FreePint®

Contents

About FreePint

FreePint is an online network of information workers. Members receive this free newsletter twice a month, packed with tips on finding and managing quality and reliable work-related information.

Joining is free at <http://www.freepint.com/> and provides access to a substantial archive of articles, reviews and events, with answers to research questions and networking at the FreePint Bar.

To read the fully-formatted version, visit <http://www.freepint.com/issues/>. To receive the formatted version as an email attachment or a brief notification when it's online, visit <http://www.freepint.com/subs/>. Please circulate this newsletter, which is best read when printed out.

Editorial

We all have a view from our desks where we work. Few views are truly inspirational, but I enjoy seeing a bit of 'life' as I sit at my desk. The view I have from my desk overlooks a small but busy street, with a convenience store at one end, and a train station at the other.

Although both the store and the station constantly have custom, I often wonder how much the operators of those facilities (the store owner and the rail network operator) can really know about each individual user of their facilities. Sure, they can surmise that the early morning crowd are the commuters and the late night crowd the troublemakers, but that's about as in-depth as it gets.

With the arrival of this, the 200th edition of FreePint, I've been trying to relate this back to the FreePint community, and realise that, in many ways, the store and station operator know more about their users than we do about ours. For example, they know what their user wants: a daily newspaper or a one-day Travelcard.

As we finish our first member survey in eight years, we have been pleased and surprised by many of the findings. In particular, the large percentage of members who work outside the traditional 'information' space. This response has been fairly typical:

> "I so appreciate FreePint as I have less of an academic background in information and more of a business background. I appreciate how much I learn from the community. I hope to give as much as I get, and am compiling information for community use as well."

While we are delighted with the level of certain responses -- for example, that 93.1% of members read the newsletter -- some statistics have been decidedly modest (only 43% of members lurk in the Bar). We know that you really like the 'Favourite Tipples', but there is much questioning about the necessity to include the full text of articles in the emailed newsletter.

We also know that we need to provide more opportunities for you to network and find out more about fellow community members ...

> "I use FreePint to get an indication of where and how to look. I have no formal training in library/information skills. I would be interested to know how many other people are using FreePint who consider themselves 'unskilled' - or are you all professionals?"

... and this is one of a number of areas where you'll see developments from us over the coming months.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey; it has been a fascinating and enlightening experience. We always welcome constructive feedback, and special thanks go to this respondent who provided a tremendous boost to the FreePint team:

> "Frankly, I can't remember how we managed before FreePint"

Cheers!

William Hann
Managing Editor and Founder, FreePint
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My Favourite Tipples
by Liz Edols

Liz Edols is an Australian freelance writer and information professional.

Submit your top five favourite Web sites. See the guidelines at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>.

- Australian Bureau of Statistics <http://www.abs.gov.au> - not just stats but also articles, white papers and research reports on Australian social trends, industry, economic issues and more.

- Website Tips <http://www.websitetips.com> is a useful compilation of resources on web site creation and management including design, content, usability and information architecture.

- Scirus search engine <http://www.scirus.com>, for all the best in scientific, medical and technical information.

- Michael Quinion's World Wide Words, <http://www.worldwidewords.org/index.htm> - great for when you need to know the origin of a word or phrase, or how to pronounce it.

- Garbl's Writing Resources <http://garbl.home.comcast.net/writing> for all those little tips about writing and grammar that I'd love to have in my head but don't. Thank you Garbl, whoever you are.

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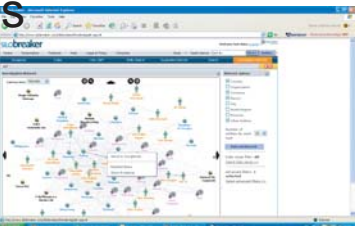
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The Jinfo Newsletter is published free every two weeks, and contains a list of the latest vacancies along with job-seeking advice. The latest article is entitled " The Nature of the Beast ". Read it online and subscribe free at <http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>.

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Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4590>

Internet Research Analyst

Determining information sources for our target markets and establishing high quality demonstrations and subscription services.
Recruiter: Magus Research
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4879>

Information Manager/ Web Coordinator

Working at the Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR), you will take responsibility for the overall management of ICA.
Recruiter: ICAR
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4903>

Human Resources Researcher

Research support at top level with Directors and Senior Execs on a one-to-one basis. Must be confident and proactive. Central London.
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4893>

Researcher

Working at the Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR), you will work on a new project creating a database of research.
Recruiter: ICAR
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4902>

Director

Ensuring the history of psychology is captured and recorded and develop accessibility of relevant materials.
Recruiter: The British Psychological Society
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4917>

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<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4880>

FreePint Bar

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The FreePint Bar has been especially busy recently, with over 260 postings in the last month alone -- not including all the postings at the FreePint Student Bar <http://www.freepint.com/student/>, VIP Lounge <http://web.vivavip.com/forum/Lounge/> and VIP Wire <http://web.vivavip.com/forum/Wire/>. Thanks to everyone who has made a contribution.

Back to the FreePint Bar - and this FreePinter needs help in re-organising a colleague's collection of paper documents so that it is accessible to the rest of the team. Any ideas? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b37259>.

Are you a member of CILIP -- perhaps you were but are not any more? This poster has been a member for twenty years but is not sure whether to renew her subscription. What do you think? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b37090>.

Do you know if you are allowed to reproduce UK and EU Government legislation in full on a website? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b37153>. Or perhaps you know of a product similar to Lexis CourtLink that provides details of European companies' legal activities? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b37003>.

Where can you find information on Hong Kong and Singaporean local strategy consulting companies that have 25-100 employees <http://www.freepint.com/go/b37075> or statistics on the total size of the UK food service market? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b37170>.

This FreePinter has a friend who is opening up a beauty salon and has asked for some help with market research - do you know where to start? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b37030>. Or how about market research on craft kits, for example sales volumes and demographics? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b37223>.

The latest issue of VIP Eye has just been published and editor's comments include: * Does Google steal content? * Free items on HighBeam * Changing publishing models <http://www.vivavip.com/go/l387>.

Yahoo mail is not letting someone send attachments from his home PC - any ideas where the problem lies? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b37040>

There are no replies to this posting yet, so perhaps you can help: "Does anyone use MS Project to schedule email mailshots and produce reports of when things went out?" <http://www.freepint.com/go/b37098>

And lastly, on the front cover of 'The Idiot' by F. Dostoyevsky, there is a painting - do you know the artist and title? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b37208>

That's it for this week, until next time.
Penny Hann Production Editor, FreePint
<penny.hann@freepint.com>

{ *the ugly truth* }

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S-001

"Health intelligence sources in diabetes"

By Marion Spring

Marion Spring has worked in health information for five years and is Knowledge Manager at Yorkshire and Humber Public Health Observatory (YHPHO). YHPHO is the lead observatory for diabetes on behalf of the Association of Public Health Observatories and is currently leading a new Diabetes Public Health Intelligence Group reporting to the National Clinical Director for diabetes (Dr Sue Roberts).

According to Diabetes UK (2004) the number of people in the UK with diabetes is 1.8 million. However, latest estimates of diagnosed prevalence suggest that this could be the figure for England alone. Taking into account levels of undiagnosed diabetes. the conservative figure for the UK could be as high as 2.5 million people with the disease.

There are two types of diabetes: Type 1 (insulin dependent, where the body cannot produce insulin) and Type 2 (non-insulin dependent, where the body cannot efficiently use the insulin which is produced). Risk factors for Type 2 diabetes include weight, age and ethnicity. As levels of overweight and obesity are increasing in the UK, so too are cases of Type 2 diabetes; even young children are now being diagnosed with the disease. In addition to affecting quality of life, diabetes can cause serious complications including: damage to the eyes (diabetic retinopathy); kidney damage (diabetic nephropathy); damage to nerves (diabetic neuropathy); coronary heart disease and stroke.

Complications can be reduced or avoided by good management of diabetes. It is therefore important that diabetes is diagnosed at an early stage of the disease, and that those involved in the care and treatment of diabetics, including patients themselves, have access to good quality information. Estimates vary widely, but many surveys suggest that between one-half and one-third of cases of diabetes are undiagnosed.

A wealth of information and resources for diabetes patients, caregivers, health officials and others is available via the web. The following resources are grouped by the type of information provided, and may be used with confidence for disease management, caregiver support, population studies, public policy and a wide variety of other uses.

Diabetes prevalence and incidence

It is useful to establish the prevalence and incidence of diabetes so that primary care providers can compare the expected prevalence against the proportion of cases which are diagnosed, and to assist service provision planning within the NHS.

There are several diabetes prevalence sources available. A guide comparing these is available from the Yorkshire and Humber Public Health Observatory (PHO) website, along with the PBS Diabetes Population Prevalence Model, commissioned by the Department of Health in collaboration with the National Diabetes Support Team. This is a spreadsheet model that generates estimates of expected total numbers of cases of diabetes (both diagnosed and undiagnosed) at Strategic Health Authority, Local Authority, Primary Care Trust and local ward level. The model can be used to compare expected prevalence between populations and over time. The model provides projections of diabetes prevalence through to 2010, based on three different obesity scenarios <http://www.yhpho.org.uk/diabetes.aspx>.

Diabetes UK is the charity for people with diabetes. They fund research, campaign and help people to live with the condition. Their report "Diabetes in the UK 2004" describes patterns of diabetes prevalence across the UK population. Figures are provided for countries and regions within the UK, as well as by year, age and ethnicity <http://digbig.com/4gfaq>.

Under the new General Medical Services contract, General Practitioners are now paid to collect data to provide evidence of their performance against the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF). Indicator DM1 within the QOF requires general practices to maintain a register of all patients with diabetes mellitus. Over time this will provide a source of comparative data on disease incidence and prevalence at a very local level. More information about the QOF diabetes indicators is available from the British Medical Association Website at <http://digbig.com/4gfar>. The data is collected via an IT system called the Quality Management and Analysis System (QMAS); data is then published by the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC). Both data from and more information about QOF are available from the QOF section of the HSCIC Website <http://www.ic.nhs.uk/services/qof/>.

The annual Health Survey for England collects data on the health and lifestyles of people in England. Questions about diabetes were included in 1991, 1993, 1994, 1998 and 1999. The HSE is a representative sample and the survey relies on self-reports of diagnosis. Reports and summary data are made available to the public via the Department of Health Website <http://digbig.com/4emrd>.

Produced by the International Diabetes Federation, "the global advocate for people with diabetes" the Diabetes e-Atlas provides global epidemiological data about diabetes. It contains the latest data on diabetes prevalence and health care expenditure in over 200 countries and territories <http://www.eatlas.idf.org/>.

Diabetes mortality

Mortality statistics are likely to under-estimate the number of deaths that are attributable to diabetes. This is because diabetes is a major contributory factor to other conditions, such as heart attacks and strokes, which tend to be recorded as the cause of death for people with diabetes. Data are collected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) from death registrations.

ONS produce several outputs based on death registrations, including the Annual Deaths Extract, Public Health Mortality files and Vital Statistics (VS) data. Due to the sensitive nature of this information restrictions are in place as to who can access this information at a detailed level, although aggregated England level annual data are available to download from the ONS Website <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/>.

The Compendium of Clinical and Health Indicators is a comprehensive source of diabetes mortality data, as data are taken from ONS and calculated as rates per population by sex. Rates are provided for England and Wales; England; Government Office Regions; ONS area classifications; Strategic Health Authorities; Local Authorities and Primary Care Organisations. Tables on deaths from diabetes include:

- Age-specific death rate (per 100,000), pooled (in age bands)

- Directly standardised rates (and 95% confidence intervals), pooled, ages 1 to 44 years

- Annual number of deaths (in age bands)

- Indirectly standardised ratios (standardised mortality rate and 95% confidence intervals), pooled, all ages

- Indirectly standardised ratios (standardised mortality rate and 95% confidence intervals), pooled, all ages - trends in mortality (comparison of years)

- Years of Life Lost (YLL) up to age 75, average annual YLL rate (per 10,000) and directly standardised average annual SYLL rate (per 10,000), pooled.

To ensure confidentiality, numbers under five are suppressed. The Compendium of Clinical and Health Indicators is available at <http://www.nchod.nhs.uk/>.NHS staff with access to NHSNet should visit <http://nww.nchod.nhs.uk/>.

Diabetes hospital admissions

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) provides information on admitted patient care delivered by NHS providers in England. Information can be obtained for patients admitted with diabetes, where diabetes is either the primary (main) diagnosis, or any of up to 14 secondary diagnoses. Aggregated data is available to download from the HES Website <http://www.hesonline.org.uk/>. More detailed analyses are available to public health and social care providers on request to your PHO. To find your PHO see <http://www.apho.org.uk/>.

The Compendium of Clinical and Health Indicators obtains data from HES and presents rates per population by sex. Rates are provided for England and Wales; England; Government Office Regions; ONS area classifications; Strategic Health Authorities; Local Authorities and Primary Care Organisations. Tables include:

- Admissions for diabetic ketoacidosis and coma, directly standardised rates, all ages, age standardised per 100,000 population.

- Hospital procedures: lower limb amputations in diabetic patients, directly standardised rates, all ages, age standardised per 100,000 population

Contact details for the Compendium are given above.

Diabetes policies, guidelines and indicators

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health. NICE guidance, primarily aimed at the NHS, published on the treatment and management of diabetes includes technology appraisals, interventional procedures, and clinical guidelines <http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=91500>.

Diabetes is a key policy area for the Department of Health. The Diabetes National Service Framework (NSF) is a concerted effort to make sure diabetics, wherever they live, receive the same excellent standard of care. Annual progress updates on the NSF are also available <http://digbig.com/4cbcw>.

The NSF is supported by the Diabetes Information Strategy. This provides the information infrastructure, systems and services required to deliver the Diabetes NSF <http://digbig.com/4gfas>.

The framework and strategy are supported by the National Diabetes Support Team, part of the NHS Clinical Governance Support Team. The team helps support the implementation of the Diabetes NSF by working with local services to improve diabetes care. They provide guidance, advice and information on developments in diabetes care and support effective information sharing and exchange <http://www.diabetes.nhs.uk/>.

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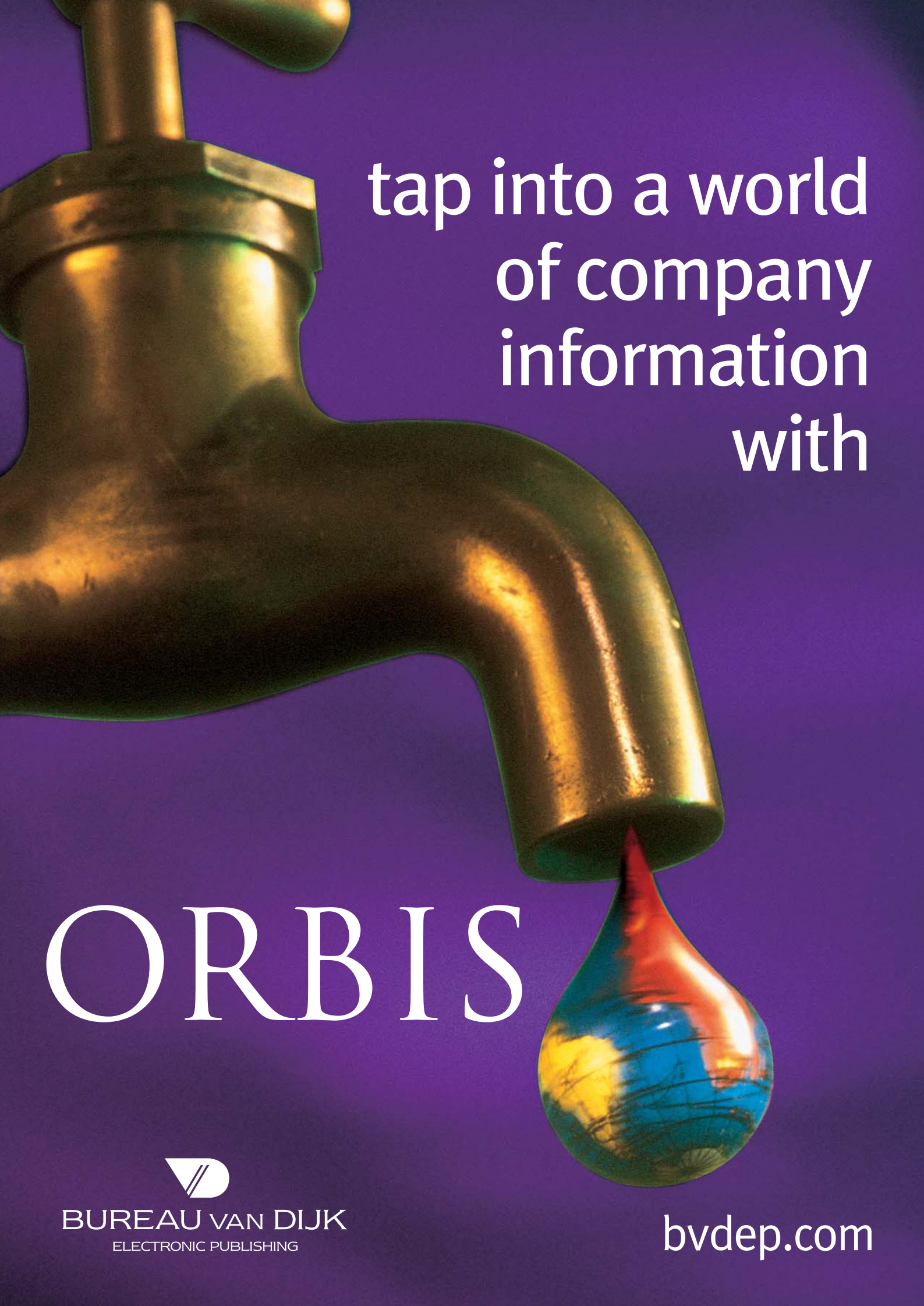[Provisional]

- MP3s and Podcasts
- Market research sources on the web
- Blind web accessibility
- Project management
- Delivering user education to a dispersed population
- KM and blogging
- Implementing new library management systems
- Open source software
- Managing change

If you have a suggestion for an article topic, or would like to write for FreePint, then please contact <penny.hann@freepint.com> or read the notes for authors at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>.

These are complemented by the Diabetes Specialist Library, part of the NHS National electronic Library for Health (NeLH), which aims to provide high-quality information on all aspects of diabetes, including both clinical and organisational issues <http://libraries.nelh.nhs.uk/diabetes>.

Yorkshire & Humber PHO has created a Public Health Indicator Search Tool, listing indicators and their associated governmental policies and targets across the whole spectrum of public health. Users can search specifically for diabetes-related indicators. The Indicator Search Tool is available from the resources section of their Website <http://www.yhpho.org.uk/>.

Diabetes is a serious disease, the effects of which can be limited by good management. There is a wealth of both data and knowledge available about diabetes to assist policymakers, clinicians and healthcare professionals make informed management, treatment and care decisions.

"Setting up a library and information service from scratch"
Reviewed by Susan Bradley

Susan Bradley is an experienced information professional with over 15 years spent working in academic, commercial and membership organisations, with roles covering electronic publishing, knowledge management, library and information services, and records management. She is currently working as the Information Officer for Universities UK (UUK), the membership organisation for the vice-chancellors and principals of the universities in the UK. She has recently developed a library and information service for UUK staff but is still awaiting a final location for the collection! Other current projects include developing and implementing a new intranet and devising records management policies and procedures.

This slim volume (195 pages including appendices) is a practical guide to setting up a library and information service from scratch. The authors (information professionals with experience in industry and government information services) present step-by-step guidance on the many different aspects of the topic. Coverage ranges from the initial stages of carrying out an information audit and the rationale for setting up a service, through the potential pitfalls associated with the possible locations of the premises, staffing requirements, services to be provided, and on to the promotion of the service and training of target groups.

Each chapter starts with a bulleted list of the topics to be covered and finishes with a brief summary. The main part of the chapter contains clear and succinct guidance, along with examples of the authors' experiences and suggestions or questions to be considered. An extensive bibliography complements these chapters, and references to web resources are also included.

The appendices also contain useful suggestions on searching the Internet and the library basics of filing, repairs, loans and reference services, and a helpful glossary.

The short section discussing performance measurement was, for me, one of the most useful sections, as it gave a good insight into the difficult area of selecting and presenting appropriate statistics or data.

The chapters can be read in a fairly stand-alone way. You can easily dip in and out of the different chapters (aided by the informative table of contents) and go quickly to the subject that most interests you. For example, you may wish to read the chapter on services to be provided by the library and information service before the one on staffing or the one on the physical premises.

I found useful book easy-to-read, and would recommend it to those already running library and information services as well as to those just starting out. Two suggestions for further improving this handy book would be to make the example of a press release a library/information service specific one, and to include more detail about how an information professional can personally train their clientele.

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"Digital Repositories in UK universities and colleges"

By Neil Jacobs

Neil Jacobs manages the JISC Digital Repositories development programme, a GBP 3.5m public investment in the infrastructure of UK tertiary education. He is also editing a book on open access to research publications, which will be published in the first half of 2006 (Open Access - Key strategic, technical and economic aspects (forthcoming): <http://digbig.com/4gfah>). He has previously managed the national database of the UK Economic and Social Research Council, and has conducted research into a wide range of topics including students' and tutors' discourse around online learning, scholarly communication and technology, academic library services, and adolescent body image concerns. He is on the Board of 'euroCRIS' <http://www.eurocris.org/en/>, a European organisation concerned with Current Research Information Systems (CRIS).

What's in a word?

Sometimes a word acquires so many meanings that it becomes difficult to use clearly. This happened to 'portal', and it may be happening to 'repository'. There is a lot of development work underway that claims to relate to repositories, that might previously have been related to 'archives', 'digital libraries' or 'content management systems'. Defining the boundaries is probably a waste of time, so for the purposes of this article, I'll take a reasonably pragmatic approach, which is to say a repository is a digital object store into which material can be deposited. Repositories therefore offer information professionals a way of becoming more involved in the processes whereby digital information is made shareable, applying their expertise earlier in the information cycle than has often been the case.

For those interested in definitions, a recent "repositories review" report <http://digbig.com/4geyt> by Rachel Heery (UKOLN <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/>) and Sheila Anderson, Arts and Humanities Data Service <http://ahds.ac.uk/>, went into some detail. Kerry Blinco and Neil McLean, leaders in the field from Australia, have drafted what's informally known as a "wheel of fortune" (Slide 24 in the PowerPoint presentation: <http://digbig.com/4geyw>), describing the dimensions along which a repository might be aligned (curated or personal, open access or controlled access, etc.).

These provide a background to the current round of R&D work funded by the UK Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/>), supporting universities and colleges in the UK. The rationale for this work is that universities and colleges can use repositories as a tool to implement various strategies, such as an information strategy, research strategy or education strategy. Of course, repositories will only be used, or strategies implemented, where these help teachers, students, researchers or managers do their work. Essentially, repositories help people share digital resources, so, where this is an aim, repositories are a solution.

Standards and interoperability

Repositories only help people share digital resources where both the repositories and the resources comply with international open standards. In terms of repositories, the key interoperability standard is the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting, OAI-PMH <http://www.openarchives.org/>, which enables metadata to be exchanged reliably. In terms of digital resources, the standards vary according to the domain, but include: Dublin Core <http://dublincore.org/> and MARC <http://www.loc.gov/marc/> for bibliographic data; IMS Learning Objective Metadata <http://www.imsglobal.org/metadata/>; and ISO 19115 <http://www.iso.org/> for geospatial data. Packaging standards exist to create compound digital objects, integrating both files and metadata, including METS (Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard <http://www.loc.gov/standards/mets/>), IMS Content Packaging <http://digbig.com/4gfan>, and the MPEG 21 DIDL (Digital Item Declaration Language <http://digbig.com/4gfad>).

So much for alphabet soup; where can repositories help, and what work is underway to make them do so?

Academic research

Building on a previous development programme (Focus on Access to Institutional Resources - FAIR <http://digbig.com/4gfac>), the current Digital Repositories development programme <http://digbig.com/4fyye> consists of some 25 projects that are exploring the role and operation of repositories. Many of these are concerned with how repositories can help academic researchers both do and share their work more effectively. Open access is a key driver and demands are growing for the outputs of publicly-funded research to be freely available on the web (RCUK draft position statement <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/access/>, National Institutes of Health statement <http://publicaccess.nih.gov/>, Wellcome Foundation policy <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/doc_WTD002766.html>). JISC and others have released guidance on open access, including a briefing paper <http://digbig.com/4geyy>, and a set of questions and answers that address some of the main concerns of researchers <http://digbig.com/4geyx>.

Repositories have a key role to play, since they both enable open access, and help universities and colleges manage the intellectual output of their researchers. Again, JISC has released guidance in the form of a simple briefing paper for

universities <http://digbig.com/4gfab>.
In terms of active development, work is underway to help universities set up and populate repositories (Sherpa <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/>), to establish a Scottish research repository infrastructure (IRI Scotland <http://digbig.com/4gfaa>), and to investigate the questions of different versions of academic papers (Versions <http://www.lse.ac.uk/versions/>). The PerX project <http://www.icbl.hw.ac.uk/perx/> is also developing a pilot cross- search of engineering open access repositories, building on previous JISC-funded work such as the ePrints-UK search <http://www.rdn.ac.uk/projects/eprints-uk/> and the Subject Portals project <http://www.portal.ac.uk/spp>.

While access to publications is vital, the research that it enables is greatly enhanced where researchers can also access the data on which the publications were based. With the advent of Grid computing <http://www.gridforum.org/> and computer applications based on Web Services standards <http://www.oasis-open.org/>, this is increasingly possible, though the challenges are not trivial.

There are a number of JISC-funded projects working within this area. The pioneer is probably eBank <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/projects/ebank-uk/>, which is informing a group of projects (Repository for the Laboratory <http://r4l.eprints.org/about.html>, SPECTRa <http://digbig.com/4gfak>) that are addressing the needs of research chemists especially, though not exclusively, crystallographers. These projects should answer some of the questions that arise from attempts to link together the raw data streaming off laboratory equipment, data analysis tools and techniques, archives of research data, research reports and published journal articles.

Broadening the scope a little, the CLADDIER project <http://digbig.com/4gfak> is looking at some of these issues within environmental science, and the Grade project <http://edina.ac.uk/projects/grade/> is focusing on the technical and legal issues when sharing derived works based on geospatial data. Finally, the StORe project <http://digbig.com/4gfaf> is building a broad picture of linking scientific data and publications across a wide range of subject areas.

The questions may be familiar (including persistent version identification, digital rights, metadata quality, cultural change, preservation), but they appear in new guises with each new domain. Nothing illustrates this better, perhaps, than current work to establish a prototype national service for open access to electronic Ph.D. theses. These are much underused resources when they are only available in paper form via inter-library loan, but are heavily used when available electronically. The EThOS project <http://www.ethos.ac.uk/> is building a prototype national e-thesis service for the UK, seeking to solve the kind of questions noted above, in partnership with a smaller project in Wales (Repository Bridge <http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/bridge/>). Work is ongoing, too, to coordinate this kind of work across Europe, working with both national bodies such as SURF <http://www.surf.nl/en/home/index.php> in the Netherlands, and international initiatives such as DART Europe <http://www.dartington.ac.uk/dart/>.

e-Learning

Creating, sharing and using online learning materials is seen by many as a way of making the experiences of both students and educators at once more interactive and more reflective. The JISC Exchange for Learning development programme (X4L <http://digbig.com/4gfaj>) proved the value of this approach and, with the development of the JORUM <http://www.jorum.ac.uk/> learning object repository service, has demonstrated its practicality. JORUM offers a way for educators to share the learning materials they create, and to reuse those created by others. Developer tools such as Reload <http://www.reload.ac.uk/> are being developed to make it easy to create content packages to upload into repositories like JORUM in standard formats, so that they can easily be re-imported into, for example, a virtual learning environment. Interoperability means that materials can be shared at regional level too, and a range of projects are exploring this possibility (Distributed e-Learning, Regional Pilots: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/delpilots.html>) and, in particular, what challenges arise when learning materials are shared directly between universities and colleges. To address some of these, the X4L programme has produced resources <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/programme_x4l.html> to help educators create, re-use and re-purpose learning material.

Barriers remain however, and the 'Community Dimensions of Learning Object Repositories' project <http://digbig.com/4gfae> will identify some of these, and will suggest and test ways of overcoming them. At the national level, a JISC repositories project <http://www.ukcdr.manchester.ac.uk/> will build a collaborative environment in which high-stakes assessment items (such as examinations for medical students) can be shared. But there are challenges within institutions as well, and the project 'Accessing and Storing Knowledge' will demonstrate how institutional systems can be joined up in a modular, more future-proof way, based on a framework of Web Services standards <http://ask.oucs.ox.ac.uk/>.

As in the research domain, digital rights are a key influence on the behaviour of individuals and organisations, and systems need to be built that support the appropriate rights regimes. The Trust-DR project <http://digbig.com/4gfam> is taking the experience of the JORUM in developing its contributor licence, together with the findings from a recent study <http://www.intrallect.com/drm-study/>, to establish an approach for institutions to create, express and enforce a set of rights policies for their learning materials Trust-DR will also be informed by another project <http://rightsandrewards.lboro.ac.uk/> that is studying the rewards sought by educators sharing learning materials, and the rights information that they consequently need to be able to share with those materials.

Finally, there are technologies that often come into universities and colleges 'under the radar', such as blogs, wikis and peer-to-peer repositories. The PROWE project <http://www.prowe.ac.uk/> is asking whether blogs and wikis in particular can be used to support the huge distributed networks of tutors associated with the Open and Leicester Universities. The SPIRE project <http://spire.conted.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/trac.cgi> is installing the secure Lionshare <http://lionshare.its.psu.edu/main/> peer-to-peer system, to explore its potential in teaching and learning and, in part, to dispel the mistaken notion that peer-to-peer equals Napster equals insecure and probably illegal activity.

Multimedia

Images, sound, video and so on can, of course, play a crucial role in both research and teaching. The JISC has long secured such content for use in universities and colleges <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=coll>. However, the establishment of repositories across UK tertiary education and beyond has led some to ask whether the sector can do more to share the resources it already has, as well as making better use of licensed content from elsewhere.

One JISC development project, MIDESS <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/library/midess/>, is building both a technical system and a set of policies to enable three universities to manage their image collections in a coordinated way, and better exploit them in teaching and research. A related set of studies will outline the national challenges in terms of infrastructure (Community-Led Image Collections Study: <http://clic.oucs.ox.ac.uk/>), preservation ('Digital Images Archiving Study' and 'Moving Pictures and Sound Archiving Study' <http://digbig.com/4gfag>), discovery and access (Visual and Sound Materials Portal Scoping Study and Demonstrator Project <http://edina.ac.uk/projects/vsmportal/>), and managing sensitive images such as those from clinical settings (CHERRI-PIE Project: <http://www.cherri.mvm.ed.ac.uk/>). Taken together, this work could inform a national approach to multimedia management within universities and colleges, based on repositories.

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