



## Note from your Editor

It is hard to believe that it has been nearly five years since the last issue of GLINT. Lack of time both for editor and authors has been the main reason for the delay in bringing out a new issue. However, the period in between has been a very active one for the GLS,

In recent years E-government and the availability of government information has been an important theme for the GLS. Two articles deal with this topic, one reporting on a useful survey of the availability and accessibility of publications on government department websites and the second reviewing the recent GLS seminar on E-government.

As most of us have to deal with legislation and many government librarians are also members of BIALL we have included a report on the 2008 BIALL study conference. Also for those interested in legislation the article on the use of Cardbox may suggest ideas for tracking legislation, as well as giving an overview of how this software can be used to update an intranet or website.

The Snippets page highlights a number of websites that members have found useful. We hope more of you will provide information on useful sites for future issues.

And talking of future issues you will, I hope, be glad to hear that we have more articles promised than we can accommodate in this issue, so we hope to publish again later this year.

As always, thanks are due to all the authors for their generous contributions.

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GLS Web Address

<http://www2.libraryassociation.ie/sections-and-groups/government-libraries-section/>

# ***A survey of the availability of official publications on Government Department websites***

**conducted by the Library Student at the National Library of Ireland**

**Autumn 2007**

*Johanna Archbold*

In October 2007 the Official Publications section of the National Library initiated a survey on the availability of official publications on Irish Government Department websites. The survey aimed to assess the level of official publications available online through Departmental websites, ease of access to these publications and their general web presentation. Findings from the survey have made it apparent that there is considerable disparity between Department websites, both in the quantity and presentation of publications and in the accommodation of various types of searches. Examples are given within each section below, but do not cover all instances of the point in the websites surveyed.

\* All examples valid on 12 Dec. 2008.

## **1. Standardisation of entry point to 'Publications' section**

2. The majority of Departmental websites have a 'Publications' section on their homepage, either in a primary or secondary navigation panel. This primary visibility is important for ease of access by members of the public. The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs website has no link to 'Publications' on its homepage or through the Sitemap, though the 'Latest News' information box does link to recently published items ([www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie)). The Department of Foreign Affairs also has no link to 'Publications' on its homepage, though it does through the Sitemap ([www.dfa.ie](http://www.dfa.ie)).

## **2. Consistency in location of publications within website**

In many cases publications are listed in areas of relevance within websites with access also provided through a general 'Publications' section, though this good practice is not universal. For example, the website for the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources lists

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only a small number of publications related to the communications area in the general 'Publications' section, but within the 'Communications' section itself significantly more publications are listed ([www.dcenr.gov.ie](http://www.dcenr.gov.ie)). The same issue has been noted in the website of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food ([www.agriculture.gov.ie](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie)).

A link to all publications from the main 'Publications' section as well within appropriate sections ensures completeness, and accommodates various search approaches.

### **3. Accommodating various search methods**

The search options offered on 'Publications' pages vary widely. Best practice appears to accommodate chronological and subject searches. An example of this comprehensive approach to access can be seen on the website of the Department of the Taoiseach where the option is given to search for official publications by date or by topic ([www.taoiseach.gov.ie](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie)). A variation used by the Department of Health and Children provides searches by date as well as an alphabetical search in 'All Publications' ([www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie)), though users who do not know the exact title of a publication would be at a disadvantage with this system.

### **4. Statement of coverage**

Each 'Publications' section should state the level of coverage of online official publications. For example, such a statement might read: 'Not all publications from this Department published from 1994-1997 are accessible online. From 1998 onwards, all Departmental publications are available online.' This introduction might also explain how to access publications not hosted online and state, if any, the time-delay between print and online publication. No examples of such statements were found on Departmental websites.

### **Recommendations**

- All Government Department websites should have a 'Publications' link in the primary or secondary navigation panel.
- The 'Publications' should include a list of and/or link to all Departmental publications, even if they are also listed in other sections of the website.
- Publications should be searchable by date and subject.
- A statement of coverage for online publications should appear in the 'Publications' section.

In October 1999 the report of the interdepartmental group on guidelines for web publication by public sector organisations noted that Departmental websites are an 'invaluable communication

and customer service tool'. The ability of websites to provide easy and efficient access to Government publications is a key example of this.<sup>1</sup> This view was restated in the Government's 'Principles of Quality Customer Service for Customers and Clients of the Civil Service' which also encouraged Departments to take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely, accurate, is available at all points of contact, and meets the needs of people with disabilities and ensuring that the potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of.<sup>2</sup>

Aside from the above guidelines there are many advantages to ensuring that the websites of Government Departments host the full range of Departmental publications and there is standard practice instituted in terms of searching and accessibility. Members of the public will find the information they are looking for faster, and staff within the Department will be able to answer queries with more ease. The establishment of web policies in relation to the uploading of all publications and their place in each site can also facilitate information-sharing between Departments and other organisations. These benefits also transfer to National Library of Ireland, and indeed other libraries, as collectors, users and advisers to the public on official publications.

<sup>1</sup> Recommendation 2.3, Web Publication: *Report of the Interdepartmental Group Recommended guidelines for public sector organisations* (October, 1999). See [www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached\\_files/Pdf%20files/webguide.pdf](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/Pdf%20files/webguide.pdf) (accessed 18 Dec 2008)

<sup>2</sup> See [http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached\\_files/Pdf%20files/PrinciplesOfCustomerService.pdf](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/Pdf%20files/PrinciplesOfCustomerService.pdf)

## Photo Gallery



LIS staff in the Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on the occasion of Martina Hickey's retirement.  
From left: Mary Doyle, Ann Smith, June O'Mahony, Martina Hickey, Barbara McCrory, Ellen Leahy



GLS members at the dinner in the Mansion House to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the LAI.  
From left: Laura O Broin, Zoe Melling, Joe Donnelly, Ruth O'Flaherty, Máire Caffrey, Mary Doyle

## Snippets

### ***Dáil Constituency Profiles***

*Text adapted from the Oireachtas website*

Constituency profiles have been prepared for Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas by the Oireachtas Library & Research Service (L&RS). The profiles offer a detailed picture of the make-up of each constituency. They include information on the size of the population, its age profile, the nationality, ethnicity and religion of the population and their education level. They also include statistics on the employment characteristics of each constituency, as well as information on the housing stock. In addition, the L&RS has added some electoral information for each constituency. A comparison with the national average is included for each statistic. The profiles are based on Census 2006 Small Area Statistics data published by the Central Statistics Office. The profiles are freely available and can be consulted online at

[www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=10848](http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=10848)

### ***Irish Architectural Websites***

*Valerie Ingram, Librarian, Office of Public Works.*

We find the two web sites described below particularly useful in the Office of Public Works Library but they could be interesting for anyone trying to find out about a particular building or architect in Ireland.

[www.paddi.net](http://www.paddi.net) PADDI (Planning Architecture Design Database Ireland) is a bibliographic database produced by the Architecture and Planning libraries of Queen's University Belfast and University College Dublin. It provides access to information on all aspects of the built environment and environmental planning in Ireland. Indexing of material began in 1980 but the material indexed, which includes books, periodicals and newspaper articles, dates back to as early as c.1865, but with the majority from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. It is possible to search by Subject or Building Type; Building/Structure Name; Place; Architect/Designer or Organisation as well as the usual fields of Author, Title etc. For research on Irish architecture it is essential to use this database

in addition to the UK and American published ones. It is available free of charge.

[www.dia.ie](http://www.dia.ie) The Dictionary of Irish Architects was recently launched by the Irish Architectural Archive. It contains biographical and bibliographical information on architects, builders and craftsmen born or working in Ireland during the period 1720 to 1940 and information on the buildings on which they worked. When you do a Search by Person, you get the choice of Biography, Works and Bibliography. References are given at the foot of the Biography and Works sections as well as in the Bibliography. When you search by Building, you are given the names of the Architects etc. involved with the particular building, the date of their involvement, the nature of the work carried out and references. This database is also free.

### ***FAOLex***

*Mary Doyle, Librarian, Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food*

A multilingual team of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations summarizes and in many cases translates laws and regulations on topics falling within its mandate - agriculture, cultivated plants, environment, fisheries, food, forestry, land and soil, livestock, water and wild species and ecosystems. Legal information is received by FAO from Member Nations pursuant to Article XI of the FAO Constitution. This is a very useful resource which, in addition to summaries and translations, includes keyword indexing, links to related legislation and details of current status. It also has print-friendly versions of relevant Irish statutory instruments. This resource has become much more comprehensive and consequently more valuable in recent years. The search engine is very good, but take care. Boolean operators must be entered in upper case.

<http://faolex.fao.org/faolex/>

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## *Staff Changes*

We have received notification of the following staff changes in Government Libraries:

### **Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food**

There have been two departures from our Library in the past year, both without replacement. Our Assistant Librarian, Nirvana Flanagan moved to take up the post of Law Librarian in the Chief State Solicitor's Office and, after 10 years working in our Library, Martina Hickey retired to better things in November 2008. Last we heard she was on her travels once again!



Martina

### **Office of Public Works Library Service**

Sarah Ball, Assistant Librarian based at the National Botanic Gardens Library, resigned at the end of 2006 and Alexandra Caccamo, who has a degree in botany in addition to her MLIS, was appointed in her place in 2007.

Emma Stevens, Assistant Librarian, returned from maternity leave and a career break to the Office of Public Works Headquarters Library in February 2009.

### **Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions**

Conor McCabe was recently appointed Librarian in the DPP's Office.

Congratulations to Nirvana and Conor on their appointments

## *Photo Gallery*



Mayor's reception for attendees at the IFLA pre-conference meeting for government librarians in Stockholm in 2005



Ruth O'Flaherty, Betty Boardman (LAI Development Officer) and Máire Caffrey at the GLS AGM 2006



# *Use of Cardbox Database Software to update the Library and Information Service Intranet (Ezone) of a government department*

*Mary Doyle, Librarian,  
Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food*

## **Introduction**

This article will be of particular interest to those of you who already use the database program Cardbox, or are considering using it. However, others may find some useful ideas that they can adapt for their own systems.

The Department's Intranet is known as the Ezone and I will refer to it as such for the remainder of this article. The Library section of the Ezone was originally set up in 2001. It was designed using the FrontPage web editor, which we taught ourselves as we went along. Using FrontPage was very useful at a time when we had little experience in web design, but subsequently proved too labour-intensive for our purposes.

The basic structure, which we still use today, was developed at the outset. Some of the structure, which might be regarded as duplication, was forced on us by deficiencies in the Ezone as a whole. The main problems were that there was no search engine for the Ezone and there was no way to access the Library databases.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the work of our Assistant Librarian at the time, Donal McSweeney, for his excellent work in setting up the Library Ezone and identifying many useful resources.

## **Basic structure**

The main pages were:

Home Page	Electronic journals
What's New	Legal resources
Library information	Databases
Breaking news	Web links
Electronic documents	Selected useful web links

## **Page structure**

The structure of each page differed according to the type of information. Some pages were

descriptive, but the main bulk of the pages were lists of links. Cardbox is particularly suitable for managing the list pages, but we also use it for the descriptive pages.

The pages were structured as follows:

- What's New Page  
sorted in order of item added
- Breaking News  
sorted by date and source
- Electronic documents  
sorted by organisation / publisher and within each by title
- Electronic journals  
sorted by title
- Legal resources  
sorted by country and within each by type of legislation
- Databases  
sorted by title
- Web links by subject

Each subject page was sorted by type of material, i.e. web resource, document, journal etc. Within each section material was sorted by title.

We should of course have sorted the material by subject within each page. This became more of a problem as the Library Ezone grew. However, as we were adding approximately 40 references per day, we did not have sufficient staff resources to classify the material by subject. Editing the Ezone with FrontPage was very labour intensive. For example, if an item was appropriate to more than one page, including the What's New page, the data had to be added to each separately. When adding electronic documents each document had to be manually copied over as well as entering the description and link. Not only was it not feasible with the available staff to structure each page by subject, but much non-Ezone work was being neglected as well.

This was a serious problem and became more so in 2005 when the post of Assistant Librarian fell vacant and appeared unlikely to be filled for several months. Even before this happened I had already begun to think about finding a more sustainable way of maintaining the site.

We had one great advantage. Because of the volume of material we were adding we had direct access to editing our part of the Ezone rather than submitting everything to the Webmaster. The other great advantage was that in the previous year a new version of the software we use to run the Library had been issued.

Cardbox<sup>1</sup> is a general-purpose database program, which is very versatile. We were using it for the core Library applications such as catalogue, periodicals, circulation etc., but were also using it for a variety of other purposes, not associated with dedicated Library management software.

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<sup>1</sup> We use Cardbox 3.0 Professional Edition ([www.cardbox.com/](http://www.cardbox.com/))



This software had two characteristics that suggested it could be used to generate our Ezone pages. The first was that data could be formatted in a variety of ways including HTML. A code could be inserted in the appropriate part of the HTML to indicate that the content of a particular field should be inserted at that point. The second characteristic was the use of VbScript to generate macros. *(Note: I use the terms macros and programs interchangeably throughout this text – they both perform the same function).* Vbscript replaced the proprietary macro language of the previous version of the software. I initially found Vbscript very intimidating as I have no training in programming, but we were so dependent on the automation using the proprietary macro language of the previous version, which at this point I had mastered, that I had to get to grips with VbScript. Otherwise we could not switch to the new version of the software, even though it was vastly superior to the already impressive Version 2.

I soon came to realise that VbScript was very powerful and could be used not only to automate Cardbox, but a variety of non-Cardbox activities as well. These included re-naming and moving files in Windows Explorer. This could greatly speed up adding electronic documents to the Ezone, as we could automate the process of adding the electronic documents. The automation would include copying the electronic document to the Ezone, updating the relevant Cardbox databases and writing out the relevant pages to the Ezone in a single operation. Using macros it was also possible to build in many shortcuts to speed data entry. The huge reduction in time this gave us enabled us to add subject classification to the records.

## Conversion

The first part of the process was to design the necessary Cardbox databases. The core database is EzoneRefs. This is not unlike a Library catalogue database, but with several additional fields to help structure data on the HTML page, many added as the project developed. We have another database called What's New. The What's New database includes records from both EzoneRefs and also our existing legislation database. We later added two more databases, which I will describe later.

The initial problem was to convert the existing data. We started by manually entering the data in the database. We quickly realised that this was totally impractical. I did a bit of research and located a very useful freeware program called HtmlToText. Using this program the HTML page can be converted to text, with links enclosed inside square brackets e.g.

*Animal Law* [<http://www.animallaw.info/>.] - information about (mainly US) laws pertaining to the welfare and preservation of animals

*Animal Welfare* [<http://www.ufaw.org.uk/journal/Animal%20welfare.htm>] – Abstracts and Table of Contents

This is a structure that was easy to parse using VbScript in order to generate a comma delimited file, isolating the elements so they could be read into separate fields in the EzoneRefs database. Having read the references from the page into Cardbox we then tested the links for continued relevance and also added a subject classification. This is work still in progress, as we decided to make the new format pages available as soon as they were ready, rather than waiting until the complete site had been converted. As a result of further staff shortages this turned out to be a good decision.

For each converted subject page we now have two formats, one sorted by subject with subject

headings and the other sorted by type of material, to accommodate those who were used to the old format, though the layout of the page has changed. There is a link between the two formats. However, regardless of the number of Ezone pages on which the data needs to appear we only need to enter the data once, as the program looks after sorting the references and writing out the appropriate pages.

### Part of the data entry format in Cardbox

We rarely enter data here directly. Most of the information is entered in input boxes, as prompted by the relevant macro. This has shortcuts and error checking built in. The macro then enters the data in the database.

Some subject pages could not sort adequately for Ezone presentation on the basis of the classification system alone, so we have extra sort codes to facilitate this.

### Part of the HTML format design screen

Header section, which includes part of the HTML body section

Part of HTML that relates to the individual Cardbox records with references to the appropriate fields in the record that are to be inserted. These field references are individually colour coded.

All the HTML code that precedes the actual list of records goes in the header section of the Cardbox format, including the start of the table code (i.e. in the lines starting with H above). The section containing the codes for the Cardbox records goes in the middle section and the remaining code goes in the Cardbox format's footer section (*not illustrated*). Cardbox users will find a detailed description of how to simplify designing the HTML format in the Cardbox help file (Help point 519).

The role of some fields will be obvious (Author, title, etc). The role of the first field reference, the JT field, is not so obvious. This is what we call the jump table field. For each subject page there is a record that contains a table of the subjects on the particular page, with the bookmark links to the location of the subject on the page.

### Example of the jump table record for the Animal Science subject page

```

<p><strong><a><font color="#0099CC"><div align="left">

<table width="600" border="0" cellpadding="1" cellspacing="2">
<tr>
<td><a name="Top" href="#AnimalScience"><font face="Verdana" color="#FF9900"
size="1"><b>Animal Science </b></font></a></td>
<td align="left">&nbsp;</td>
<td align="left">&nbsp;</td>
<td align="left">&nbsp;</td>
<td align="left">&nbsp;</td>
<td align="left">&nbsp;</td>
</tr>

<tr>
<td><a href="#VetMed"><font face="Verdana" color="#FF9900" size="1"><b>Veterinary
Medicine </b></font></a></td>
<td align="left"><a href="#Viral"><font face="Verdana" color="#FF9900" size="1"><b>Viral
diseases </b></font></a></td>
<td align="left"><a href="#Parasitology"><font face="Verdana" color="#FF9900"
size="1"><b>Parasitology</b></font></a></td>
<td align="left">&nbsp;</td>
<td align="left">&nbsp;</td>
<td align="left">&nbsp;</td>
</tr>

<tr>
<td><a href="#AnimalWelfare"><font face="Verdana" color="#FF9900" size="1"><b>Animal
welfare</b></font></a></td>
<td align="left">&nbsp;</td>
<td align="left">&nbsp;</td>

```

Continued on next page...

#### Note

The main reason I found VbScript intimidating was that, at the time I was learning it, Cardbox3 was still at the beta stage and the Cardbox macros and programming manual had not yet been written. The books that I was using gave no examples that were relevant to Cardbox or any other database program. However, they did alert me to the wider applications of VbScript. I later studied these in more detail, which contributed greatly to me designing the system in this article. The Cardbox macros and programming manual obviously makes learning VbScript for Cardbox a lot easier.

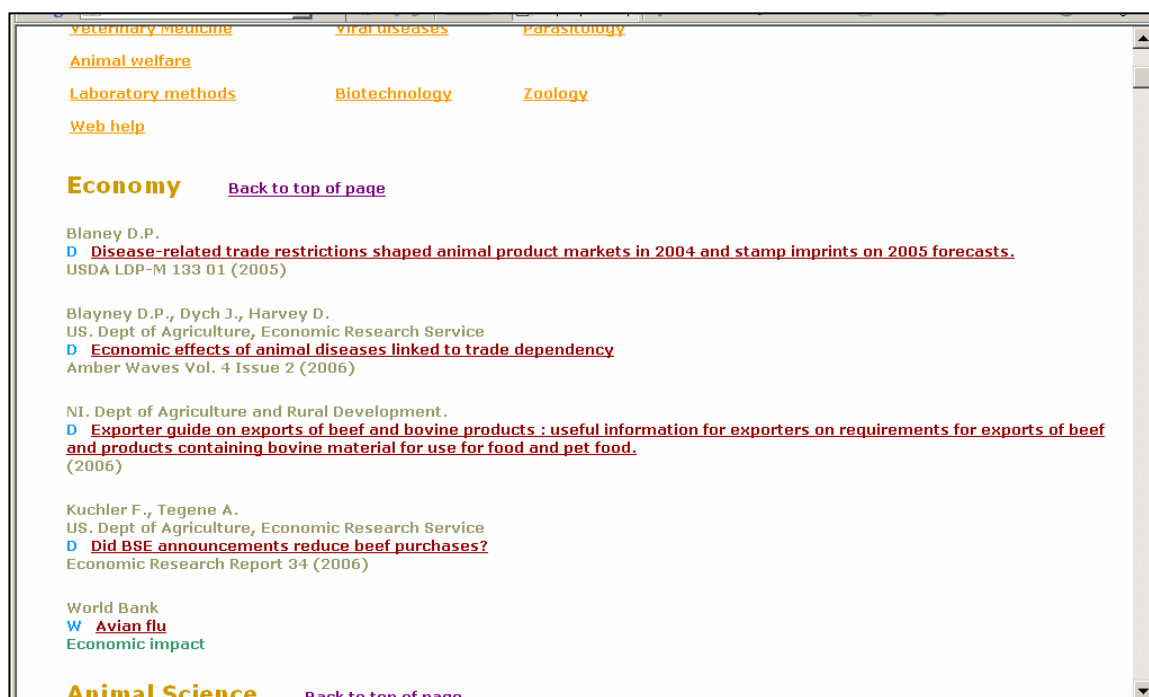
The books I, as a beginner, found most useful and least intimidating at the time were:

Ford, J.L. Learn VBScript in a Weekend. Indianapolis: Premier Press, 2002. It is aimed at beginner to intermediate. While it is not comprehensive, it covers most of the essentials and gives simple examples, which are relatively easy to follow, even though they tend to be web based.

Windows 2000 Scripting Guide. Redmond: Microsoft Press, 2002. Based in part on Microsoft's online reference material. It covers the essentials of VBScript in a logical sequence.

## The corresponding page on the Ezone

(The links in yellow at the top correspond to the jump table field)



We don't use CSS (Style Sheets) as the HTML formatting codes in the HTML formats we design effectively perform the same function. They also give us a lot more control as we can control not only the look of the headers etc, but we can also control the look of the different elements of the record data. For example we use colour coding to identify the Author and Title, so that the Title stands out when someone is browsing quickly down a page.

We later added two more databases: EzoneUpdate and EzonePages

Because of the different requirements of each type of reference added to the Ezone, e.g. documents, legislation, useful websites etc., we use a different macro to write out each type of page, which includes selecting the records, sorting, selecting the correct format etc. and writing the relevant page. The EzoneUpdate database lists the relevant macros for each type of material. The appropriate macro can then be called using a function key or pushbutton.

The EzonePages database lists the various pages on the Library Ezone. If an item is appropriate to more than one page the relevant macro will ask us to mark the appropriate records in this EzonePages database (representing the individual Ezone pages). The item will then be written to each appropriate page. All the items are automatically included in the What's New page.

## Breaking News

Each morning we list important articles relating to agriculture and the other subject areas for which our Department is responsible, including links to the relevant newspaper if the stories are available online. If not, we detail the page on which the article appears in the printed newspaper. A major problem we had with FrontPage was that it took a long time for pages to

save and even longer for the entire site to update, especially if writing directly to the Ezone server. This was because FrontPage had to update all its navigation links with each save. For this reason we were not able to take full advantage of having direct editing access to the Ezone. Instead our Assistant Librarian had a copy of the Library Ezone on his C drive and when finished adding items to a page he copied the page over to the Ezone. Even if we had been writing directly to the Ezone only one person could edit a page at a time.

Using Cardbox for data entry got over both these problems. Updating is now directly to the Ezone and is instant as each item is input. This has enabled us to divide out the work so that the breaking news is now available very early in the morning. Very occasionally two people will be trying to write out the new page at the same time and get an error message. This is not a problem, as the next item that is entered will automatically update the page, including all previous entries. The macro features many data entry shortcuts.

## **Legislation updates**

The basic structure of the legislation pages has remained the same with the conversion. However we have added a major enhancement. We now track the status of the Department's legislation, checking each new Statutory Instrument (SI) on receipt to see if it amends or revokes any previous legislation. The system we use for this is a very good illustration of the advantages of using Cardbox to manage our section of the Ezone, so I will describe it in some detail.

The setup for adding legislation to the Ezone comprises three databases.

### **1. SI-REG**

This database, which was set up by the Library, is maintained by the Registry Section in the Department, which manages the legislation at the preparation stage – printing, publication, etc. For our Library this database has two advantages. We use it to ensure we are not missing any legislation and we access it when adding a new SI to the Ezone to get the title details of the new legislation. This saves us having to enter the title manually.

### **2. SI**

The SI database is our main database for tracking Statutory Instruments. It has standard details, such as title, number, year. As time permits we are also adding details of the Enabling Act. As a result of a major project it now also notes if the legislation has been amended or revoked.

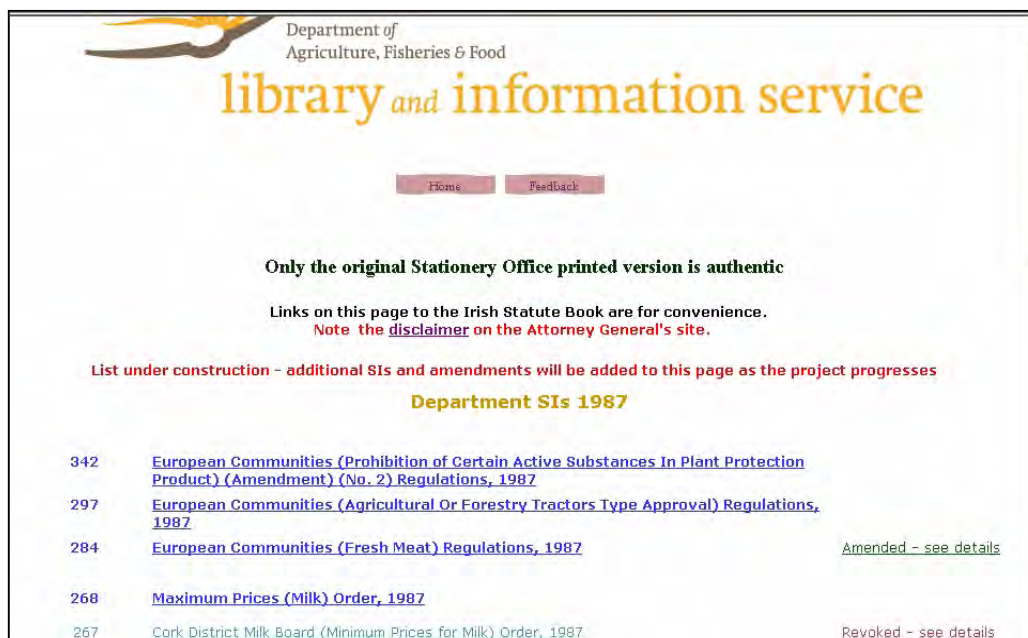
### **3. SI-Status**

This database stores the details of the amendments and revocations. They are stored in a separate database, rather than being incorporated in the SI database, as it enables us to easily list all amendments in a structured way on the Ezone. If an SI has been amended there is a link to the Amendments and Revocations page. Revoked legislation is also listed in fainter type to speed browsing of legislation still in force.



## Process for adding new SIs

- The SI (Statutory Instrument) is emailed to the Library by the relevant Section. We check periodically during the day to see if there are any new ones.



- The attachment is then saved to a specific folder using the formula SI[number]-[year].pdf as the filename. The program for loading the SI can easily parse this formula to derive the number and year to enter in the database.
- We run the SI load macro from the EzoneUpdate database (see above)
- This program scans the folder for files starting with SI (there may be other documents saved to the folder).
- It gets the number and year and then searches the SI-REG database to get the title. Very occasionally the data will not yet have been entered in this database. If the SI is not found there the actual document will open, so the inputter can get the details from the SI itself.
- The SI file is then copied to the Ezone.
- The data is entered in the SI database and the link to the SI is generated automatically.
- The records for the SI year are then selected, sorted and formatted as HTML and the updated page is written to the Ezone.
- The data is also added to the What's New database and the updated What's New page is written to the Ezone.
- As well as copying the document to the Ezone a copy is emailed to the Webmaster to add to the Department's webpage.

- A copy is also emailed to a number of Libraries and to FAO<sup>2</sup>.
- An email is sent to notify the Assistant Librarian that a new SI needs to be classified by subject.
- An email is sent to alert another Library staff member to check the new SI to see if it amends any previous legislation.

All of the above is fully automated.

### **Process for checking amendments**

- Each SI is checked to see if it amends previous legislation.
- Details are entered in the SI-status database.
- Only the minimum data needs to be entered
  - Number of SI being amended
  - Year of SI being amended
  - Type of amendment : amendment or revocation (uses checkboxes)
  - Number of SI doing the amending
  - Year of SI doing the amending

With this small amount of information the appropriate macro can derive the remaining data that needs to be entered to generate links, colour coding for the text etc. It then updates the main SI database and writes out the updated "Amendments and Revocations" page and the revised SI page to the Ezone.

The What's New page is also updated to alert people to the change.

### **Electronic Documents**

The basic idea is similar to the SIs insofar as we store new documents in a specific folder and then run the program to transfer each file to the Ezone and enter the data in the relevant databases, EzoneRefs, What's New and Library catalogue.

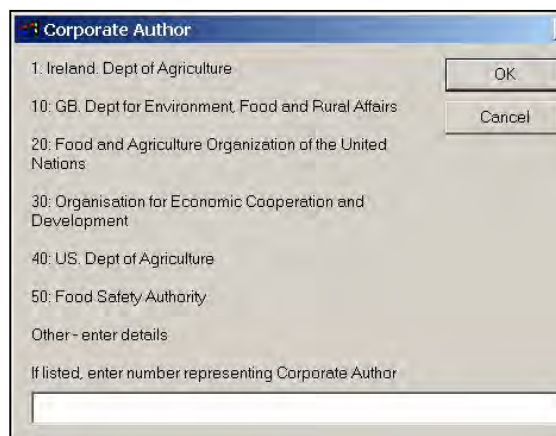
- The original filename of each document is stored by the program.
- It is then renamed using a running number (a Cardbox database stores the last number used). This is to prevent duplication of names and the danger of overwriting another document with the same name, a very useful tip I picked up from Sonia Elso, a Librarian in Chile whom I visited shortly before embarking on the conversion project (taking advantage of being in Chile on holidays).

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<sup>2</sup>FAO maintains a database of legislation relating to agriculture, fisheries and forestry etc from around the world, complete with a summary of the document and keyword indexing. By sending our legislation automatically it saves FAO staff having to track the Department's webpage, thus saving them time and ensuring they don't miss anything. There is no extra work for us in sending it. (See Snippets for more details). <http://faolex.fao.org/faolex/>



- The inputter is then directed to enter the cataloguing data. Several shortcut features speed up data entry.
- All pages on the Library Ezone to which the document is appropriate are then updated.



Sample shortcut  
(common corporate bodies)

## Conclusion

The above illustrates some of the ways we use Cardbox to update our Ezone. While the system was not set up overnight and the transfer of data from the old system is still not complete, the basis of the system was set up in about three months. Because Cardbox, in combination with VbScript, is so adaptable and because we are in control of the system, we can and do tweak it on an ongoing basis, improving it continually. I do not profess to be an expert programmer or even an expert HTML writer. However, I have developed a reasonable expertise in both given the time at my disposal, with necessity being the mother of invention. I also have an in depth knowledge of the work to be automated and how the different elements interact with each other. This is a fairly powerful combination. While challenging, it is very satisfying to have a system that allows us to accomplish a great deal despite staffing pressures. The Department's Ezone in general is currently being re-designed and will henceforth include a good search engine and provide access to the Library databases, but much of the system described here is likely to be retained.

## Snippets (Continued)

### *Leabhar Tagartha—Irish language – Bibliography*

A useful reference work, written by retired librarian Íosold Ní Dheirg, was published in 2006, but may have escaped the attention of some government librarians.

Íosold Ní Dheirg (with Linguistics Institute of Ireland Staff): *Vade mecum na Gaeilge: a guide to sources of information on the Irish language*. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin Press, in association with the Linguistics Institute of Ireland, 2006; xxxii, 742p. ; 23cm., Hardback/paperback, with 1 CD-ROM. Text in English and Irish.

Íosold is the author of a number of other works, including *Téarmaí leabharlainne*: library terms, an Irish-English English-Irish dictionary of terminology used in librarianship (An Gúm, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1993, available through Government Publications)



Author  
Íosold Ní Dheirg

## ***Publishing Government E-Information: Challenges and Opportunities***

***One-day seminar organised by the GLS***

***Thursday 9th October 2008, Bedford Suite,  
Dublin Castle***

***Joseph Donnelly, Librarian, The Judges' Library***

For many years the Government Libraries Section of the Library Association of Ireland (GLS) and the Northern Ireland government librarians' group have taken turns in hosting each other in a series of occasional events. On Thursday 9th October 2008 the GLS ran a one-day seminar, entitled "*Publishing Government E-Information: Challenges and Opportunities*". The conference addressed a range of issues of practice and policy relating to long-term access to electronic information, including developing digital strategies, maintenance of electronic repositories and archives, open access, copyright, ownership of information (exploitation of intellectual property versus obligations to make public sector information widely available) and bibliographic standards. These topics were addressed in individual presentations, and many of them were gathered together in the first paper after lunch "*A View from the Government Libraries Section*" to document the special concerns of the GLS.

As the event was organised by government librarians, the Office of Public Works kindly provided an excellent venue in the Bedford Suite of Dublin Castle, and also a tour of the State Apartments for all participants after the seminar, and for both of these contributions the Government Libraries Section would like to acknowledge its sincere gratitude. The conference drew delegates from a number of State bodies as well as government and academic librarians. Twelve information professionals from the government sector in Northern Ireland were hosted by the GLS at the conference and lunch.



The Conference Committee comprised Máire Caffrey (Librarian, Teagasc); Anne Wilkinson (Library Development and Information Manager, The Marine Institute); Joseph Donnelly (Librarian, The Judges' Library); Laura O Broin (E-Services Librarian, Oireachtas Library and Research Service, and GLS Treasurer); Zoe Melling (Librarian, Legal Aid Board/Refugee Documentation Centre, and GLS Chair); Valerie Ingram (Librarian, Office of Public Works); Mary Doyle (Librarian, Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food); and Conor McCabe (Librarian, Office of the DPP, and GLS Secretary).

GLS Chair Zoe Melling (Legal Aid Board/Refugee Documentation Centre) opened and closed the conference. Sessions before lunch were chaired by Máire Caffrey (Teagasc), and those in the afternoon by Ruth O'Flaherty (Legal Information Manager, Office of the Attorney General).

**Gráinne MacLochlainn** (Services and Systems, Reader Services, National Library of Ireland) was our first speaker. In her paper, "*Strategies for Developing Digital Access*" she gave an overview of digitisation developments in the National Library of Ireland, especially in the context of the NLI's strategic plan for 2008-2010. This plan places great emphasis on the NLI developing into a major digital library, both in terms of managing services and enabling users to access collections remotely. Gráinne discussed the need to upgrade the Library's IT network and also its future ICT strategy. She detailed a variety of new online services available to users via the new website and online shop. She then usefully outlined the steps in acquiring the new library management system from tendering stage to going live. She followed this with details of some exciting new projects, including the digitisation of the Hayes Manuscript and Periodical Sources and also the digitisation of the photographic glass plate collections. Users of both these resources will doubtless be delighted with these developments. Finally Gráinne emphasised the need to keep developments under constant review, to develop key skills, to set realistic and timely goals and the necessity to collaborate both internally and on a cross-institutional basis.

Dr Ian Cornelius and George Moir shared the second slot of the morning "*Government Publishing on the Web: Policy and Practice*".

**Dr Ian Cornelius**, currently Head of the School of Information & Library Studies (SILS) in University College Dublin, spoke about "*Information Policy and Government Publishing*". Ian spoke about the possible conflicts in terms of what we want when we collect, store, use and disseminate information. For example, the filing of a detailed flight plan by private pilots assists rescue missions, but may disclose sensitive commercial information to competitors, while recent news stories about data loss on stolen computers or storage devices illustrate the dangers that accompany the ease of storage of digital data. Likewise the benefits of electronic information in terms of access may be offset by problems of volatility and a deficiency in providing a check on political activities, in the absence of a paper record. Pointing out that comprehensive information policies are usually the preserve of authoritarian regimes that seek to control publishing, he said that information is more typically far down the political agenda, and usually as an adjunct to specific topics. Looking at official information that may be politically sensitive or of practical use, Ian outlined the changing developments in government publishing, including the 18<sup>th</sup> Century view that publishing parliamentary debates was treasonous, and the importance of Court judgments in the administration of justice. A liberalizing trend was to be seen in the openness with which 19<sup>th</sup> century British Admiralty charts were first made available and the publishing of census information. Recent years have shown retrenchment in some areas, such as the US Paperwork Reduction Act, commercialisation, and the reduction in government openness following the 9/11 attacks. Going on to consider some choices that arise in accessing and using information, Ian touched on the role of librarians.

In the second part of the "Policy and Practice" slot, we moved from the policy and theoretical considerations of Ian's presentation, to the practicalities of the work of **George Moir**, Head of Public Relations in the Office of Public Works - "*Publishing Government E-information: Challenges and Opportunities*". George is responsible for the OPW web presence, encompassing around a dozen web sites, covering the varied activities of several business units within the broad areas of Buildings & Architecture, Heritage, Flooding and Procurement. Providing key information sources for staff and clients, these diverse sites must provide appropriate content that is up-to-date, have a consistent layout with a common "look-and-feel", comply with accessibility standards, be capable of being updated locally, provide multilingual support, and for practical and aesthetic reasons have a clear, uncluttered layout. The content itself within the varied sites includes general OPW information, standard Civil Service wide material and links, publications both internal and external, Freedom of Information requests, Flooding information and Tourism & Heritage details. George emphasised the importance of identifying each target audience, and of having rules and guidelines for the look and feel, before illustrating the work with a number of web resources, from floodmaps and the solstice at Newgrange to Iris Oifigiúil, the State gazette (noting that Courts of Law require a printed original of the Iris). On the matter of people having interests in the content, George noted that the works of art shown on State Art Online would be confined to works of deceased artists that were out of copyright. He discussed interesting aspects of copyright and privacy. Artists often have concerns in relation to copyright not only about the ease with which their work can be reproduced, but also about the quality of the reproduction. In the case of photographs, people in the photos may have an interest. Likewise, if fully tagged, a photo of houses suffering flood damage might cause a fall in the value of the property or lead to problems in obtaining insurance. However, the use of modern technologies, including SMS, also brought great opportunities, not least the increased availability of publications, potential savings and improved efficiency and services.

In the final session before lunch, the broad area of "*Institutional Repositories and Electronic Legal Deposit*" was addressed by three speakers: Niamh Brennan, Margaret Flood and Colette O'Flaherty.

**Niamh Brennan**, Programme Manager for Research Information Systems & Services in the Library of Trinity College Dublin (TCD), looked at "*Institutional Repositories and the Open Access Revolution in Ireland*". Although the impact has been greatest in universities, Open Access is also relevant to the wider community. Quoting Peter Suber's Open Access News, she explained the open access movement as "Putting peer-reviewed scientific and scholarly literature on the internet; making it available free of charge and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions; and removing the barriers to serious research" ([www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/fosblog.html](http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/fosblog.html)). The movement should be viewed in the context of increased publicly-funded research, the government's Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2006-2013 and the European Union's Lisbon Strategy to make the EU "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". In addition, colleges must justify their budgets in terms of publications output and citations. Open Access increases citations by between 50% and 250%, and the impact OA has is one of the driving forces behind it. It allows producers to reclaim their intellectual property. A high proportion of journals now permit the lodging of some version of papers in an open access

repository. TARA (Trinity's Access to Research Archive) is an open access repository used to manage the intellectual output of the university, with self-archiving of full-text papers, freely accessible to the world. Several systems are integrated – the Research Support System, with links to the full text articles in TARA, the academics' CV and Research Profile, and bibliographic records from ISI. Metadata is exposed so that it can be picked up by a Google search, leading to the publication and the researcher's profile, thus promoting the researcher's work and career, providing an educational aid and disseminating information more widely. A second source of vigour is the support of those who fund research and who find that in traditional publishing access to the research they have funded is restricted, whereas Open Access makes the research available to themselves and to others who will cite it. National and international initiatives, such as Ireland's IReL, funded by the Higher Education Authority to support the National Development Plan are a third driving force of Open Access. Mention was also made of Europe's DART-Europe E-theses Portal and MILE (Metadata Image Library Exploitation). Finally, Open Access is driven by the opportunities it provides to promote the greater good with evidence-based policy making, part of the tradition that gave rise to the Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland following the great famine. Long after the discovery of lemon or citrus juice as a remedy for scurvy among sailors it was still not used, but Open Access provides a mechanism whereby research can be made available to policy makers.

**Margaret Flood** (Keeper, Collection Management, Trinity College Dublin Library, and Convenor of CONUL Sub-Committee for Copyright and Regulatory Matters) and **Colette O'Flaherty** (Keeper of Printed & Visual Collections, National Library of Ireland, and member of CONUL Sub-Committee for Copyright and Regulatory Matters) delivered a joint presentation entitled *"Legal Deposit and Digital Formats: Where Is Ireland?"* There is a statutory obligation on any commercial or public organisation or any individual producing documentation in multiple copies to deposit one or more copies with a recognised national institution (UNESCO Guidelines for Legal Deposit Legislation, Paris, 2000) in order to preserve the cultural and intellectual heritage of the nation, to record and describe it, and to make it accessible to researchers now and in the future. However, publishing in electronic formats raises issues that are not covered by our existing legislation. As a result, content is being irretrievably lost, a problem that is by no means unique to Ireland. The British Library stated in 2002 that "The comprehensiveness of the national intellectual archive is becoming increasingly compromised as new types of publication are not covered by the legal deposit system", a concern also shared by UNESCO. Many questions have to be addressed: What meaning has 'country' in a digital world? How do we define what is being produced? Who is producing it? What should be collected and how? How can it be preserved, and how can access be managed? After a brief overview of legislative approaches in other jurisdictions some points in the Irish legislation were discussed. Section 198 of the Copyright Act 2000 was commenced in May of 2007, and extended Legal Deposit to electronic formats by giving legal deposit institutions the right to claim a preferred format, and to claim both print and electronic versions of a book. However, the text is far from clear, in part because of outdated terminology. Whether "born-digital" publications are covered is unclear, there is no mention of access to content, and there is no obligation placed on libraries to collect, retain or preserve content. Section 199, which amends the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997, and deals exclusively with the National Library, has not yet been commenced, but could have far-reaching effects as it encompasses sounds, images and "all other objects", and it could be applied to the other legal deposit libraries as well as the NLI. A number of responses to this

situation have been initiated. A TCD Scoping Project on Deposit of e-Publications is being conducted with three publishers (the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Met Éireann, and the Marine Institute) who will deposit electronic publications for the purposes of the study over a period of some months. The Strategic Plan 2008-2010 of the National Library of Ireland has as one of its objectives to plan for a phased extension of the legal deposit provisions of the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997". CONUL (Conference of National and University Libraries) is also looking at current practice and international developments in order to identify important issues and develop a legal deposit system for digital publications. Finally, Margaret and Colette described a survey they were planning to present to the Government Libraries Section of the LAI relating to the collection and preservation of digital publications by government funded bodies.

**Lunch** was served in the Erin Room of Dublin Castle.

The first presentation after lunch was "*A View from the Government Libraries Section*" in which **Joseph Donnelly** (Librarian in The Judges' Library, member of the GLS Committee and one of the organisers of the Conference) outlined on behalf of the GLS the many issues relating to electronic publishing that had come to the attention of government librarians in recent years, leading to the decision to hold the seminar in order to provide an opportunity for government librarians, civil servants and others to consider some of the questions raised and perhaps formulate some answers. Although the "View from the GLS" did not purport to represent policies of either the Library Association of Ireland or the State bodies in which the GLS members worked, those members were ideally equipped to identify potential challenges, as well as opportunities, arising from the strong swing towards publishing in electronic format (sometimes exclusively so). Many of the issues catalogued in this presentation were dealt with in more detail by other speakers on the Conference Programme.

First, there was the issue (touched on by Ian Cornelius) of the extent to which an electronic version was authoritative. This was particularly important in the case of documents that embody the law or are required for use in legal contexts, such as Judgments, the Irish Statute Book, and Iris Oifigiúil (to which George Moir had alluded), and where a final printed version has traditionally provided the authoritative document. However, questions of version control, draft and final versions, reuse and amendment, will be relevant to many other documents, whether internal or for the public. One of the advantages of electronic publication is the ease with which small changes can be made on a regular basis; however this raises the question of identifying a definitive version, or even a substantially new version, of the publication (one of the issues facing Margaret Flood and Colette O'Flaherty when claiming a constantly updated digital publication for legal deposit). A second important area of concern to government librarians was that of ensuring both long- and short-term access to documents. As Ian Cornelius had mentioned, ironically the electronic version is often more volatile and impermanent than the hard copy. Publication on websites often caters for current interest rather than long-term preservation. It would appear that no area within central government has responsibility for devising Civil Service wide policies and guidelines on long and short-term archiving of local, or major, electronic publications. Even where a decision is taken to archive material as it is removed from current web pages, questions arise as to how many versions should be preserved, where and how they should be stored for retrieval, predicting how they will be required in the future and whether anyone will know of their



hidden existence and whether some or all of the archive should be for public access as distinct from purely internal use – all issues that have long been managed in the case of the physical copy in printed publications. Several practical considerations arise in the archiving of material that is removed from current exposure: will it be stored in a searchable database, or in some way indexed with metadata for retrieval? It is more likely that if any arrangements are in place they will amount to no more than storage in a cyber cemetery, and this is a problem for private, national and international organisations all over the world. Even material on live websites is not always retrievable where the search facilities or layout are not optimal (an area mentioned by George Moir).

In addition to the issue of constantly changing versions, Legal Deposit raises other problems: if special software is required to access the electronic content, must that software (possibly not the outright property of the publisher) also be supplied along with the otherwise unusable data? Who may use the electronic material and in what ways? Use of print material deposited in a library is governed by the familiar law of copyright and by any further restrictions the library may choose to impose, together with the physical restrictions on using individual items; however, use of electronic publications is normally governed by licence agreement – if the product is an expensive subscription database, is it reasonable to expect that the Library be permitted to make it available free of charge to the world (as it may do with paper stock)? Related to long-term access is long-term usability of material, for example in terms of obsolescence of hardware and software necessary to use the content, and the durability of modern storage media, or even laser printouts.

Ownership of publications was something that would be looked at from different perspectives by speakers later in the afternoon, but of particular concern to government librarians is the fact that the body that funds research often has it published by commercial firms and in the process assigns copyright in it, so that it later has to pay to use its own research (hence Niamh Brennan's call in her paper to "take back your intellectual property" by using the Open Access model of publication). The need for clarity in retaining ownership also arises when commissioning research or reports. On the other hand, many bodies forget that when they publish material on the Internet intending it for unhindered public re-use, it is nevertheless protected by copyright, and will need accompanying statements granting permission beyond those granted by law. Sometimes government bodies give exclusive rights over their resources to particular suppliers (Ian Cornelius referred to the rise in prices of some content that was formerly available from US government). But there is also the question of protecting and exploiting valuable publicly funded research while also meeting the requirements of Public Sector Information legislation (matters that were to be addressed later by David Flood, Miriam Walsh and John Dolan).

Mainstream publishers are familiar with bibliographic standards, but they are just as important in documents produced inhouse by government bodies, whether in hard-copy or electronic formats, whether formal publications or informal documents for limited (non-confidential) distribution. Indeed these are precisely the documents referred to as "grey literature", because identifying and locating them is all the more difficult because of their limited circulation and vagueness in terms of author, title, edition, status, date, etc. Several years ago GLS-member Mairead Mullaney (then in the Library of the Department of the Taoiseach) produced a useful checklist on bibliographic standards in publications. Joe used a document from a current government website as an example of a document where around ten elements of the bibliographic information within the booklet were inadequate or positively



misleading and showed the problems likely to arise as a result.

The potential challenges, then, in paper but especially in electronic government documents, lie in the fact that the existence of the document may not even be known, or it may be known but irretrievable, or it may no longer be usable. There is a great danger that public bodies will go through the motions of producing publications but that they will not be as effective as they might be in the long or even short term. The seminar was prompted by the perceived need for policies and guidelines in each organ of State publishing, and/or centrally, providing direction on publication standards, ownership of intellectual property, long-term organisation, retention and retrieval, and accessible archiving.

The sessions after the break for tea and coffee (David Flood, Miriam Walsh and John Dolan) all related in one way or another to the ownership and use of information generated by public bodies. The "*Scheme for Academic Research Commercialisation*" was the topic of **David Flood**, a Commercialisation Specialist in the Industrial Technologies Commercialisation, Research and Innovation Business Unit of Enterprise Ireland (though he was not speaking on behalf of Enterprise Ireland). The role of the Unit in which he works is to help industry exploit new technologies arising from third level research funded by Enterprise Ireland. Funding helps develop research, and the resulting new technologies are commercialised by licensing products and services to industry or by setting up a High Potential Start Up Company. By developing world-class Irish companies with a strong position in the global market, national and regional prosperity are increased. Enterprise Ireland facilitates businesses to be market-focussed and innovation-driven, and supports academic research that has commercial potential in order to channel the ideas and intellectual property into Irish industry. David then outlined the process from publicity and calls for proposals, through receipt of applications to evaluation (with non-disclosure agreement), notification of results to applicants and publication on the web of successful project titles and abstracts, followed by project monitoring, and protection of intellectual property before publication. This process leads to dissemination of results in order to licence the technology to an existing company or to the formation of a new company. Publication of the research is a matter for the third level education establishment, but must not compromise the Intellectual Property.

**Dr. Miriam Walsh** is the Intellectual Property Officer in Teagasc and spoke about commercialising publicly funded IP in "*Intellectual Property and Public Sector Information: Challenges and Opportunities*". She described intellectual property as the property of intellect or mental efforts (research with commercial potential), which can be commercially exploited in technology transfer to industry in return for economic gain. Some forms of IP are registrable (patents, designs, trademarks) while others arise automatically (copyright, the database right and confidential know-how). It is important to educate researchers in the proper management of intellectual property, and in particular to impress upon them the importance of not publishing their findings too soon. This commercialisation does not conflict with the public good that is the objective of Public Sector Information legislation, since protection and dissemination are not mutually exclusive. Commercialisation, through protection of intellectual property (first) is possibly in addition to producing publications and dissemination of information for technology transfer (later). In recent times Ireland's drive to become a knowledge economy (STI strategy) has led to an increase in public funding for research and developments and to an emphasis on the exploitation of R&D outputs. The

steps in IP management include the capture or identification of IP in laboratory notebooks and project reports, the evaluation and protection of IP (e.g., through patenting if appropriate) and its commercialisation. Miriam then went through some of the features of patents, designs, trademarks and copyright and the prerequisites for each. Premature disclosure is a danger to the protection of IP, and can happen by making the information publicly available in any form – journal articles, abstracts, demonstrations, discussions, theses, etc. The implications for librarians were mentioned (e.g., theses containing patentable results must not be made publicly available). Finally, Miriam described how the public interest in disclosure was met when patent applications were published and made available for inspection in due course.

The last presentation of the day was an EU Perspective - "*The Re-use of Public Sector Information (PSI)*" by **John Dolan** (Department of Finance, with responsibility for the implementation of the PSI Directive). Referring to the Lisbon Agenda and the drive to make Europe a "competitive, dynamic, knowledge-based economy" John went on to discuss the rationale of the Public Sector Information Directive, concerned with the vast amounts of information held by the public sector, which is extremely valuable when made available for both commercial and non-commercial use. A single European approach is necessary for a Single European Market but the 1999 guidelines were seen to be ineffective. The US is more advanced in the area of PSI, but the potential market in the EU is bigger than in the US. The EU does not want companies and member states to be put at a disadvantage and is prepared to take a stern line in supporting the implementation of the Directive. The Directive of 2003 was transposed on 1st July 2005 (Statutory Instrument 279 of 2005). It allows an exemption for cultural establishments, and it is non-mandatory – any public sector body can decide not to allow the re-use of its information, but if it decides to participate, the Directive has effect. The policy of the body must be stated, even if only to say it has decided not to allow re-use of information. The PSI website [www.psi.gov.ie](http://www.psi.gov.ie) gives the legislation and the standard licence, with links to any office that is compliant. PSI differs from the Freedom of Information regime in that FOI applies to a definitive list of public bodies (that can be added to) and allows only access to information (not a right of re-use). PSI uses a broader definition and governs the re-use of that information. Only information produced as part of the PSI holder's *public* tasks is within the scope of the PSI Directive, and there are safeguards for intellectual property. The review of the PSI Directive raises the question of whether to extend it to cultural establishments and public sector broadcasters. The views of the member states and of private industry are that it is too early to consider amending the Directive and it is preferable to concentrate on giving effect to the current Directive. John referred to the Mission Statement of the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) which seeks to give everybody fast, comprehensive, multilingual and long-term access to their collections and information, and wherever appropriate without cost, to build the European Digital Library, and to use research and development to improve user services of national libraries. The progress in digitizing content raises questions about the availability of information on websites without re-use control.

Following the final presentation, there was time for some questions and answers, after which **Zoe Melling** closed the proceedings and thanked all who had contributed. Through the good offices of **Valerie Ingram** (Librarian, Office of Public Works, and GLS Committee member) a free tour of the State Apartments of Dublin Castle was provided for all seminar delegates.

***BIALL (British & Irish Association of Law Librarians)***

***39th Annual Study Conference and Exhibition***

***Beyond the Pale***

***Planning for the Next Information Generation***

***June 2008, Royal Dublin Society***

*Joseph Donnelly, Librarian, The Judges' Library*

The 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Study Conference of the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) was held in Dublin in June 2008. The Conference title was "Beyond the Pale", and the broad theme was "Planning for the Next Information Generation". The Irish setting was appropriate during the BIALl Presidency of Jennefer Aston (Law Library of the Bar Council). The conference took place in the RDS from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> June 2008 (with the pre-Conference Seminar on 11<sup>th</sup>) and was attended by over 400 registrants from worldwide jurisdictions. The Irish delegates included a number from State bodies, as well as from other sectors. Practical information and a Guide to Dublin for visitors was provided on the BIALl website. Half-day walking tours of Dublin were also organised.

The packed programme began with a practical half-day pre-conference workshop on Cataloguing and Classification, before the 2½ days comprising 7 plenary sessions, 12 parallel sessions, the AGM, and a "have your say" open forum for members. In this brief account and I can only hope to give you a flavour of the experience.

The *Pre-Conference seminar* this year was entitled "*Back to Basics: Cataloguing and Classification*". The first session was delivered by Guy Holborn, Librarian of Lincoln's Inn, who looked at common problems encountered in cataloguing legal materials and suggested occasions when it might be best to depart from a strict application of AACR2. The second session was delivered by Christine Miskin, Editor of *Legal Information Management*, who looked at recent developments such as "folksonomies" and how to select and adapt a classification scheme from the range that is available, including in-house schemes and Moys (devised specifically for legal materials by the late Betty Moys).

A regular at BIALl, the keynote speaker Richard Susskind, was as engaging and challenging as ever as he gave us a look at the future of lawyers. He sees an expanding role for non lawyers in the provision of legal services, and our information handling skills should serve us well in that regard. The Saturday session on the Legal Services Act gave further opportunities for gazing into the future. The future of our profession in legal services was also covered on Friday but with the emphasis on changing roles and the importance of aligning our roles with the firm's strategy and demonstrating value.

Federated searching was the among the topics looked at and led to discussion of both the

technical and business issues that arise in using federated search to retrieve from the content of various publishers. Publishers have invested heavily in their own interfaces, and are often afraid their content will be diluted by others in federated search, especially if not clearly labelled.

*"Implementing an enterprise wide search tool"* by Victoria North described a project to bring together the wealth of knowledge in client-matter documents, and of precedents in business units, along with internal catalogues and external web resources.

Web 2.0 was the focus of a couple of sessions covering basic concepts, practical advice, lively discussion, an anthropological video and there was even a hint at 3.0 and 4.0. Margaret Flood of Trinity College Dublin addressed current issues in legal deposit in *"Legal Deposit – Preserving the Published Record or More? Facing the Challenges of a Digital World"*

*"Law Crime and Punishment in Bloomsday Dublin"* by Mr Justice Hardiman, with his very interesting and entertaining insight into Ulysses and Dublin at that time, inspired many to return to Joyce with renewed enthusiasm. Developments in the Legal Information Institutes CanLII and BAILII gave us an insight into the future provision of free legal resources for the public and the professions.

With speakers from six different jurisdictions, the programme covered issues as varied as are the roles, skills and interests of BIALl members.

In addition to the conference sessions, the Annual Conference also features an Exhibition of publishers and other vendors. There are social events, including a reception for new and overseas delegates. The informal reception and dinner (sponsored by legal publishers LexisNexis) was held on Thursday 12th June in the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The BIALl President's Reception on Friday 13th in the Long Room of Trinity College Library, with a private viewing of the Book of Kells Exhibition, was sponsored by Thomson Sweet & Maxwell, as was the Annual Dinner and presentation of Awards in the Round Room of the Mansion House later that evening.

A regular element of the conferences is the presentation of awards for achievement by the Association and by sponsors. As a profession we are perhaps too slow to give ourselves credit, and to claim much deserved recognition for ourselves or our teams. On Thursday and Friday nights, as well as awards for publishing and service, there were awards recognising our excellence as individuals or teams in several spheres. As with all conferences the out-of-session opportunities for learning from, and meeting, colleagues from different backgrounds were excellent.

The 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Study Conference ("Locks and Keys: Safeguarding Legal Information") will be held from Thurs. 18<sup>th</sup> - Sat. 20<sup>th</sup> June 2009 (with pre-conference workshop on Wed 17<sup>th</sup>) in Manchester. <http://www.biall.org.uk/>