

Editorial

This is the first issue of *Legal Information Management* and I am conscious that it marks both the beginning and the end of an era. For over 30 years, BIALL has produced its journal under the title of *The Law Librarian*. But as the traditional role of *The Law Librarian* changed to take account of the diversity of sources available and increasing responsibilities for information provision and management, many law librarians became disenchanted with that as a job title and changed their titles to become legal information managers or similar. Many, particularly those operating in major firms of solicitors, found that there was a failure on the part of those within the legal profession to give their skills and expertise proper recognition. They found that a change in title gave them recognition on a par with IT managers and finance managers.

The Editorial Board of *The Law Librarian* has always been very conscious of its role in protecting a valuable heritage. There was no swift and ready move to a change of title. There was an awareness that any change had to be a proper reflection of something more than the latest fashionable trend. Because of that, we conducted a detailed survey of views on the appropriateness of a change of name for the journal. I was personally astonished to discover that the title *The Law Librarian* was the least popular of all the options put forward for the future. There was a very large majority in favour of a change similar to that upon which we have decided (the issue was clouded by questions surrounding possible clashes with existing titles).

Since we announced our intention to change the name of the journal there has been a mixed response. Many have welcomed that move but many, sadly including persons who did not respond to the attempted survey, have indicated that they thought that such a change was something of an admission of defeat. They properly emphasised that they are proud of their role and understandably, particularly in the case of many of the individuals who have contacted me who are prominent in their field, state that they encounter no prejudice as a result of their title. I think some of this debate over the wisdom of a change in title is based on a false premise. It is true that the springboard for a change of name was dissatisfaction with some of the librarian stereotype and the recognition that lawyers in particular (who can be a rather laddish lot) revelled in the negative side of that stereotype. However it was not those negative factors which justified the final decision to move to a change of name. The Editorial Board was conscious that there were many people operating in the field of legal information provision, such as knowledge management workers and professional support lawyers, who are unlikely to consider a journal with the name *The Law Librarian*. We do however believe that these are people who have a valid

interest in legal information management and are potential future members of BIALL and potential future subscribers to the journal. We want to see these sorts of people included within our readership and we see them as potential contributors to the learning experience of our current readership as well as learners from the experience of law librarians.

Of course a change of name is not the only change. We have taken the opportunity to redesign both the cover and the internal contents and have aimed to make both more appealing to a wider audience. It weighs heavily with the writer to accept that the quality of content is not the sole test of quality but the reality is that many of our BIALL members are put off reading the journal by its appearance. This fact was brought home to the writer most firmly by the number who suggested we might consider using photographs when in fact we have been using photographs for the best part of three years. To complete any redesign exercise of this nature must necessarily involve elements of the amusing (even the downright ludicrous) but the professionalism which has been displayed by the Editorial Board as a whole and by the sub-committee charged with the final stages of the redesign process has been enormously impressive. It has also been extremely rewarding to discover how many people, both inside and outside the Editorial Board, care really deeply about the journal, its content and its appearance.

What has eventually emerged is to some extent a work in progress. I mentioned in the final issue of *The Law Librarian* that the new title would have one thing at least in common with the old. It is a service to readers not merely a product and that means that we resolve to listen carefully to the views of all concerned and adopt suggestions and continue to review, particularly over the next year.

Human Rights and Devolution

This issue is principally concerned with legal information management issues surrounding increasing importance of human rights and the increased complexity which has been given to the pursuit of information by the moves towards devolution. Kate Hodgson is principally responsible for the contacting of authors and the commissioning of the articles which fill the journal. I am very grateful to her, particularly in the light of the very substantial burden she was carrying in relation to her own workload and in relation to the redesign project.

I think you will find that there are some excellent articles within these pages. The one aspect of the old journal which is of course most jealously guarded relates to the quality of content. Those who were concerned will I am sure be reassured by the quality of the articles herein.