License management tools available from CEIRC

My university library spends approximately 80 per cent of our library materials budget on print and online serials subscriptions. In 2000 we subscribed to 5400 online serial titles and 56 datasets. In 2006 the number increased to 24 746 serial titles and 208 datasets. This is a phenomenal rate of change. The dynamic electronic environment has increased the complexity of managing subscriptions, publisher packages, aggregations and online datasets. It has also increased the workload and skill set required for library staff responsible for negotiating licenses and ensuring that e-resources are available to all users, including remote use and multi-campus sites.

CEIRC, the Council of Australian University Librarians' Electronic Information Resources Committee, is responsible for the collaborative purchasing of electronic resources for CAUL members and external organisations eligible for, and admitted into, the CEIRC program. Before an offer is made available to our members, the CAUL Executive Officer will usually discuss with the vendor the type of information that members need (content, license, pricing model and trial information). Omissions and changes to the license will also be discussed (walk-in users, remote use, multiple sites, price-caps etc). For new offers, negotiations can take up to a year, depending on the length of the trial. The turnaround time for renewals is normally 4–6 weeks. If an offer is rejected, it is probably because the appropriate pricing level and/or the minimum number of subscribers have not been achieved. More than 147 products from 98 publishers/vendors worth more than $18 million are currently managed through CEIRC.

In October 2005, as part of the CEIRC strategic and operational planning, we surveyed our members to find out what license terms and conditions are required and add value to a deal. Details of the survey are available online at http://www.caul. edu.au/datasets/ under the link 'Vendor terms & conditions – What adds value to CEIRC agreements – CEIRC Survey 2005'.

As a result of the survey we added more information to another CEIRC tool, 'Checklist for vendor negotiation', available from the same website. The checklist includes 16 variables, many of which are further sub-divided, and is an excellent starting point for reviewing a new or existing license.

Another useful tool from the CAUL web site is the 'Model Clauses' document. Because CAUL and CEIRC members are very diverse, we do not have a single license model. Instead we provide alternative clauses for issues or variables our members identified as important and/or problematic. Some of the items to be added to our model clauses include:

- Definition for open URL compliant
- Definition of visiting scholars
- Definition of multi-site in the Australasian context (this was the big issue from the survey)
- Definition of adequate product withdrawal notice
- Definition of content changes (particularly reduction or loss of titles)
- Definition of compliance with federated searching tools
- Notice for any change in terms of a license

Model clauses and definitions can assist libraries to negotiate both the business and access conditions essential for ensuring a good return on investment (ROI).

ROI is the difference between the costs and the benefits of an investment and is often expressed in money-related terms. However, in higher education the real value of an investment may not be limited solely to the specific use of the product but may also be connected to the learning and research outcomes made possible by its availability. These 'soft benefits' may be hard to measure in financial terms. A comprehensive set of measures and indicators is available to evaluate ROI for electronic information resources in the context of a library's strategic, operational and project plans. The Return on Investment (ROI) Framework is available from the CAUL website (http://www.caul.edu.au/datasets/ and click on the link 'Return on Investment (ROI) Framework for E-Resources Negotiated by CEIRC'). For a better understanding of how libraries evaluate of products and licenses, CEIRC also encourages publishers and vendors to review the document.

Another CEIRC tool that can assist libraries negotiating contracts is 'Negotiation with non-Australian vendors'. The document briefly outlines the 10 most common negotiating issues, including the legal questions CEIRC members often have to negotiate with offshore vendors, covering copyright, currency, advisory boards, help desks etc.

License negotiation and management is a complex business. CEIRC provides valuable information, and not only to its members, on the development of standards and tools in areas such as licensing, authentication and statistical reporting. We also provide publishers and vendors with access to this information to ensure that acceptable terms and conditions are available to libraries. No matter what type of library you work in, or what type of client you serve, these tools may provide valuable assistance.

Heather Gordon, 2006 Chair, CEIRC, Director, Information Services and University Librarian, James Cook University

Information Online 2007

Kay Harris

The Information Online conference for 2007 is fast approaching. Planning has been underway since the beginning of this year and the Information Online committee has been working hard at putting together what we hope to be an exciting program of speakers and exhibitors.

The Conference Committee has selected speakers from Australia, Europe and the USA to talk to us on a range of topics from information security to knowledge management, from managing in the virtual world to managing with disruptive technologies. We hope that no matter what your environment you will find papers that will intrigue, inspire and challenge.

At the time of writing the exhibition had 106 booths booked with exhibitors ranging from software vendors to publishers and online information sources and many, many more. There will be a selection of workshops before and after the conference.

We still have a few surprises up our sleeves, such as the dinner speaker and the opening address. Full details of speakers, exhibitors and workshops are on the conference website (http://www.information-on-line.com.au). You can register online, book an appointment with an exhibitor and join our blog. Any updates or changes to the program will also be posted to the website.

On behalf of the entire Information Online committee I hope to see you at Darling Harbour from Tuesday 30 January to Thursday 1 February at the 13th Information Online Exhibition and Conference.