

UKeiG MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

January 2008 – December 2008

With all the gloomy news about the economy and business that we have now become somewhat immured to over the last year I am delighted to report that UKeiG has had a very successful year, again! Our training courses have continued to sell-out, and the evaluation forms show a consistently high quality of user satisfaction. Although many of the courses take place in London we do try to hold courses throughout the major UK centres, though I am conscious that we need to move outside of England if we want to claim to be a UK organisation. Tracy Kent has put an enormous amount of effort into devising a programme of courses that reflects current professional interests.

On top of all the work on the one-day courses Tracy has also been chairing the UKeiG Conference Committee, and the result has been that we have managed to achieve our delegate numbers with a new conference in the time of an industrial recession. This has required a huge amount of work from the Committee for over a year, especially from Megan Roberts in her role of managing publicity and Shaida Dorabjee in working on the logistics of the event.

Over the last couple of years the Intranet Forum has developed well under the direction of Janet Corcoran, and again we get more requests for places than we have spaces. This is a difficult problem to resolve as the meetings are held on-site and that often means that space is limited. The Forum does illustrate that it is possible to share good practice about intranets without compromising the business interests of the organisations willing to be hosts.

Even with the delegate numbers we get at these events they only represent a small proportion of our total membership. Member communications are therefore of great importance. Michael Upshall produces eLucidate with professional flair and insight on what makes for a balanced newsletter. The web site is also a key communications channel. We are upgrading the web content management system used for the web site, and Anne Welsh has taken over management of the web site from Karen Blakeman. UKeiG has developed a substantial number of Factsheets over the last few years, and Gina Nason is in the process of restyling these and also other corporate materials.

Behind the scenes the administration of the Group takes a lot of effort. In membership terms UKeiG has about the same numbers as the former Institute of Information Scientists back at merger time in 2001. Christine Baker is a very pro-active Administration Manager, with an invaluable attention to detail to support the other members of the Committee who are trying to find time in a very busy working day for UKeiG commitments. Jane Grogan has had to step down from her position as Honorary Treasurer because of pressure of work, and I am pleased to report that Charles Oppenheim has now taken over the role. Other new members of the Committee are Anne Welsh, Liane Bradbrook, Karen Gravett, Clare Sinclair and Nick Woolley. All of them bring significant expertise to the service of UKeiG members.

Honorary Secretary Karen Blakeman spends much of her time on managing our relationship with CILIP, a relationship which is not as integrated as we would like it to be.

We recognise that CILIP is going through a difficult time at present, and we are committed to do whatever we can to support CILIP but sometimes communications between CILIP and the Branches and Groups is not as well managed as it should be in a professional association devoted to effective management of information. We are fortunate in having Sheila Walker as Minutes Secretary to take some of the load off of Karen.

UKeiG makes a number of awards each year. We once again awarded two student bursaries to enable the recipients to continue their studies. In 2008 there was no Farradane Award but the Strix Award for innovation in information retrieval was made to Professor Kalervo Jarvelin, Tampere University, Finland. I had the pleasure of making the presentation personally to Professor Jarvelin in April at a reception in his department.

As Chairman I, and all UKeiG members, are very fortunate in the commitment and enthusiasm shown by all the members of the Committee. All of them have to squeeze time out of long working days to support UKeiG but attendance at Committee Meetings is very high and between meetings every one gets on with their allotted tasks. This is especially noticeable when we staff stands at the Internet Librarian International and Online Information exhibitions, where not only do current Committee members take on a share of the work but past members also do a tour of duty. These stands are very important ways of both publicizing the work of the Group and also giving us a way of gaining feedback on the services that our members need.

As a Committee we have to tread a sometimes difficult line between the services we provide to members (not all of whom are members of CILIP) and our position as a CILIP Group. As many of you know there has been a major change in the governance of CILIP and the impact of this on UKeiG is still not clear. Not only do we wish to represent the best of CILIP but we also wish to be able to have an input into the direction that CILIP takes in meeting the needs of the profession.

In conclusion I would like to thank Gary Horrocks, my predecessor as Chairman, and Jane Grogan for their work whilst members of the Committee in the past year. What has marked out members of the Committee over many years is the way that they continue to make their experience, expertise and networks available to UKeiG, and Garry and Jane are excellent examples of this.

Martin White, Chair