News

SCONUL Spring Conference: Openness Under Pressure: Strategic leadership for libraries in an era of disruption, London, 1 May

Join us for the SCONUL Spring Conference at the Royal College of Physicians in London on Friday 1 May from 9.30 for 10am to 4pm. We will explore how we sustain our mission in an environment of economic challenge, geopolitical fragmentation and cybersecurity risk. We will be inspired by the keynote speech from technology strategist and researcher, Rachel Coldicutt, on how we can make technology work for eight billion people, not eight billionaires, We will also explore whether the future really is open (and how we can shape this); hear about the Gen Z and Gen Alpha users and explore new opportunities for collaboration. Tickets are £175pp, for registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk. Read more

SCONUL AGM and members meeting, 16 July

SCONUL will be holding its AGM and members meeting on Thursday 16 July, 11am – 1pm, via Zoom. The meeting will include our AGM which is an occasion to review SCONUL's work from 2025-26 and engage with plans for next year, and with the development of the SCONUL strategy 2027-2030. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

AI Skills for Librarians: the journey from AI literacy to AI fluency webinar, 13 March

SCONUL's AI working group is hosting a webinar looking at skills and competencies for library teams working on the adoption, integration, and development of AI tools and how we can support our teams to move from being AI literate to AI fluent. We will be joined by Karolina Andersdotter, librarian and doctoral researcher in information studies at Åbo Akademi University, and by Jason Coleman, Academic Services Librarian at Kansas State University and Keven Jeffrey, Librarian at Kansas State University, who co-chaired the ACRL AI Competencies for Library Workers Task Force which has produced an insightful and helpful guide into AI competencies: https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ai. The webinar will be held on Friday 13 March, 13.30-15.00hrs. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

SCONUL AI coffee morning, 27 March

SCONUL's next AI coffee morning will look at Ai in the wider GLAM landscape. We will hear from Dr Jenny Kidd and Bethan Jones from Cardiff University who will talk about their Responsible AI Afterlives Workbook, a practical resource supporting cultural organisations considering the use of AI to 'revive' collections and engage visitors; and we'll also hear from Dr Richard Cole and Frances Pickworth from University of Bristol who will present CultureQuest, an AI-powered Quest System for the Heritage Sector. The AI coffee morning will take place on Friday 27 March at 10am. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk. SCONUL's AI coffee mornings brings together those with an interest in AI developments within libraries on the last Friday of every month. SCONUL members can access recordings and resources at: https://www.sconul.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/ai/ai-coffee-mornings/past-ai-coffee-mornings/

HE Reference Models webinar series

Everything you wanted to know about the HE Reference Models but were afraid to ask, 24 March 14.00 – 15.30hrs

The HE Reference Models have been increasingly appearing on libraries' radar as they are being used to support and inform change processes in HE institutions. Come along to this webinar to discover why the HE Reference Models matter; how they work; and how they are being used to meet the challenges of digital transformation and to support other change processes within your institution. We will hear from:

- Russell Boyatt, Director of Strategy and Architecture at the London School of Economics and member of the UCISA Enterprise Architecture Group who will set out the 'what, why and how' of the HE Reference Models and highlight plans for the development of a new HERMS Service Model.

- Anna O'Neill, SCONUL co-chair and University Librarian at the University of Warwick about the collaborative work that SCONUL has been doing with UCISA colleagues to ensure that library representation in the HERMs fully reflects the scope of libraries contribution to the business capabilities of the institution.

We will also hear from colleagues in the HERMS working group on how the HE Reference Models are being used in their own institutions. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

HE Reference Models as a tool for institutional transformation, 21 May 14.00 – 15.30hrs

The HE Reference Models are being used as a tool for those leading institutional restructuring and transformation programmes, often alongside, or integrated with other frameworks. This webinar will include a deeper dive into how the HE Reference Models are being used to inform institutional change processes. It will also introduce the new HE Service Reference Model which is being developed to help support this type of work. We will hear from:

- Mary Millard, Executive Director of Faculty Operations at University of Bristol and sponsor of Bristol's Professional Services Transformation Programme which has led the development of the institution's service catalogue based on the HERMs.

- Iain McCracken, Director of Service Delivery at the London School of Economics. Iain is leading the development of the new HE Service Reference Model and he will set out the background to its development; share the alpha version of the Service Model and discuss how the SCONUL community can engage with this work.

For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

Engaging with the HE Reference Models, 7 July 14.00 – 15.30hrs

There are clear advantages for those leading library in having a good working knowledge of the HE Reference Models and their uses in the wider institutional context as they can be a powerful advocacy tool, making visible the myriad ways in which the library supports wider capabilities within the institution, and providing a tool for demonstrating the value of the library to the institution's missions. This third webinar in the series on the HE Reference Models will provide an opportunity to hear from SCONUL members who have successfully engaged with the use of the models within their institution and to explore how these can be to support the library's engagement with the institutional leaders and to advocate for the library. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

SCONUL AI and Information Literacy CIG meeting, 13 March

The next AI and Information Literacy CIG meeting will focus on how we – collectively - can capture, collate, and share the wealth of expertise emerging across the group. The meeting will also include an update on the newly published HEPI Student Generative AI Survey 2025, presented by Erin Nephin, Head of Student Experience at Leeds Beckett University. The meeting will take place on 13 March from 9.30 – 11.00hrs, and is open to all, whatever your role or level of expertise, and we welcome the sharing of different perspectives and practices. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk. The membership of the AI and information literacy CIG is large, lively and very engaged with a focus on sharing practice and supporting each other to respond to this rapidly moving area. The warm and supportive community created, provides a space to explore our individual and collective challenges. To join the community, please subscribe to AI-INFO-LIT-CIG@JISCMAIL.AC.UK.

Academic Libraries and Learning Technologies CIG meeting, 19 March

The next Academic Libraries and Learning Technologies CIG meeting will take place on 19 March, 10.00 - 11.30hrs. Participants are interested in using this forum to share their experiences, as well as to gather input from others for issues at hand. The meeting will cover a range of topics whereby a speaker will share their experience and invite discussion or set the scene for a problem and invite input from others. If you would like to volunteer or if you any suggestions of topic, please feel free to contact bertha.low@bcu.ac.uk. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk. SCONUL Academic Libraries and Learning Technologies CIG is a community of practice bringing together those with an interest in learning delivery and related technologies. To join the community, please subscribe to libs-learning-tech-cig@jiscmail.ac.uk

The Future of the Systems Librarian CIG meetings 2026

The next two meetings of the Future of the Systems Librarian CIG will each explore current themes in system librarianship. The group officers welcome and invite contributions or suggestions from anyone who would like them to address particular topics – please get in touch!

People, recruitment, and progression, 30 April, 13:00-14:30hrs

To include a further look at the name of the Systems Librarian – is this still the most relevant name for the role? For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk

- Matt Cox, Head of Content Delivery and Discovery, Anglia Ruskin University – Reflections on a 5-year challenge to recruit a Systems Librarian
- Sue Egleton, University Librarian, University of Reading – Looking at entry level roles

Different ways of working, 17 September, 13:30- 15:00hrs

Looking at how the role can sit outside the library and how this can work effectively. Also reflecting on the importance and visibility of the role. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

Controlled Digital Lending webinar

This joint SCONUL, RLUK and Jisc webinar, which took place on 12 February under Chatham House Rule, looked at how controlled digital lending can support access to content not otherwise available in digital format, enabling libraries to provide accessible and inclusive readings to students, provide remote access to special collections or to supply out of commerce works. Please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk if you wish to access the recording.

Town hall meeting on the Big Five negotiations

SCONUL and RLUK held a joint Town Hall meeting, under Chatham House Rule, on 18 February. The webinar focused on reflecting on recent negotiations with the major academic publishers and assessing what worked well and what challenges emerged. Jisc described how a small number of institutions have chosen to step away from one or more agreements, often due to cost pressures or concerns about publisher practices, and explained the support being offered to those negotiating alternative arrangements. Please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk if you wish to access the recording.

Jisc Library portfolio and roadmap and webinar 6 May

Jisc has published its new library portfolio roadmap, which sets out how Jisc intend to support the sector across discovery, access and digital capability across the research and learning life cycle. The roadmap sets out early thinking across five areas: sustainable acquisition of content and systems; national discovery infrastructure; identity and access management; community and standards; and digital transformation and capability. Jisc will be holding a webinar for Library directors and senior leaders, on 6 May, 10.00 – 11.00hrs, where they will walk through the roadmap in detail and discuss emerging needs across higher education and research. Feedback will be invited on where collective effort should focus, including where you want to invest, where gaps are emerging, and which national-level interventions will have the greatest impact. Read more.

Jisc announces closure of Publication Router

Jisc has announced that it will be retiring the Publications Router service on 1 July 2026 as it judges that it is no longer operationally or financially sustainable and would require "significant reinvestment to keep secure and cannot evolve sustainably to meet future OA requirements". It is working with affected institutions on alternative support models. Read more

Call for Applications: LIRG Research Award 2026

Applications are now open for the LIRG Research Award 2026. The award supports high-quality research in Library, Information and Knowledge (LIK) practice, conducted by UK-based researchers. Applicants should be experienced in the field. Projects should be completed within 12 months, culminating in the acceptance of an open-access journal article. Additional dissemination activities such as blogs, infographics, short videos, or online presentations are encouraged. Applications must include a concise research proposal, budget, project plan, and details of the research team. All materials and outputs must acknowledge the "LIRG Research Award 2026". Deadline for applications is 31 March. Read more

Behind the scenes at SCONUL

SCONUL's Board is getting together this month to start the process of developing our next strategy, which will run from 2027 to 2030. We are keen to hear members views on priority issues and activities for SCONUL, and while there will be opportunities via surveys and discussion at forthcoming meetings, we're also happy to hear direct from members – please feel free to email ann.rossiter@sconul.ac.uk.

Updates from our peer organisations:

1. Academic Libraries North https://www.academiclibrariesnorth.ac.uk/
2. Cilip https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/IP_news
3. CONUL https://conul.ie/news/
4. LIBER https://libereurope.eu/news/
5. M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries https://www.m25lib.org.uk/about-the-consortium/newsletter-archive/
6. Mercian Collaboration https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/news
7. RLUK https://www.rluk.ac.uk/rluk-bulletin/
8. SCURL https://www.scurl.ac.uk/news
9. ucisa https://www.ucisa.ac.uk/News-and-Views
10. WHELF https://whelf.ac.uk/

Appointments and job opportunities

If you have moved to a new role or institution or have any senior job opportunities that you would like us to include, please e-mail SitMui.Ng@sconul.ac.uk.   These vacancies can also be found on our website at: https://www.sconul.ac.uk/jobs-bank/current-roles/

Vacancy: Subject Liaison Librarian, Middlesex University

The Library at Middlesex University is seeking to recruit a Subject Liaison Librarian to join their team. This is a permanent position based at the Hendon campus in London, primarily with responsibility for supporting business programmes. In this role, the post holder will work closely with academic staff and students in your subject areas, acting as a key point of contact between the Library and the University community. They will support teaching, learning, and research through the delivery of information literacy sessions, the development of online learning materials, and the curation of high-quality information resources. **Closing date 13 March** Read more

Vacancy: Associate Director Education and Research, Manchester Metropolitan University

As a key member of the Executive Team, the postholder will share responsibility for the strategic leadership and management of Library and Cultural Services, providing high-level support to the Director and leading two significant domains, Transformative education and student success and Open research.

The Associate Director Education and Research will also play a central role in defining a reimagined Library and student experience through the Library Transformation Programme, and build strong, collaborative relationships across the University and beyond, engaging widely to influence thinking, inform strategic direction and enhance the Library and Cultural Services' reputation, visibility and contribution. **Closing date 22 March** Read more

Vacancy: Deputy Director (Library), Royal Holloway, University of London

Royal Holloway is currently recruiting for a Deputy Director (Library). In addition to operational oversight of core service delivery, this leadership role will be responsible for developing and delivering our digital road map and open scholarship plans, as well as other cross-functional projects in support of University and Directorate strategy. For an informal chat about this rewarding opportunity, please contact Christopher.Cipkin@rhul.ac.uk . **Closing date 22 March** Read more

Vacancy: Deputy Director, Collections, Durham University

Durham University is recruiting to the new role of Deputy Director, Collections, within University Library and Collections. The post holder will have a key leadership role in shaping, managing, and preserving Durham University's unique and diverse collections. This position supports the Director in the strategic oversight of modern, heritage and cultural collections across our libraries, archives and special collections, and museums, galleries and exhibitions. The post holder will work with library, archive, conservation and curatorial staff bringing a ULC wide approach to all University collections. They will ensure that the collections are managed responsibly, made accessible to diverse audiences, and leveraged in the advance of teaching, learning, research and external engagement at the University and beyond. As a member of the Senior Management Team within University Library and Collections the post holder will provide leadership for all collections under the ownership and custodianship of ULC as well as associated staff including librarians, archivists, conservators and curators. **Closing date 1 April** Read more

Events

If you would like SCONUL to include any events that may be of interest to directors, please e-mail sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

CILIP Metadata & Discovery Group Conference 2026, Bristol, 11-13 March

NLISN: Neurodivergence and Entry into the Profession, 18 March

MORPHSS Catalogue launch event and panel discussion, 19 March

Teaching/training neurodivergent students in the library webinar, 23 March

RLUK26 Virtual Conference, 25-27 March

UKSG Annual Conference, Glasgow, 30 March-1 April

LILAC 2026, Sheffield, 30 March – 1 April

EBLIDA Annual Council & Conference 2026, Prague, 20-22 April

LIBER Architecture Group (LAG) Seminar, Dublin, 6-8 May

RLUK Repositories Symposium, 8 May

Critical Approaches to Libraries Conference (CALC), w/c 11 May

NAG Seminar and Forum, Nottingham, 20-21 May

CONUL Conference 2026, Galway, 27-28 May

18th Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries International Conference, Romania, 26–29 May

CILIP Data Protection Conference, 3 June

CILIP Online Copyright Conference, 4 June

UXLibs Europe, York 2, 9-11 June

SCURL Annual Conference 2026, Glasgow, 16 June

Edinburgh Open Research Conference 2026, Edinburgh, 18 June

Academic Practice and Technology (APT) Conference 2026, London, 19 June

LIBER Annual Conference, Trondheim, 1-3 July

ARCLIB Conference, Liverpool, 1–3 July

ARLIS Conference 2026: Challenging Collections, Leeds, 6-8 July

14th International Congress on Medical Librarianship, Glasgow, 14 July

NLISN (Neurodivergent Library and Information Staff Network) Conference, Leeds, 16-17 July

CILIP Rare Books and Special Collections Group conference, Cambridge, 9-11 September

The European Print Initiative Collaboration conference, London, 30 September – 2 October

46th Annual International Association of University Libraries (IATUL) Conference, Johannesburg, 22-23 November