

Research Information and Digital Literacies Coalition

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES, JUNE 2012 – MAY 2013

Background

The Research Information and Digital Literacies Coalition (RIDLs) was set up in June 2012, with the aim of collectively promoting the value of training and development in information skills, and enabling activities to facilitate the development of this knowledge and skills. The rationale for the initiative was to provide an environment where all those with an interest and stake in the furtherance of information knowledge in higher education, in the academic library world and beyond, could consider practical ideas for advancing the development of information-handling training for HE researchers.

From the outset, the intention was to define RIDLs not just as a forum, but as an agenda-setting body which would initiate activity, act as advocate and disseminate relevant information. It is on this basis that the initiative was framed as a one-year programme, managed by the Research Information Network, aimed at:

- testing the feasibility of establishing RIDLs on a sustainable basis;
- producing over twelve months a tangible legacy of outputs and outcomes on which RIDLs and others can build.

Through consultation with stakeholders, this programme was formulated in the early part of 2012. It was articulated around six strands of activity, each with defined outputs and outcomes, as follows:

1. setting up and running RIDLs (governance, outreach, sustainability)
2. devising criteria for describing and reviewing relevant training interventions
3. promoting good practice in information handling and data management
4. promoting the information lens of the Vitae Researchers Development Framework and the SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy
5. running relevant pathfinder projects
6. encouraging international engagement

The detailed programme, along with the full aims and objectives, can be found at <http://www.researchinfolnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Programme-for-the-IL-Coalition-June-2012-version-for-website.pdf> .

The programme was presented to HEFCE and the Digital Curation Centre as a funding proposal in April 2012. Having considered this, HEFCE agreed to support the proposal in full, with a financial allocation of £75,200 over the period 1 June 2012 to 31 May 2013; DCC's contribution took the form of providing staff time. The budget reflected the detailed requirements for each of the six strands, to cover the cost of the facilitating and co-ordinating work to be undertaken by RIN, plus research project work, publicity, room hire and expenses for attending meetings.

It is worth noting that the work benefitted greatly from the time and effort provided generously and without payment by the RIDLs members as part of their collective input to the advancement of the Coalition. If costed as if for a fully funded project then this input would be at least equivalent to the actual funding received.

Conclusions

The RIDLs programme has now reached the end of its one-year term. HEFCE have already received quarterly progress reports, and this paper provides a final report covering the activities across the whole period against each of the six strands. This is set out in detail at **annex A**, which, in addition to achievements, also explains how the outputs and outcomes described in the proposal have been addressed.

The programme has broadly achieved its objectives; in one or two cases, notably with the analysis of the cases of good practice (strand 3), it has even exceeded them. In other instances, progress has been a little slower than anticipated. However, all the outputs set out in the programme submitted to HEFCE have been attained. Addressing the outcomes has proved more challenging, because these were often ambitious and could not easily be achieved in the course of a single year – particularly since many of the outputs from which they were derived did not materialise until the end of the programme. Thus although RIDLs has made a good start in addressing outcomes, more time would be needed to monitor and chart them effectively. Such work could be addressed as part of a continuation of the initiative beyond its first year.

The sustaining of RIDLs in the short to medium term, and its capacity to follow through on its activities, was an important element of stand 1 of the programme. RIDLs members have reflected on how the initiative might develop usefully and practically, and these thoughts will form the basis of a further proposal, building on and amplifying the work undertaken during 2012-13, to cover a further year of activity. This proposal will be formulated by the end of July 2013.

15 July 2013

ANNEX A: RIDLS activities and achievements

Date	Activity	Resource / reference
<i>Strand 1 – setting up and running RIDLS</i>		
<i>Membership and governance</i>		
Jun – Jul 2012	The RIDLS terms of reference were agreed in June, and on that basis, we achieved an understanding of what is expected of members. The setting up of RIDLS was formally announced in July.	Aims and objectives document set out as a preamble to the RIDLS programme, at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/ News announcement about RIDLS at http://www.researchinfonet.org/spreading-information-literacy-about
Jun 2012 – May 2013	RIDLS membership started at 16, and grew by around 10 over the course of the year. It included representation from sectors such as academic librarianship, research data management, graduate education, pedagogy, information science, information management and publishing. Some members approached us spontaneously with a request to join, symptomatic of a genuine interest in what RIDLS is seeking to achieve. A chair was appointed for the initiative in June 2012: Professor Pam Denicolo (universities of Reading and Surrey).	Updated list of members also at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/strand1/
Jun 2012 – Apr 2013	The RIDLS steering group, open to all members, has met on four occasions: May 2012, September 2012, January 2013 and April 2013.	Steering group minutes at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/strand1/
Jun 2012	Champions, drawn from the membership, were appointed to take the lead for each of the strands of the programme, and they have accordingly started to play an active role.	Documented in the minutes from the first steering group meeting, at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/strand1/
<i>Dissemination and outreach</i>		
Aug 2012	A web presence was established for RIDLS on the RIN website; this was structured around the six activity strands. The content was updated regularly throughout the year to reflect progress with the programme. To complement this, a one-page publicity flyer was produced.	Landing page at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/ Publicity flyer at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/
Sep 2012	A RIDLS communications strategy was formulated and approved by the steering group.	Communications strategy document at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/strand1/
March – Oct 2013	RIDLS presentations and workshops were peer-reviewed and accepted for three major conferences:	- slides from LILAC2013 at http://www.slideshare.net/infolit_group/goldstein-walton

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - symposium at the Librarian and Information Literacy Conference (LILAC) – Manchester, March 2013 - workshop at the Information: Interactions and Impact Conference (i³) – Aberdeen, June 2013 - panel at the inaugural European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL) – Istanbul, October 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - i³ conference programme at http://rgu-sim.rgu.ac.uk/i3conf/programme13v8.pdf - confirmed ECIL panel discussions at http://www.arber.com.tr/ecil2013.org/index.php/page,97,panels
Jan 2013 onwards	There has been some RIDLs-related outreach in the JISC-funded DaMSSI project. In this instance, we have sought encourage selected learned and professional bodies (notably in areas covering physics/astronomy, psychology and librarianship) to promote and possibly endorse training resources for developing skills in research data management.	DaMSSI-ABC project website at http://damssiabc.jiscinvolve.org/wp/
March 2013 onwards	We have been making efforts to reach out to communities with an interest in transferable skills beyond the HE section. There have been useful initial contacts with AGCAS, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services; we are currently pursuing these. We have also been in touch with the Confederation of British Industry, although there have been no reactions from them to date; we are keen to continue investigating the possibility of raising awareness about information literacy for the purposes of transferable skills and employability.	--
Jul 2013	An article presenting the work of RIDLs is to be published in the summer 2013 edition of the Journal of Information Literacy.	Published at http://ojs.lboro.ac.uk/ojs/index.php/JIL/article/view/PRJ-V7-I1-2013-3/1803
--	<i>Further dissemination activities relating to specific activities are outlined below, under the different strand headings.</i>	--
Sustainability		
Dec 2011 – Jan 2013	Initial ideas were set out and discussed at the January 2013 steering group meeting, to consider how RIDLs might be sustained beyond its initial year of activity, from June 2013.	Steering group minutes at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/strand1/
Apr 2013	There were in-depth discussions about RIDLs sustainability at workshop sessions that took place in the context of the April 2013 steering group meeting.	Steering group minutes at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/strand1/

Jul 2013	On the basis of discussions at the steering group, and consultations with key stakeholders such as Vitae and UKCGE, a scoping document / business case is being formulated to present to would-be supporters of the initiative, including HEFCE.	--
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<i>Strand 1 outputs and outcomes as defined in the proposal</i>	<i>Summary of progress achieved</i>
<p>Outputs: establishment of RIDLs with a stable membership and regular meetings (assume four meetings a year), established ground rules and good lines of communication with the communities/constituencies that it represents.</p>	<p>All objectives have been met; RIDLs has achieved a good rhythm of activity throughout the year with a growing membership and active to very active engagement on the part of most members (although, perhaps inevitably, a minority members has been content to observe rather than contribute). Networking within the RIDLs membership has been fruitful, and this has fostered dialogues between stakeholders which would not otherwise have taken place. Relationships have been established with the various stakeholder groups, and this has enabled two-way communication; but this has been of varying intensity, and in some cases, the relationships would benefit from being deepened and amplified.</p>
<p>Outcomes: sustaining RIDLs as a recognised and credible collective organisation in its own right, at national and regional level, with the potential to sustain itself beyond the 12-month duration of the programme.</p>	<p>RIDLs is starting to be recognised and its work has attracted some attention – but this is still relatively limited, particularly since many of the significant outputs (notably for strands 2, 3 and 5) have only become available from April 2013, and the notable outreach work did not get off the ground until early 2013. Through its practical outcomes and working methods, RIDLs has demonstrated that it provides a genuinely useful model for joint working. There are good grounds for building on the outputs with further dissemination work, and on setting out new joint projects, but this can only be done in the context of an extension of the year-long programme. Ideas for extending this, and providing the means for doing so, have been explored; these will serve as a basis for a business case / additional programme to be formulated by the end of July 2013.</p>

Date	Activity	Resource / reference
<i>Strand 2 – criteria for describing and reviewing training interventions</i>		
Aug 2012	Agreed a set of draft criteria, with explanatory notes. These were divided into two broad sections: (i) criteria used to describe training interventions; (ii) criteria used to evaluate interventions, by focusing on outputs, outcomes and impact.	Criteria and explanatory notes at http://www.researchinfolit.org/infolit/ridls/strand2/
Sep 2012 – May 2013	Consultation on draft criteria; these were tested and piloted in several institutional settings, notably through the identification of good training practice covered by strand 3 and the DaMSSI-ABC project, but also through contacts with further individual institutions. Feedback received has been essentially positive, and constructive comments from various quarters have helped with the refinement and clarification of the criteria.	
May – Jun 2013	Feedback received as a result of the piloting has been essentially positive, and constructive comments from various quarters have helped with the refinement and clarification of the criteria.	
Jun – Jul 2013	Early dissemination of agreed criteria.	

<i>Strand 2 outputs and outcomes as defined in the proposal</i>	<i>Summary of progress achieved</i>
Outputs: a set of clear and accepted criteria that can be used with confidence within the HE and research sectors	The criteria have been finalised, although they may be subject to further refinements in future in the light of practice.
Outcomes: adoption of the criteria by a wide range of players as an aid to the design of interventions and resources	In the first instance, the criteria have been used and tested in over 30 institutions (mostly in library settings, but also for the purposes of training in research data management), which has allowed RIDLs to endorse a document that reflects multi-faceted views; the criteria have thus already been exposed to a good range of institutions. However, further dissemination is required to encourage their use in a more generalised way; given that they were not refined and finalised until June 2013, there has to date been limited scope for promoting them across the whole HE sector.

Date	Activity	Resource / reference
Strand 3 – promoting good practice in information handling and data management		
<i>Project progress</i>		
Jul – Aug 2012	Jointly with SCOUNL, scoped a project aimed at identifying, analysing and promoting representative cases of good practice; this is the Research Information Literacy and Digital Scholarship project (RILADS), overseen by the RIDLs steering group <i>[note that only the first part of the project related to RIDLS; the second, related element, focused on digital scholarship, was funded by SCOUNL].</i>	General information at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/strand3/ Full documentation and progress report on RILADS project page and blog at http://rilads.wordpress.com/
Sep 2012	Project officer recruited for RILADS	
Oct 2012 – Jan 2013	Stage 1 of RILADS: identification of a longlist of possible cases. Almost 50 such examples were initially identified, and on that basis, over 20 trainers or training units, covering a wide range of institutions, types of training interventions and aspects of information literacy, provided detailed feedback. The descriptive component of the strand 2 criteria (see above) was used to frame this stage. An interim report presented to RIDLs steering group in January 2013.	
Jan – May 2013	Stage 2 of RILADS: refinement of the preliminary information into shortlist of 15 fully documented cases, making use of the assessment/evaluation component of the criteria. This was complemented by an analysis and recommendations of how the different training practices are described and assessed A near-final report presented to RIDLs steering group in April 2013, with further refinements completed in May.	
Jan – Jul 2013	Small number of cases of good practice, focused on research data management, described through DaMSSI-ABC project.	DaMSSI-ABC project website at http://damssiabc.jiscinvolve.org/wp/
<i>Dissemination and outreach</i>		
Jan – Jun 2013	RILADS blog used as vehicle for announcements and disseminating information about progress; regular and detailed updates posted.	RILADS blog at http://rilads.wordpress.com/

Apr – Jul 2013	RILADS presentations at conferences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UKCGE International Conference on Developments in Doctoral Education and Training – Edinburgh, April 2013 - CILIP Umbrella – Manchester, July 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UKCGE event – details on RILADS blog (with link to UKCGE page) at http://rilads.wordpress.com/2013/04/11/ukcge-international-conference-on-developments-in-doctoral-education-and-training/ - CILIP Umbrella – details at http://www.cilip.org.uk/umbrella2013/speakers/pages/charlie-inskip.aspx
Jun 2013	The RIDLS final component of the RILADS report was published; press release issued. RIDLS members used their networking capacity to disseminate it. Representatives from the 15 cases have been encouraged to deposit their material in Jorum and the Vitae Database of Practice at the earliest opportunity (follow-up will be required to ensure that this has been done).	Press release at http://rilads.wordpress.com/2013/06/10/rilads-report/
Jul & Dec 2013	Article on RIDLS and RILADS in July 2013 issue of CILIP update; further article scheduled for December 2013.	CILIP Update: http://www.cilip.org.uk/publications/update-magazine/pages/default.aspx (subscription access only)

<i>Strand 3 outputs and outcomes as defined in the proposal</i>	<i>Summary of progress achieved</i>
Outputs: up to 20 documented cases of best practice, covering a balanced sample of different IL competencies and relating to a good cross-section of institutions. These cases would be presented appropriately, disseminated effectively through the partner organisations and flagged in key online resources such as Vitae’s database of practice and Jorum.	Fifteen cases were identified in an academic library setting through the RILADS project, with a further 2-3 through DaMSSI-ABC. The RILADS cases were extremely well documented, with an accompanying analysis that went further than what was originally anticipated. There has been a sustained effort at disseminating information and outputs, and the involvement of almost 50 institutions in the original longlisting process has helped to raise the profile of the project.
Outcomes: enhanced value and impact for the selected examples of best practice, and the greater use of best practice exemplars in information and data management training.	The promotion of the cases is still at a relatively early stage, and it is likely to be a while before they have any influence on the relevant training environment.

Date	Activity	Resource / reference
Strand 4 – promoting the information lens of the RDF and the SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy		
Nov 2012	Discussions have taken place with the Director of Vitae to explore possibilities of future joint engagement. A number of ideas, aimed at underpinning or promoting good practice to support researcher development, were considered – but these would be in the context of the possible future development of RIDLs. Organisations such as Vitae, whose own business model is evolving, could be particularly useful partners as RIDLs develops its own sustainability options.	--
Jan – May 2013	<p>Workshops or workshop sessions on the relevance of the RDF information lens and the Seven Pillars have taken place in partnership with a range of stakeholders, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) workshop on the Digital Future of HEIs – Manchester, January 2013 - Workshop in the context of the DaMSSI-ABC project, focusing on mapping research data management training interventions against the RDF lens – London, April 2013 - Society for Research into HE workshop on digital literacies – London, May 2013 - Scottish Academic Libraries Cooperative Training Group (SALCTG) workshop on research support – Glasgow, June 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UKCGE workshop: http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/main.php?main=events&Workshop=The%20Digital%20Future%20of%20HEIs - DaMSSI-ABC workshop: http://damssiabc.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2013/05/14/damssi-abc-workshop-april-18-2013/ - SRHE workshop: http://www.srhe.ac.uk/events/details.asp?eid=96 - SALCTG workshop: http://salctg.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/salctg-research-support-workshop.html

Strand 4 outputs and outcomes as defined in the proposal	Summary of progress achieved
Outputs: oversight and support for up to three regional workshops focused on exploiting the Vitae RDF; dissemination of the Informed Researcher guidance.	Four workshops have taken place in London, Manchester and Glasgow. All these events provided opportunities for the dissemination of the Informed Researcher guidance.
Outcomes: increased awareness and use of the Vitae RDF (particularly those elements relevant to information literacy) and its relationship to the Seven Pillars.	The workshops were occasions for reaching a variety of audiences; by and large, participants at these events had not heard of RIDLs and often were not aware of the RDF information lens. The various sessions therefore plugged some gaps in knowledge and understanding for different groups of stakeholders.

Date	Activity	Resource / reference
Strand 5 – pathfinder projects		
Sep – Oct 2012	Scoping the work: the original intention here had been to fund a couple of pathfinder projects aimed at advancing the evidence based and supporting the development of policy relating to IL skills in HE. In the event, the RIDLs steering group decided that better value would be derived by focusing resources on a single project; it was agreed that this should relate to skills and training in the highly topical area of open data.	Final report and explanatory notes at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/strand5/
Nov – Dec 2012	Recruitment and appointment of project contractor, under the supervision of a sub-group of the RIDLs steering group.	
Jan – Jun 2013	Research project undertaken, with a focus on the place of open data skills and training in the broader context of research data management and the research data cycle. An initial draft of the project report, including recommendations, was presented to the sub-group in April 2013; this required significant modification, and the final report was delivered, several weeks late, in June 2013.	
Jun-Jul 2013	Dissemination using RIDLs networks, and also targeting specific bodies such as DCC, Royal Society and Open Knowledge Foundation.	

Strand 5 outputs and outcomes as defined in the proposal	Summary of progress achieved
Outputs: two small pathfinder projects addressing the objectives set out in the RIDLs programme.	The project was delivered just beyond the end of RIDLs' term. Its coverage relates to an area which has not been well investigated to date, and it is hoped that the report will lay some useful grounds for reflection on the part of stakeholders with an interest in research data management. The project chimes with renewed interest in this area, notably as a result of the Government's transparency agenda and of the Royal Society report (June 2012) on Data as an Open Enterprise.
Outcomes: the capacity to scope and design joint projects of varying scale, and undertake and/or manage them as appropriate.	The scope and objectives of the project were a collective RIDLs endeavour, for which an activity was devised from scratch, as there had been no prior assumption about what would be covered. The management and oversight arrangements worked well; the expert sub-group was actively committed, and had a strong influence in the final shape of the report. There was therefore strong engagement from RIDLs at all stages, from inception to completion.

Date	Activity	Resource / reference
Strand 6 – international engagement		
Sep – Oct 2012	RIDLs members have provided names of known contacts in Europe and beyond, and a list has been drawn up for reference.	List of contacts at http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/strand6/
Sep 2012 – Jan 2013	The focus of the international activity has been the effort that several RIDLs members have put into their participation in a joint bid for European Commission FP7 funding, for a €1.5m project aimed at developing training resources in open access at a European level. This involved significant effort, but unfortunately, we learnt in April 2013 that the proposal had not been successful. The process was nevertheless an opportunity to make potentially useful international contacts.	FP7 call for proposals and associated documentation at http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/capacities;efp7_SESSION_ID=hCCKP8hQ0njQvWZTT82nZJCvTjz4Dr7WJQxhz0WMZnHltSg4Hh!-595117945?callIdentifier=FP7-SCIENCE-IN-SOCIETY-2013-1 Final bidding document available on request.
Mar – Apr 2013	There has been engagement with UNESCO’s media and information literacy programme, whose officers have shown an interest with RIDLs’ multi-agency approach to promoting IL; this chimes with UNESCO’s own perception of IL as a holistic phenomenon, part of a global effort to ensure that citizens possess a sufficient degree of information know-how. There are prospects for future joint activities, and UNESCO will be contributing to the RIDLs workshop at ECIL in October 2013.	Information on UNESCO’s media and IL programme: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15886&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Strand 5 outputs and outcomes as defined in the proposal	Summary of progress achieved
Outputs: an informal network of players in a range of countries outside the UK, with a capacity for exploiting international funding opportunities.	Potentially useful European contacts were made during the course of the preparation for the FP7 bid. In addition, the list of international individuals and organisations constitutes a resource that could be used for the development of interactions and possibly joint activities at a future date.
Outcomes: a capacity to make use of a network of international contacts to react in a timely and coordinated fashion, or to initiate ideas, beyond the UK; and to work together on international projects.	The FP7 bid has demonstrated that RIDLs members have a capacity for collaborating on the preparation of major projects. Although no other international collaborative effort materialised during 2012-13, there is scope for making use of contacts in future. The relationship with UNESCO should be maintained, as this could offer prospects for international engagement in the context of an established and recognised worldwide programme.