly it is now librarians who are taking on this role. With this in mind, on 13 February 2009 the ESDS organised an event at the Royal Statistical Society entitled 'ESDS – what's in it for Librarians?' aimed specifically at librarians.

Despite the bad weather, there was an impressive turn out, with librarians coming from all round the country. While most attendees were from academic libraries, there were representatives from government departments and the health sector.

The day took the form of presentations in the morning, followed by a feedback session in the afternoon. There was thus a two-way exchange of information - in the morning, delegates had the chance to find out about the ESDS, and in the afternoon advise how the ESDS can help librarians in their role of social science research facilitators.

In addition to presentations on the ESDS, keynote speaker Jude England, Head of Social Science Collections and Research at the British Library, spoke of how the role of the librarian is evolving in light of new researcher needs and expectations. She also discussed some of the strategic links and collaborations the British Library is forging with the research community as well as with

other data services and providers, including the ESDS. Stuart Macdonald went on to describe his work at EDINA and Edinburgh University Data Library as a data librarian. He observed that there are currently only four dedicated social science data librarians in UK Universities, and encouraged other librarians with knowledge of data to join the network (DISC-UK). Slides of the presentations are available at: www.esds.ac.uk/news/eventdetail.asp?id=2125

The feedback session centred round three main questions: (1) the most popular questions that librarians are asked that are relevant to the ESDS; (2) the most requested types of data at the librarians' institutions; and (3) three specific things librarians would like from the ESDS to support users' knowledge and use of the ESDS. Questions (1) and (2) revealed a wide range of data in terms of type of data - such as international comparative data, government statistics and qualitative data - and subject/topic. Question (1) identified problems associated with finding data at ESDS - locating related resources; accessing data and the registration process; and using and citing data properly. The three wishes in response to question (3) targeted some of these problems, but also highlighted areas where ESDS is excelling, namely its popular thematic guides, and its outreach and workshops. More of each were requested, including workshops geared not just at researchers but at librarians, as research facilitators.

ESDS will take these suggestions forward in its next planning phase. It is also investigating ways in which to further strengthen its links with librarians, either through its network of SSSDR representatives, or less formally. SSSDR representatives act as first port-of-call for information on the ESDS at their institution. ESDS provides a dedicated mailing list and web pages (www.esds.ac.uk/support/sr.asp) for representatives, where they are first to be informed of new developments at the ESDS and Census.ac.uk, and have free privileged access to ESDS and Census.ac.uk workshops. In return they are invited to disseminate literature about the services at their institution, test new versions of ESDS and Census.ac.uk systems, and help initiate and host census and social science workshops (for example ESDS recently delivered training courses to researchers and statisticians from the House of Commons and the House of Lords libraries: www.esds.ac.uk/international/news/pastnews.asp#17sep08hoc).

To apply to become an SSSDR site representative at any time – just send an email request to publicity@esds.ac.uk. This email address can also be used for any other query or suggestions about how ESDS can support librarians.

**Government Libraries and Information Group (GLIG) in association with
SCOOP / British Library presents
Government Information in the Google Age 2**

GLIG/SCOOP/British Library has put together another outstanding line up of experts in the delivery of Government information in the fast moving information age. The conference will be chaired by Peter Griffiths (CILIP President 2009).

Venue: Conference Room 4, British Library St Pancras

Date: 2 November 2009

Time: 9.30 – 5.00

Cost: £125 + VAT (£143.75) includes lunch and refreshments throughout the day.

Maximum 60 places – book early

Draft Programme:

- Keynote speaker: Natalie Ceeney, The National Archives.
- Delivery via the Web: Government Web Site Design
- Web Continuity Update
- Re-use of Public Sector Information – Opportunity or Threat?
- The role of the Government Publisher and its remit
- Developments at National Library of Scotland
- EU Information Policy in the Digital Age
- New developments in official publishing

You will also have the opportunity to have a tour of the Library lasting c45 minutes. There are only 15 places on the library tour (places will be allocated on a first come first served basis). Would you like a library tour? YES / NO



I would like to attend Government Information in the Google Age 2 on 2nd November 2009.

Name:

Address:

Email:

Cancellations made within 2 weeks of the event and non attendance will be invoiced for the full cost of £143.75

If you have any questions regarding this event please contact Karen Gommersall (Karen.gommersall@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) or 0114 294 3595

CDL update

Graham Monk, Chief Librarian, DWP

Much of the Committee of Departmental Librarians (CDL) current activities outside the CDL Working Groups are geared towards feeding into the wider professional requirement of the Knowledge Council (KC). This update is both an update on the CDL and the KC activities.

Many of you will not need reminding on the history of the formation of the KC and its aspirations as an important step in building recognition among senior leaders in government of the value of good Knowledge and Information skills as assets and, the importance of having skilled professionals to manage these assets. The main KC current focus is on:

- Building a knowledge management and knowledge sharing culture
- Using Common Standards and Secure Processes
- Strengthening leadership

An important part of KC work is the KIM framework (the specialist skills framework of KIM competences) which has now been endorsed by the KC. The plan is to review the framework every two years. This leads us within CDL to address two issues for the future. The first, how we use the framework within our departments (and it is up to departments to decide how to use it). That said, an element of commonality could well be a future aspiration. Meanwhile, CDL recognises that the framework could be an important tool both for departments to test skills on entry and also for current incumbents to develop their skills based on the framework. Continuing Professional Development will be key here.

The second issue for CDL is the matter of the Librarian qualification. No firm conclusions have been reached here but it is likely that CDL will seek to broaden the current qualification requirement, if only to acknowledge the other accredited courses within the CILIP framework. CDL may also seek to develop a training function to allow interested, but non-qualified, staff to develop and obtain qualifications within the KIM community. These are early days but it is important to recognise that CDL is active and negotiating with the major players in this potentially contentious area. At root, is the desire to make the profession stronger, with wider opportunities for all and to develop an acceptable competence and qualification framework where appropriate to enable this to happen.

The other KC activity of which CDL is a prime contributor is the e-procurement activity. In this area, we are well advanced and CDL is anxious that the contracts in place are used to the full to ensure value across government. Part of the e-procurement agenda is inevitably bound within the copyright licence agenda which CDL is currently taking forward on a collective basis.

Purer CDL activities covered at the recent CDL meeting were that of the Business Community and the draft framework specification which the Working Group is developing. It is hoped to issue a template to allow departments to draft their own specification.

