

CURL Annual Report, 1998/ 99

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Chairman's Introduction

This annual report records the highlights in a year of continued progress for CURL. The strategic plan has continued to provide the focus for its activities which are being implemented through the work of the three Steering Groups.

COPAC is now firmly established as a major research tool and it is gratifying to see so much use made of the service at both a national and an international level.

This has been a year of unprecedented opportunity for obtaining external funding, an undertaking in which CURL has been highly successful. One of the most important developments for the members has been the establishment of the Research Support Libraries Programme. The successful bid by the University of Birmingham, on behalf of CURL, to retroconvert 177,000 records for pamphlet collections is a huge project and will greatly enhance COPAC, for the benefit of researchers world-wide.

Also successful was CURL's bid, led by the University of Liverpool and Manchester Computing, to provide the infrastructure support for the Higher Education Archives Hub. Funding for this project is initially for a year. As the provision of collection level records for archives, to enhance research support, is a major priority for CURL, the experience gained through this project will be very valuable in pushing this agenda forward.

The feasibility study on the identification of CURL collections remaining to be retroconverted, and which is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, is almost complete and will provide further opportunities for retroconversion programmes.

The CEDARS project is now acknowledged internationally as undertaking 'cutting-edge' research in digital preservation strategies. The outcomes of the project will be crucial for research libraries.

CURL continues to be enormously grateful to the staff in the CURL libraries who provide their expertise and commitment to further CURL's goals. Our gratitude is also due to Lynne Brindley who stood down from the Board at the AGM and whose vision will be sorely missed.

Finally, I would like to conclude by expressing our particular thanks to Clare Jenkins, CURL's first Executive Secretary who has made CURL a major player within the sector, and who left during the year to take up a post at the University of Birmingham.

Peter Fox Chairman

The year's highlights

Activity throughout the year continued to be driven by CURL's Strategic Plan for 1997-2000. Implementation of the operational goals for the year remained with the Steering Groups.

Resource Description and Discovery

The Resource Description and Discovery Steering Group, chaired by Clive Field, continued to play a major role in the completion of some important database projects and saw major enhancements in both the CURL database and COPAC.

The database

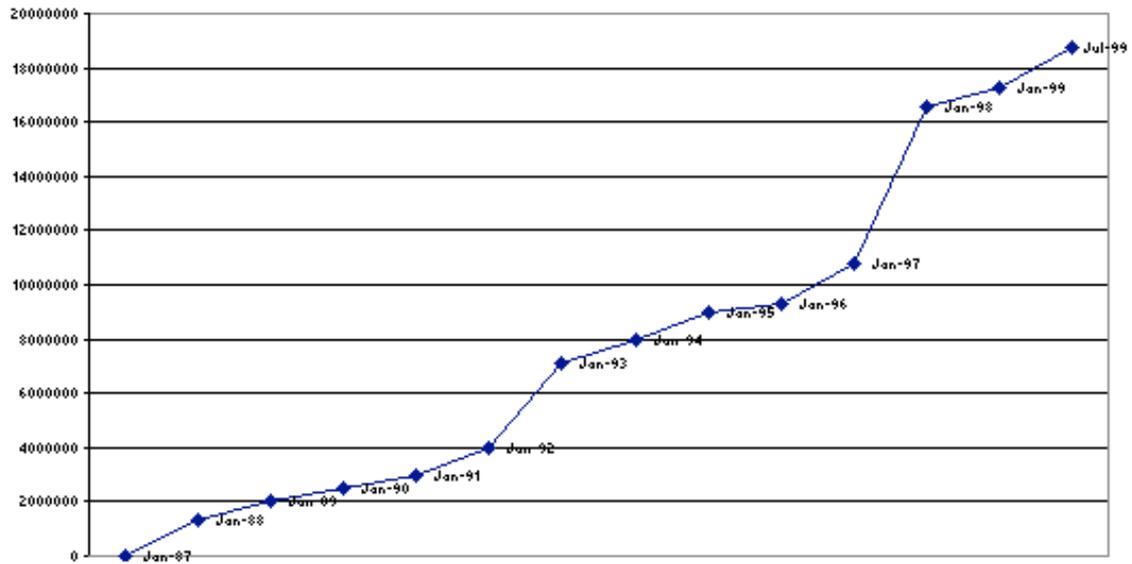
Over this period the size of the database continued to increase dramatically and had reached 18.7 million records at the end of July 1999 (see chart 'Growth').

It saw the addition of data from Durham and Warwick, bringing the total number of contributing libraries to fifteen. The number of CURL member-originated records has increased as a proportion of the overall provenance (see chart 'Provenance').

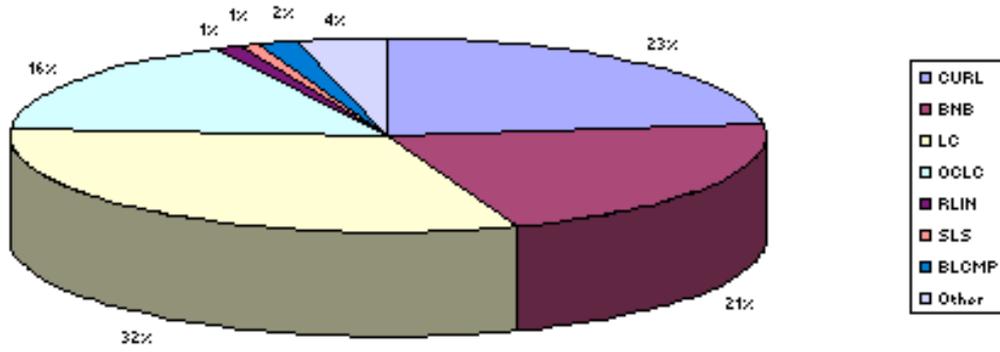
As in other years, the necessity to reload libraries' data after a change of library system has held up the loading. Also Manchester Computing successfully moved to a new system in July from which to operate the CURL record retrieval service and COPAC (see chart 'Growth in COPAC Usage') and at the same time carried out a full investigation into Year 2000 compatibility of their systems. Work is now in progress to ensure that loading of the remaining 7 libraries' data will take place by the middle of 2000. The increased value of the

database to the wider community is demonstrated by the increase in the number of customers of the database from 10 to 11 with others currently involved in a month's free trial. Prices for access to the database remained at the 1997 rate. The Z39.50 service for record retrieval has gone from strength to strength and is now used by a number of members and customers.

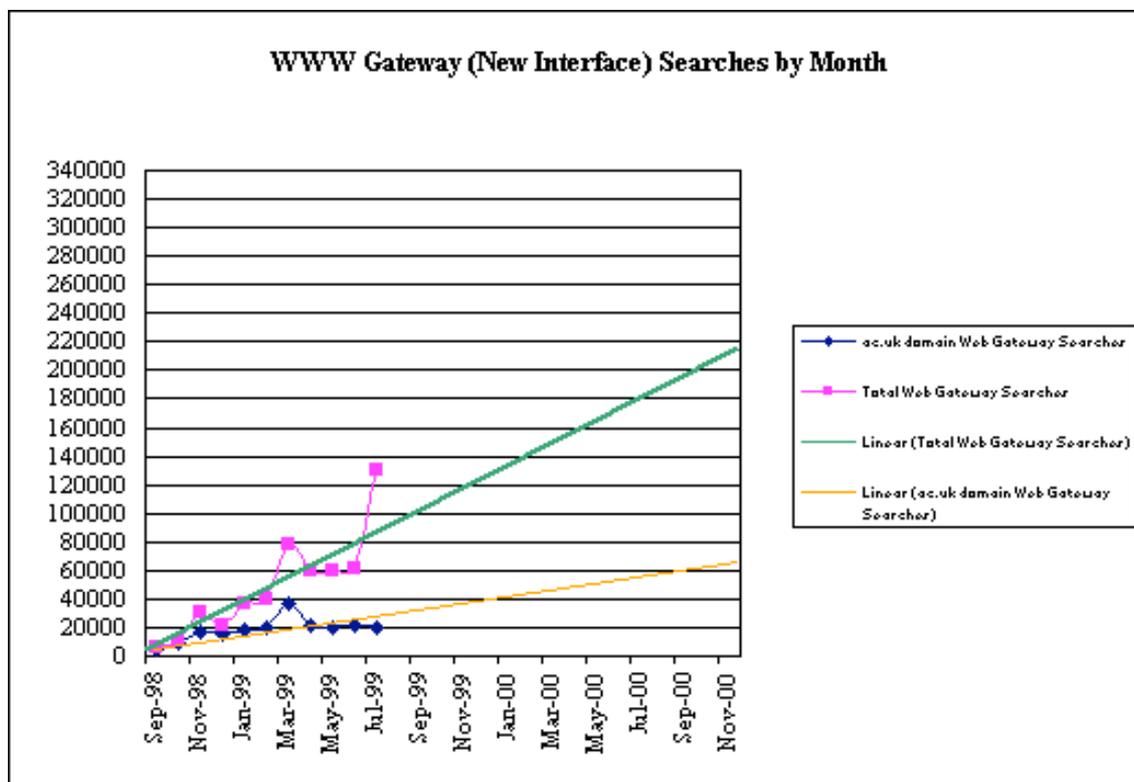
Growth of the CURL Database up to July 1999



Provenance July 1999



Growth in COPAC Usage



Bibliographic Standards

After discussion among cataloguing staff in CURL libraries, CURL agreed Minimum Bibliographic Standards (Roman Scripts) for contributors to the CURL database. The document recommends these standards but by means of flagging the records enables even those records which have little or no value for record retrieval to be added to COPAC so that they are available for resource discovery. The means of flagging records is currently being implemented. The statement of CURL Bibliographic Standards is on the CURL web site.

Areas of future development for CURL database and COPAC

Non-Roman script

Areas which have been identified for development over the next year include enabling the display and storing of non-Roman Script characters to allow records containing these characters to be loaded into the database and into COPAC. Representatives of CURL and COPAC have attended two seminars covering this issue. CURL libraries are currently involved in a number of projects to catalogue non-Roman script material.

MARC conversion

As the number of CURL members using USMARC continues to increase, a conversion program to convert records from UKMARC to USMARC is essential and work is in progress at the moment to evaluate commercially available programs to undertake this.

Archives & Manuscripts Sub-Group

It was agreed that the CURL database should be extended to include formats other than printed books. As part of this, Oliver Pickering (Leeds) provided a report on cataloguing practices, within CURL libraries, for archives and manuscripts. The report showed a very wide diversity of practice and it was agreed that any strategy would support the inclusion of collection level records for manuscripts and archives in COPAC; and would also encourage institutions to use EAD as the emerging standard. The report influenced the development of the CURL bid for the infrastructure for the HE Archives Hub.

Access to CURL Resources

The Steering Group on Access, after extensive consultation with CURL libraries, drew up a Statement of Access Policy document for all CURL libraries. Details of access arrangements to all the member libraries have also been updated. Full details are on the CURL website.

The outcomes of the interlending trial were reviewed and it was agreed that real progress in this area could only be made following the identification of appropriate software. Possibilities include VDX software, as used by the LIDDAS project in Australia or RLG's ILL Manager.

However, given that COPAC now holds considerably more records than was the case during the original trial, it was decided to investigate inter library loans by CURL libraries for monographs, and the extent to which locations for these were available on COPAC. The BL/DSC agreed to help with this study and the results will inform CURL's planning in this area.

Resource management

Further work on setting up the National Register of Collection Strengths led to the commissioning by the National Preservation Office, on behalf of CURL, of David Hayes Associates to establish the database for this Register. A questionnaire is being compiled to be sent out to the full members of CURL – the results will form the initial content for the database.

The joint BL/CURL Working Party on Retention drew up a model retention policy which was then piloted in a number of CURL libraries – Birmingham, Leeds, Durham, Glasgow and UCL. On the basis of the feedback received the policy will be amended and work is progressing on this. Dr Mirjam Foot who chaired the Working Party retired towards the end of the year and she has been replaced as Chairman by Clare Jenkins.

Raising awareness

Various consultation exercises, relevant to research support within libraries, took place over the year. CURL sent responses to the British Library's Strategic Review consultation paper, to the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Towards a Strategic Plan for Lottery Funding for the Heritage' consultation paper and to the National Library of Wales' 'Choosing the future' strategic review.

International links

Research Libraries Group (RLG)

The relationship between CURL and RLG continued and developed.

RLG's representative in the UK, Nancy Elkington is a member of the Advisory Board for the CEDARS project.

For another year, the fixed-fee all-inclusive deal between RLG and CURL offered CURL members access to RLIN for record supply and to Eureka, Citadel and Shares for resource discovery and inter-lending. Use of Eureka increased throughout the year, as did the number of Shares users. A number of libraries also took advantage of the free trial of the Archival Resources Service.

The gateway developed by RLG to access the CURL Database went live in autumn 1998 and has proved to be a successful development for inter-lending and resource discovery.

The Executive Secretary attended the RLG Annual Meeting at the Getty Institute, Los Angeles in May, and followed this with a visit to RLG headquarters at Mountainview, California.

CAUL

An invitation was received from CAUL for the heads of CURL libraries to visit Australian university libraries. The invitation has been received with enthusiasm and a programme is being prepared for a visit during August/September 1999. There are likely to be at least ten participants in the tour.

Membership services

CURL continued its period of consolidation and no new institutions were received into membership.

During the latter part of the year, consequent to the change of Executive Secretary, the CURL Office moved from the LSE to Glasgow. Leeds agreed to continue holding the CURL account and to provide financial statements. CURL is very grateful to these institutions for their administrative support for the Secretariat.

OCLC

The agreement concluded between CURL and OCLC in January 1998 continued and several of the tapeloading libraries began to receive credits for original cataloguing records. The number of libraries in full tapeloading membership of OCLC rose to 6 (Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Newcastle, Oxford) when Newcastle joined the CURL agreement. The number of partial members rose to 11.

The CURL Database Officer attended the OCLC Users' Forum in April 1999 in Birmingham.

National Preservation Office

CURL continued to support work at the NPO. An annual contribution was made to the costs of the NPO, and CURL continues to be formally represented on the NPO Management Committee.

Projects

Heritage Lottery Fund

The CURL Database project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and undertaken by consultants Juliet Leeves and Stella Butler commenced in autumn 1998 and was well on its way to completion by the end of the year. The study has identified collections remaining to be retrospectively converted from manual records within the CURL libraries and is likely to recommend specific retrospective conversion projects for consideration.

Research Support Libraries Programme

A CURL bid to RSLP to retroconvert records for pamphlet collections in the libraries was successful and is being led by Birmingham. It will convert a minimum of 177,000 records and involves 16 CURL libraries and 2 non-CURL members. Non-CURL members involved in projects with a majority of CURL partners, have benefited from free access to the CURL database for the purposes of the projects. CURL libraries individually are involved in a number of other RSLP projects. CURL has also provided RSLP with a minimum bibliographic standard which should apply to all relevant projects.

HE Archives Hub

CURL was successful in bidding to JISC for the infrastructure provision for the HE Archives Hub. This project is to be funded for a year in order to develop a 'proof of concept'. The project is led by the University of Liverpool and Manchester Computing. Liverpool will undertake the development work and the service will form part of the MIMAS suite of services. Data contribution for the Hub has been separately funded by JISC – 12 of the data contributors are CURL members. Editorial control is being undertaken by Southampton.

CEDARS

The CEDARS project is now well underway. Three project officers have been appointed at Leeds, Oxford and Cambridge. There have been some changes to the project management infrastructure and a number of focus groups have taken place.

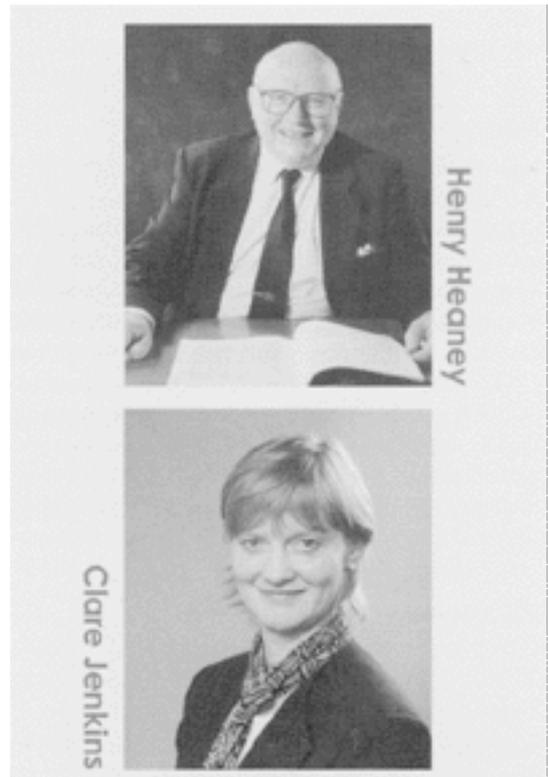
Work based at Oxford will concentrate on metadata issues for digital preservation. Cambridge remains focused on Content Issues addressing rights management, copyright and collection management. Leeds will concentrate on the development of the demonstrator software system which will form the backbone of the demonstrator projects.

People

A long-standing member of the Board, Lynne Brindley stood down in March 1999. Her vision and commitment have had a very significant impact on CURL's thinking. Jan Wilkinson was appointed as Director of Strategic Development at Leeds following Lynne Brindley's promotion to Pro-Vice Chancellor.

At Glasgow Andrew Wale was appointed Director of Library Services, following the retirement of Henry Heaney. [It was with great regret that CURL heard of Henry Heaney's death in September 1999].

Clare Jenkins, CURL's first Executive Secretary, resigned with effect from March 1999 to take up the appointment of Assistant Director at Birmingham. Her contribution to CURL's development, strategic vision and, most notably, its position of influence within the sector was enormous and CURL is greatly indebted to her. Chris Bailey was appointed as the incoming Executive Secretary.



Membership

The twenty institutions in full membership at 31 July 1999 were the universities of Birmingham, Cambridge, Durham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Oxford, Sheffield, Southampton, Warwick and Imperial College London, London School of Economics, University College London and Trinity College Dublin.

The British Library, the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales and the Wellcome Trust were Associate Members and the School of Advanced Study of the University of London was a co-operating member.

Board of Directors

Membership for the year was as follows

To 18 March 1999

Lynne Brindley	University of Leeds
Clive Field	University of Birmingham
Peter Fox Chairman	University of Cambridge

Michael Hannon Honorary Treasurer	University of Sheffield
John Hall	University of Durham
Ian Mowat	University of Edinburgh
Bernard Naylor	University of Southampton
Frances Thomson	University of Liverpool

Following AGM on 18 March 1999

Paul Ayris	University College London
Clive Field	University of Birmingham
Peter Fox Chairman	University of Cambridge
Michael Hannon Honorary Treasurer	University of Sheffield
John Hall	University of Durham
Ian Mowat	University of Edinburgh
Bernard Naylor	University of Southampton
Frances Thomson	University of Liverpool

CURL Steering groups

Resource Description and Discovery Steering Group

Chris Bailey (from 16 April 1999)	CURL
Clive Field Chair	University of Birmingham
John Hall	University of Durham
Clare Jenkins (to 31 March 1999)	CURL
Anne Mealia	CURL

Oliver Pickering	University of Leeds
Hugh Taylor	University of Cambridge
Paul Watry	University of Liverpool
Keith Webster	University of Newcastle
Janet Wharton	University of Nottingham
Present at each meeting by invitation:	
Julia Chruszcz	Manchester Computing
Ric Collins	Manchester Computing

Access Steering Group

Frances Thomson Chair	University of Liverpool
Chris Bailey	University of Glasgow/ CURL
Anne Bell	King's College London
Clare Jenkins (to 31 March 1999)	CURL
Anne Mealia	CURL
Michele Shoebridge	University of Birmingham
Murray Simpson	University of Edinburgh
Julia Walworth	University
Jan Wilkinson	University of Leeds
Present at each meeting by invitation:	
Ric Collins	Manchester Computing

Resource Management Steering Group

Bernard Naylor Chair	University of Southampton
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Chris Bailey (from 16 April 1999)	CURL
Liz Davis	Imperial College
Tom Graham	University of Newcastle
Clare Jenkins (to 31 March 1999)	CURL
Stephanie Kenna	British Library
Martin Lewis	University of Sheffield
Mark Nicholls	University of Cambridge
Gregory Walker	University of Oxford

Meetings of CURL

The Board of Directors met on the following occasions

14 September 1998 - Gleddoch House, Glasgow

25 November 1998 - UCL

14 January 1999 - UCL

17 March 1999 - Durham

07 June 1999 - UCL

Member representatives met on the following occasions

15 September 1998 - Gleddoch House, Glasgow

18 March 1999 - Durham

The Annual General Meeting

18 March 1999 - Durham

Summary statement of financial activities:

Year ended 31 July 1999

	1999	1998
	£	£
Income and expenditure		

	1999	1998
Incoming resources		
Subscriptions	189,125	178,705
User charges	127,215	97,902
CURL guide	6	39
RLIN search charge	248,299	199,506
CEDARS project	132,000*	42,500
Other income	23,470	2,720
Interest received	14,743	7,230
734,858	528,602	
Resources used		
Staff Costs	77,545	74,227
Administrative Costs	11,177	11,450
Membership activities	67,693	23,950
Database expenditure	233,282	214,137
CEDARS project	134,240*	16,461
	523,937	340,225
Net incoming (outgoing) resources for the year and net movement in funds		
	210,921	188,377
*restricted funds		

Glossary

BLDSC British Library Document Supply Centre

BLPES British Library of Political and Economic Science

CAUL Council of Australian University Libraries

CEDARS CURL Exemplars for Digital Archives

COPAC CURL Online Public Access Catalogue

HLF Heritage Lottery Fund

ILL Inter-library loans

JISC Joint Information Systems Committee

LSE London School of Economics
MARC Machine Readable Cataloguing
MIMAS Manchester Information & Associated Services
OCLC Online Computer Library Center
RLG Research Libraries Group
RLIN Research Libraries Information Network
RSLP Research Support for Libraries Programme
SOAS School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London)
UCL University College London

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