

Editorial



A mini editorial board meeting on a riverboat in Prague, comprising your Editors, Zuzana Helinsky, and a large bottle of something interesting

Your Editors need you.....

UKSG has been moving towards a more integrated web environment, overhauling the website, and moving *Serials* to MetaPress from 2004. We will also start to make *Serials* available through agent gateways. In looking at the move towards a *Serials* portal, the UKSG committee has proposed that from 2005 *Serials* becomes electronic only.

Why is the committee proposing electronic only? The rationale is that although *Serials* is a key benefit to UKSG members, it does take up quite a bit of the UKSG budget and a large part of that expense is the printing and distribution. We are also finding that more professionals are reading electronically distributed information (even if they do print it out first). UKSG is unusual in that, unlike many journals, we have a lot of voluntary support and low staff overhead. That has always enabled us to keep the subscription low, and provide this significant benefit to every member. The use of the electronic version is increasing gradually, but we still hear complaints from people within institutions that "*Serials* never gets to me". So by providing a single portal for all the UKSG members, with journal, newsletter and information about events, we hope to make it easy and efficient to access all the membership benefits.

As you can imagine, the implications and ramifications of this proposal have been exercising

your Editors and the Editorial Board. We know that our readership is in general more sophisticated and more aware of the industry trends than the average journal reader ... but we are not aware of any other professional journal (rather than newsletter) that has completely discarded the print version. Does anyone out there know of any titles that have done so?

So what are the implications of going e-only? First, we already know that some people will want to continue to have a print copy – so print on-demand is being investigated (see the last issue's Key Issue by Suzanne Wilson Higgins). Second, the subject of VAT in the UK will raise its head, with the percentage of the electronic and print bundle that is taxable currently being incalculable, as it is totally dependent on the idiosyncrasies of your local Customs and Excise officer. We hope that going electronic will clarify this. Third, how will archiving be managed? As a single title publisher with limited resources, UKSG will have to look at the LOCKSS, legal deposit and other options. Lastly, advertising in the printed version brings in some revenue for *Serials*, so how do we raise the same revenue with the e-version? Increasingly, discrete advertising on websites, intro pages and even in the PDFs is becoming accepted, but it means revamping the prices, technology and management.

So what do you think of this proposal? As

you will see from the cover, we have set up a page on the website to record your views, so take the opportunity to go to <http://www.uksg.org/survey.asp> and let us know your views.

In this issue we have selected papers from the conference and of course the reports from the students who were awarded places. It is always good to see how much they enjoy themselves, both socially and professionally, and this reflects on the nature of the conference itself, which goes from strength to strength. We always get the

best speakers and have the keynotes from Lynne Brindley, Jay Jordan and David Seaman in this issue. There are now only a limited number of venues that can meet our needs for size and facilities, so we will be in Manchester next year and back at Heriot-Watt the year after. As usual by this time of year, the planning for all aspects of the 2004 conference is well under way. The fact that the conference runs like clockwork is down to hard work and detailed planning – not good luck!