E-Journal Technical Update
University of Bristol
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Report on UKSG course by Yvonne Desmond, Faculty Librarian, Dublin Institute of Technology

On the plane from Dublin to Bristol to attend the technical briefing on e-journals, I prided myself on my knowledge of this subject area. On the way back I was more chastened by the amount I had not known or had been decidedly unclear on! This one-day course provided a comprehensive overview of the technical management of e-journals, bringing together a wide variety of topics and rolling them out to the audience in small, digestible bites. The level of technical information given was just right – just enough but not too much. *Simon Inger* from Scholarly Information Systems provided wonderful, simple explanations of quite complex matters, for example, a Digital Object Identifier is just like a number in a phonebook.

The day started with a session on the history of e-journals, which I have to say I was not looking forward to with any great enthusiasm. However, the point was made that you had to look at the past to be able to predict the future and who the key players will be. In the event, this potted history of e-journals was in fact quite interesting. Simon discussed hosts, gateways, combinations of the same, publishers' web sites, aggregators, library gateways, special library and corporate intranets and the differences between them. This was then followed by an overview of 'access control and authentication'. Here, I was particularly interested in the concept of digital certificates and how, but for the fact they became embroiled in the Microsoft 'anti-trust' situation, they might have provided the answer to authentication in academic libraries. The next session dealt with organizing access to content and emphasized the need for the library to impose its branding on publisher web sites so, even if users come in via Google, they will be aware that the content is being provided by the library. 'Navigating users to content' looked at the way users behave and how, whether librarians like it or not, most choose to start in Google. Simon Inger has the gift of clarity and nowhere was this more apparent then when it came to discussing CrossRef, link resolvers and SFX. CrossRef may not bring the user to the most appropriate tool where a link resolver will, and this is where librarians come into their own. Uniting use of a link resolver with our knowledge of our users means we can streamline the searching process and ensure the user accesses the most appropriate resource for his needs. The day concluded with a discussion on the open access movement and how the same problems that apply to licensed content will also apply here.

Did I think the course was worth the trip across the Irish Sea? The answer would have to be yes and, more than that, I never came near to nodding off at any point during the day.

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More venues and dates to be announced for 2005: next course – Thursday 27 January in Coventry

Check the UKSG web site (http://www.uksg.org/events/diary.asp) and *Serials*-eNews for details of additional venues and dates for this popular one-day course to be presented for UKSG by Simon Inger of Scholarly Information Strategies.