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Program: a record of the first 40 years of electronic library and information systems

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Purpose: To provide a broad overview of the history of the journal

Program: electronic library and information systems and its contents over its first 40 years.

Methodology: Analysis of content from the original published material as well as from abstracting and indexing publications and from minutes of Editorial Board meetings.

Findings: The publication has grown from modest beginnings as a newsletter for British university librarians to a respected refereed journal with a wide international readership.

Originality/value: An analysis of the content of articles published on computer systems in libraries and information units over the last 40 years.

Category of paper: Historical overview

Keywords: Library automation; History; Computer systems; Refereed journal.

Word length: 6508

1. Introduction to the early days and general overview

The journal, known today as *Program: electronic library and information systems*, was founded in 1966 at the then School of Library Studies at Queen's University Belfast (QUB). The mid-1960s was a time of expansion in higher education generally and in library education in particular, including, for instance, the founding of the College of Librarianship Wales in Aberystwyth in 1964. In 1961 Peter Harvard-Williams had become the University Librarian at QUB and had been involved in the setting up of the QUB School of Library Studies which appointed three lecturers (Richard Kimber, Peter Lewis and Philip Whiteman) in 1965 and admitted its first students later that year. One morning, Peter Harvard-Williams came into Richard Kimber's office and said "What would you think about editing a newsletter to deal with library automation?" As Kimber (1987) recounted at a celebration to mark 21 years of *Program*, "I thought it was a good idea. The timing was just right: too soon, and it would have not survived; too late and somebody else would have done it." The first issue (reprinted in this issue), had the title *Program: news of computers in British university libraries* and comprised four pages, with a red masthead. It was typed on the School secretary's Imperial 66 manual typewriter and printed by the QUB Reprographic Unit and was available for free. Another journal, *Catalogue and Index*, was founded at QUB at the same time with Peter Lewis (who later became

Director General of the British Library's Bibliographic Services Division) as its Editor; that journal is now the periodical of the Cataloguing and Indexing Group of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). In the early 1960s, staff in several university libraries in the UK, especially those at Southampton and Newcastle, had started to experiment with using computers to assist in the processing of information. As stated in the first issue "the purpose of *Program* is to assist librarians in learning about what is beginning to be done in this field, to provide a medium for discussion of the problems involved, and to help establish direct personal contact between those working in similar directions".

Program continued as a newsletter, being published every three months at QUB, with one issue, No. 6, July 1967, reaching 40 pages in length, until the eighth issue in January 1968. By then it was obvious that the newsletter should become a journal 'proper' and so all the first eight newsletters became known as Volume 1 and Volume 2, April 1968, saw the start of Volume 2. There were some important changes:

- an annual subscription charge of 25 shillings (£1.25 in decimal coinage);
- the typing was now done by the QUB Typing Centre using an IBM Executive proportional spacing typewriter;
- a change of format to allow for easier binding;
- a change of title to *Program: news of computers in British libraries* to reflect the fact that several public libraries (such as those at the London Borough of Camden and West Sussex County) as well as special libraries, were also involved in experiments related to computers in libraries.

Kimber continued as Editor and was pleased to find that 423 organisations were willing to pay the annual subscription for the journal.

The companies and the computers used by the various libraries at this time included:

- Elliott Automation and the 803 and the 903 and 905
- English Electric and the KDF9
- IBM and the 360 series
- ICT (International Computers and Tabulators and later ICL

International Computers Limited) and the 1900 series.

Each of these had specific working parties addressing the challenges of using computers in libraries and reports of these meetings regularly appeared in the early issues of *Program*. In 1968 a decision was made to merge these individual working parties and to form the Computer Applications Group (CAG) of Aslib (originally standing for the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux and now known as the Association for Information Management (<http://www.aslib.co.uk>)). The general objectives of the CAG were to:

- promote the development of computer-based library and information techniques by establishing criteria for systems and determining areas of common ground;
- assess existing or evolving systems and investigate the reasons for differences where these exist with a view to the development of common systems where this is practicable;
- communicate findings, by publication, meetings courses and conferences.

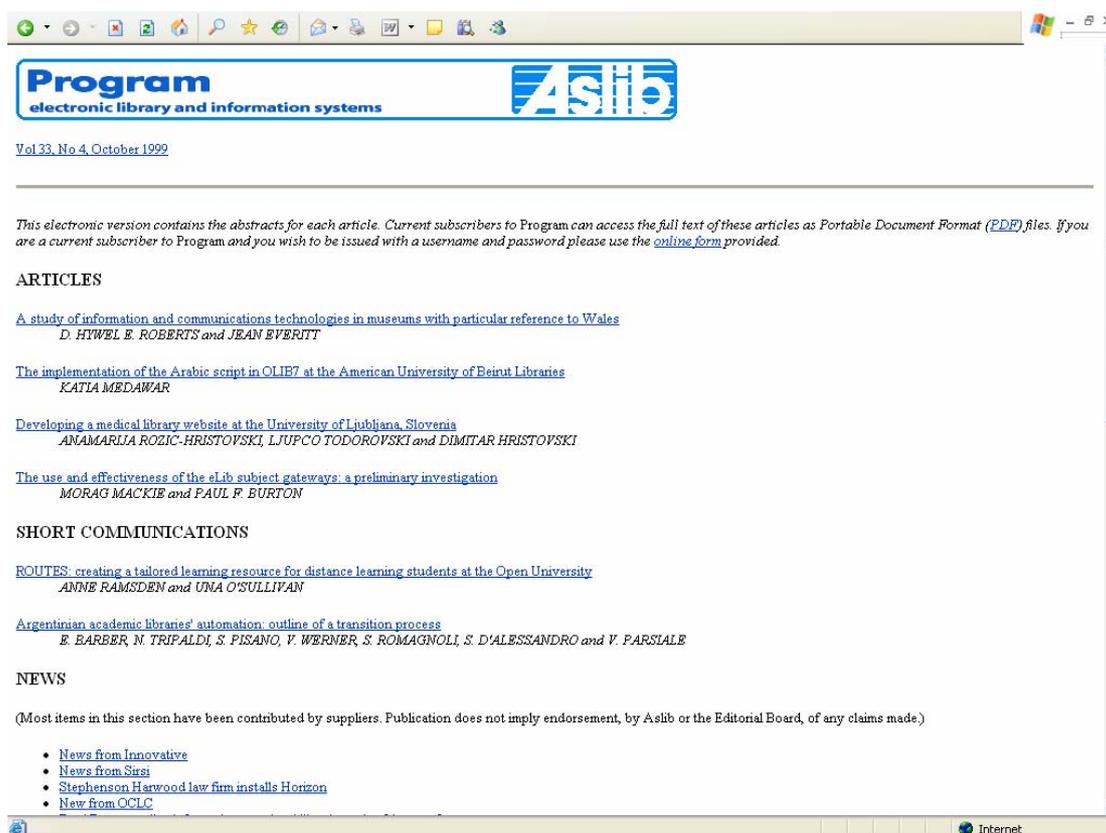
Program was seen as the natural place to record findings from the CAG's work and to contribute to its objectives. Also in 1968 Kimber was invited to become a member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Documentation* which was published by

Aslib with Herbert Coblans as Editor. It was decided that Aslib should also publish *Program* and so Coblans supervised its transfer from QUB to Aslib, the continuation of Kimber as Editor and the setting up of an Editorial Board. Coblans also suggested a revised title: *Program: news of computers in libraries* and that it should be published as a quarterly journal. The form of content of the journal was set in 1972 to comprise a number (usually between four and six) of papers, some news and short communications and book reviews. In essence the format has continued, although the news items were dropped in Vol. 39. In 1987 a celebration of 21 published volumes of *Program* was held with former authors and Editorial Board members being invited to Aslib and a review of computer-based library systems was prepared (Tedd, 1987).

During the mid-1990s there was much discussion during Editorial Board meetings about an electronic version of *Program*. Many of the then Board members were also involved in, or aware of, the work of FIGIT (Follett Implementation Group on Information Technology) which resulted in a number of funded projects in UK higher education as part of the Electronic Libraries (eLib) programme (Whitelaw and Joy, 2000); so in 1997 Aslib launched an electronic version of *Program* which was made freely available to those subscribing to the printed version. A decision was also made to change the title to *Program: electronic library and information systems* for Volume 31 in January 1997. Figure 1 shows a screenshot of the online Table of Contents for an issue of *Program* in 1999, accessed via the Internet Archive (<http://web.archive.org/web/19991129022720/www.aslib.co.uk/program/volume/number/index.html>).

Take in Figure 1

Figure 1. Online Table of Contents from 1999



In December 2001 Emerald acquired *Program* along with seven other journal titles from Aslib. Emerald currently publishes more than 150 journal titles of which some 24 cover library and information science and has developed its Electronic Management Research Library Database (or Emerald) FullText service (<http://www.emeraldinsight.com>) for providing online access. Emerald continues to work in partnership with Aslib so that members of Aslib have access to two selected journals. As described in “Notes from the publisher” in the first (36(1) 2002) issue of the Emerald-published *Program* the new ownership was seen as bringing the following benefits to subscribers:

- Web-based publishing and archiving;
- institution wide-licence (and accessible from a distance);

- personal e-mail alerts of newly published articles;
- reference linking;
- automatic permission to make up to 25 copies of individual articles for which Emerald holds the copyright.

The first three volumes of *Program* published by Emerald (Volumes 36, 37 and 38) were A4 size with a striking blue cover which complemented some of Emerald's other journals, *Library Review* (yellow), *Library Management* (red) and so on. However the format changed for Volume 39 to a smaller page size to fit in with Emerald's other journals. The key dates in *Program*'s history are detailed in Table I.

Take in Table I

Table I Key dates in the history of *Program*

1965	First issue published at Queen's University, Belfast – a 4-page newsletter entitled <i>Program: news of computers in British university libraries</i>
1968	Second volume of four issues appears and a change of title: <i>Program: news of computers in British libraries</i>
1969	Aslib becomes the publisher of <i>Program</i> and another change of title: <i>Program: news of computers in libraries</i>
1972	Editorial Board is established
1980	Change of title to <i>Program: automated library and information systems</i>

- 1993 Scope note amended to include “material on all aspects of the use of information technology in libraries, museums, art galleries, archives and information services generally”.
- 1997 An electronic version becomes available to subscribers – and the title changes to *Program: electronic library and information systems*
- 2001 Emerald acquires *Program* from Aslib, along with several other journals.

Since Volume 4 in 1970, *Program*'s four issues per year have all been published regularly, and on time – no mean achievement!

2. Analysis of papers by institution of author(s)

By its 40th volume in 2006 the total number of papers published in *Program* was 884.

For this paper I have analysed these papers and categorised each according to the institution of the author(s):

- A - from an academic (mainly university) library and describing practical aspects of the use of computer systems in that library or in a group of similar libraries.
- B - from a department (including library and information science or computer science) within an academic institution and mainly describing some ‘research’ aspect of using computers in libraries.
- C - from a public library.
- D - from a special library (including medical libraries, those of companies etc.).

- E- from a government or a national library.
- F- from a supplier of computer systems or services for libraries.
- G - Other - including contributions from consultants

Table II shows the breakdown of papers over the years according to the given categories.

Take in Table II

Table II. Breakdown of papers published in *Program* by category of author(s).

	1966- 1975	1976- 1985	1986- 1995	1996- 2005	Total
A	73	85	109	77	344
B	19	27	47	67	160
C	12	10	16	13	51
D	34	42	55	20	151
E	10	21	34	27	92
F	13	14	14	6	47
G	1	12	17	9	39
Total	162	211	292	219	884

So, over the years the majority of papers published in *Program* have been related to developments within academic libraries (A). There has been an increase in the number, and proportion, of papers from academic departments (B) over the years. One reason for this could be the requirement for many academic research staff to ‘publish or perish’. Papers emanating from public libraries (C) have never been great in number – despite much relevant work being carried out in this area. One reason for this lack of papers may be that, despite the best intentions of editors over the years, it is not always easy to encourage relevant staff in public libraries to write for general publication and there is usually no incentive for staff to do this. In earlier years there was a good proportion of papers published by staff from special libraries, although this has dropped in more recent times. An analysis of the international coverage of the articles is given in a subsequent section.

3.An overview of content decade by decade

3.1 1966-1975 or Volumes 1-9

The articles published in the first volumes of *Program* concentrated on describing the various experimental systems being developed during that period. For instance, early work at Southampton and Newcastle universities was documented by various staff in 20 or so papers during this period. Staff at Newcastle ran a series of lectures entitled “The computer and the library” in 1966 and this resulted in an early book on the subject (Cox, Dews and Dolby, 1966). Other universities which featured often in articles during this period included Bradford University, City University (in London), Loughborough University (known initially as Loughborough University of

Technology) and Sussex University. Often papers would be written by a librarian (and frequently a fairly senior person) and a computer programmer or systems analyst.

These papers would, typically, describe one particular application such as a circulation system, an acquisitions system or a catalogue system. At this time libraries were dependent on using the computer of the parent authority (be it university, public authority or company etc.) and all development was carried out at a local level with staff from the computer centres undertaking the necessary programming.

It was during this period that work began on co-operative systems and this was documented in various contributions to *Program*. Fred Kilgour, the 'father' of OCLC (<http://www.oclc.org>) which was originally a co-operative cataloguing project for colleges in the US state of Ohio, contributed a paper to *Program* in 1969. This paper was based on a lecture given at a conference and set a precedent for several other papers published in *Program* which originate from a spoken presentation. In 1969 the Office for Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI) of the UK government funded two major projects in co-operative systems in the UK:

- BLCMP – the Birmingham Libraries Co-operative Mechanisation Project which involved Birmingham Public Library and the university libraries of Aston and Birmingham.
- SWULCSP (South West University Libraries Systems Co-operation Project) - later renamed to SWALCAP (South West Academic Libraries Co-operative Automation Project) involving the university libraries of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter.

There were several papers outlining developments in these projects and the resulting services during this period. OSTI had also funded an officer on library automation who was based at Southampton University and the first holder of this post, Mary

Overton, wrote a paper for *Program* in 1973 outlining the OSTI-funded projects at the time.

A major international development which had a big effect on the development of library housekeeping procedures during the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially acquisitions and cataloguing systems, was the MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloguing) format. MARC originated in the US in the mid-1960s as a format for records for the catalogue of the Library of Congress. However, OSTI was also interested in funding a feasibility study for the development of a machine-readable bibliographic record for the British National Bibliography in the UK, and this resulted in an international collaborative project to develop the format. There were at least 10 papers published in *Program* during this period detailing developments with MARC, including Kimber's introductory paper on the format in 1968. Again, this was the precedent for other papers which provided introductory information on some new topic of the time.

As indicated earlier, the original emphasis of *Program* on university libraries in the UK broadened and public libraries and special libraries were included. Bearman, County Librarian of West Sussex, described in a paper published in *Program* in 1968 the use of the very new Automated Library Systems Ltd (ALS) label developed by Frank Gurney of Elliott Automation to record details automatically of books and borrowers at the library issue desk. This system was one of the four computer-based loans systems compared by Chris Wilson, then Librarian at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment (AERE) at Harwell, in a paper published in *Program* in 1969 - the others were at Southampton University, the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE) and the AERE system.

Until 1969 *Program* had been a rather male-dominated journal with all its papers written by men. I am sure that this is no reflection on the views of the Editor at that time – merely that there were few women involved in computer systems in libraries. This changed with Helen Townley's paper, published in 1969, on a current awareness service for International Data Highways Ltd.

3.2 1976-1985 or Volumes 10-19

By the late 1970s several libraries started to supplement the computing facilities available from their parent authority by having a minicomputer installed in the library and this was reflected in *Program*'s papers. Papers from Aslib CAG's conference on minicomputers in libraries were included in two issues of *Program* in 1976 covering:

- What is a mini? (Mike Hyman, Logica)
- Factors affecting their selection (Jane Wainwright, Aslib)
- Costs of making or buying software (John Ashford, consultant)
- Minicomputers in cataloguing (Bruce Royan, British Library)
- Minicomputers in circulation control (Chris Aslin, University of East Anglia)
- An information retrieval system for minicomputers (Kevin Jones, Malaysian Rubber Producers Research Association).

As in the previous decade there were many papers outlining practical experiences of using computers for various applications in specific libraries. The authors of the 'original' papers were now joined by authors from other organisations including, from academic libraries, the University of Kent, City of London Polytechnic, Leeds University, University of London, Sheffield City Polytechnic, Strathclyde University and York University.

Another development of the late 1970s was the ability to use the telecommunications networks of the time (the early Internet) to search online bibliographic records. There were several papers published in *Program* on networking including three (in 1977, 1980 and 1982) on the European network – EURONET. Network technology could also be used to link geographically remote sites of one library system, for instance as described at the Polytechnic of Central London in 1984.

Using computers to process text as opposed to numbers was still a fairly new phenomenon at this time and there was a special issue of *Program* in 1982 covering various text-based information retrieval systems of the day (including ASSASSIN, CAIRS, DECO, MINISIS and STATUS), as well as many papers describing their use, mainly in special libraries. Developing algorithms for searching text was an information retrieval research topic of the time and the paper by Martin Porter (of the Cambridge Computer Laboratory) in 1980 on developing an algorithm for suffix stripping has been, by far, the most highly cited *Program* paper covered by the Social Sciences Citation Index of the Web of Knowledge (409 citations recorded in late 2005).

By the end of this period there was a number of papers being published relating to the use of microcomputers in libraries. One of the earliest mentions of microcomputers in *Program* was by Paul Burton, then Librarian at Leith Nautical College in Scotland, in 1982 describing the use of a database management system, known as PetAid and running on a Commodore Pet microcomputer. A special issue of *Program* on microcomputers was published in 1985 with papers covering:

- Library software (Paul Burton and Hilary Gates)
- Use in Australia (Howard Petrie, Wollongong University)

- Use in the US (Ching-chih Chen, Simmons College, Boston)
- Use in UK public libraries (Chris Batt, Croydon)
- A software package for interlibrary loans (Roy Adams, Leicester Polytechnic)
- The PERLINE serials control system (Phil Holmes, Blackwell's)
- Retrieval with dBase II (Sean O'Brien, Northern Ireland Health and Social Services Librarian)
- Book circulation in Nigerian university libraries (G. A. Alabi, University of Ibadan).

3.3 1986-1995 or Volumes 20-29

Rollo Woods, Deputy Librarian at Southampton University and an early pioneer in using computers in libraries, in a paper (Woods, 1987) published as part of the 21 year celebrations of *Program*, stated that “the majority of British libraries have some form of automation. Only two university libraries are totally unautomated, all the polytechnic libraries and many other college libraries are fully automated and many more than half our public libraries - you can compare this with the USA where a bare 10 per cent of public libraries have any automation at all.”

Sussex University Library was one of the first in the UK to instal the Geac software from Canada for its library management system and two papers were published in 1986 describing these experiences. There followed a number of papers describing individual libraries' experiences with different systems – a brief list is given to show the systems being used at this time and the range of types of library:

- ALS at Bromley Public Library (1986)

- LIBS 100 (from CLSI) at Warwickshire County Library (1987)
- URICA (from McDonnell Douglas) at the National Library of Wales (1987)
- Dynix at Kensington and Chelsea Libraries (1989)
- LIBERTAS (from SWALCAP) at Cranfield University (1990)
- UNICORN (from Sirsi) at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew (1993).

Five papers were published during this decade by John Blunden-Ellis who provided a regular series of studies of the UK market for library management systems.

Some of the special issues of *Program* in this period covered:

Online Public Access Catalogues OPACs (1986)

Retrieval techniques (1988)

CD-ROMs (1989)

Libraries, museums and art galleries: the shared picture (1993)

European Libraries Programme (1995).

The first paper on CD-ROMs - the new optical storage medium of the 1980s - appeared in *Program* in 1987 and described the use, at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire in the US, of the Datext CD-ROM database which provided bibliographic, textual and numeric information on over 10,000 companies. By the end of this period some 40 papers had been published in *Program* covering some aspect of CD-ROMs; either from a developer's viewpoint, quality issues of the data contained, use made in various types of libraries (including school libraries) and so on. CD-ROMs also featured in a number of the papers in the 1993 special issue. In the editorial to that issue it was reported that the 'scope' note describing *Program's* range of interests had been amended to include "material on all aspects of the use of information technology in libraries, museums, art galleries, archives and information services generally". The change of coverage resulted from much discussion within

our quarterly Editorial Board meetings which, at that time, included Chris Batt (now Chief Executive of the UK's Museums, Libraries and Archives Council).

3.4 1996-2005 or Volumes 30-39

The incredible development of the World Wide Web and the Internet resulted in major changes in services and systems provided by libraries, museums, archives and galleries in the final decade of this review and, as might be expected, resulted in many papers.

For instance, papers resulting from projects funded in UK higher education institutions as part of the eLib Programme included:

- London and Manchester Document Access Service – LAMDA (1996)
- Skills for new information professionals - SKIP (1998)
- Managing access to distributed library resources – MODELS (1998)
- Edinburgh Engineering Virtual Library – EEVL (1998).

There were also examples of similar funded projects in other countries; for instance an overview of projects funded as part of the US Digital Library Initiative was provided by Chen in 2005. The concept and implementation of the digital/electronic/virtual library was covered by many papers in this period; examples include:

- Indian Institute of Technology at Kharagpur (2000)
- Glasgow Digital Library (2001)
- Toronto Public Library (2001)
- University of Derby (2002)
- Monash University (2004)
- The European Library (2004).

Papers describing applications in archives, museums and galleries continued to be published – examples included:

- Public Record Office (1999)
- National Register of Archives (1999)
- Multimedia in museums – My Brighton (1999)
- Archive catalogue at the University of Birmingham (2002)
- An XML infrastructure for archives, libraries and museums (2002)
- The Virtual Library Museums pages (2002)
- Information retrieval features of online cultural heritage collections (2005).

Digitisation of content emerged as a theme in many papers in this period. The actual material being digitised ranged from:

- Examination papers in the University of Botswana (1999)
- Heritage material - Powys Digital History project (2000)
- Back runs of a scholarly journal *Midland History* (2000)
- Books from the past in Culturenet Cymru (2005).

Electronic books (e-books) and electronic theses (e-theses) were also covered in several papers. The final issue of 2005 was a special one containing a selection of papers from a conference on “Recasting the past - digital histories” organised by the Association for History and Computing in the UK.

4. International contributions

Although *Program* began as being a newsletter for British libraries it soon became an important journal for international librarians and a place of publication for international authors. Even at the first Editorial Board meeting in 1972 Aslib staff reported that 50% of the 945 subscriptions were from overseas.

Table III shows a breakdown by country of papers published during the last four decades.

Take in Table III

Table III Papers published in *Program* from overseas

Country	1966-	1976-	1986-	1996-	
	1975	1985	1995	2005	
Argentina				1	1
Australia		5	3	4	12
Austria				1	1
Belgium	1		7	6	14
Botswana				5	5
Brazil		1			1
Brunei				1	1
Canada		1	3	2	6
China				1	1
Croatia			2	1	3
Denmark		4	2	1	7
Egypt	1		1		2
Ethiopia			1		1
Finland			1	2	3
France	2	2	4		8

Germany	2	3	1	3	9
Greece		1	4	1	6
Holland		3	3	3	9
Hungary			1		1
India			10	9	19
Indonesia			1	1	2
Iraq			1		1
Ireland	1		4		5
Israel		1			1
Italy		2	2	2	6
Japan		1			1
Jordan			1		1
Kenya				1	1
Korea			1		1
Kuwait				2	2
Lebanon				1	1
Luxembourg		2	1		3
Malaysia		1		1	2
New Zealand		1		1	2
Nepal			3		3
Nigeria		3	4	4	11
Norway		1			1
Oman			2		2
Pakistan				1	1

Papua New Guinea			1		1
Portugal			2		2
Russia				1	1
Saudi Arabia	1		4	2	7
Singapore			1	5	6
Slovenia			1	5	6
South Africa	1		3	1	5
Spain		1	2		3
Sri Lanka			1	1	2
Sweden	1			2	3
Switzerland			3		3
Thailand			1	3	4
Tunisia			1		1
Turkey			1		1
US	2	5	6	3	16
Totals	11	39	90	78	

In total, 218 papers (24.6% of all papers published) over the last 40 years in *Program* have been from 54 countries other than Britain. The most have come from India (19), then the US (16), Belgium (14), Australia (12) and Nigeria (11). The figure for Belgium is high as there have been many contributions from Paula Goossens (Head of Automation at the Royal Library of Belgium and President of the European Library Automation Group (ELAG)) reporting on annual meetings of ELAG which are held in various European countries. Ninety four (or 43%) of the non-British papers are from

Europe. Papers from developing countries have been encouraged, with editors sometimes having assisted authors in their writing, and this is reflected in Table III.

The first non-British paper was published in 1969 and described the production of catalogues by an IBM 360 series computer at Rand Afrikaans University in South Africa. Many of the papers in the 1980s and 1990s from non-European countries described applications using microcomputer software such as Dbase II (e.g. its use for a book acquisitions system in India in 1987) and Unesco's freely available software CDS/ISIS (e.g. at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development in Nepal in 1989).

The topics covered in recent years by overseas authors cover similar themes to papers emanating from the UK; for instance:

- Implementing a library management system at the University of Tomsk (2002)
- Library co-operation in Italy (2002)
- Market place for library management systems in Arabian Gulf states (2003)
- digitisation of collections in Indonesia (2004)
- e-books in India (2004).

Access to the Internet is not easily possible from all over the world and some papers have addressed issues of the digital divide. Initiatives being undertaken by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) were described in 2002 and the situation in sub-Saharan Africa is outlined in 2005.

Emerald operates an annual Outstanding Paper Award for each of its journals and the most recent recipients for *Program* were both from overseas:

- Otto Oberhauser from the Austrian Library Network in Vienna on Card-Image Public Access Catalogues in 11 countries in 2003

- Juha Hakala, Director of Information Technology at Helsinki University Library/National Library of Finland on archiving the Web in 2004.

Hakala's paper was presented at the XIIth conference of the Conference of South-East Asian Librarians (CONSAL) held in Brunei Darussalam and was included in a special issue in 2004 covering selected papers from that conference.

5. Book reviews

Over the years some 773 reviews of books deemed to be relevant to *Program's* readership have appeared and the breakdown by decade has been:

1966-1975	99
1976-1985	165
1986-1995	252
1996-2005	257

A book review first appeared in *Program* in the third issue in 1966. It was short (a mere eight lines in length), anonymously written and described a book on introducing computers which cost 7/6 (or 37.5p). The second review, for Cox, Dews and Dolby (1966), appeared in No. 5 and was written by Mike Lynch of the then Postgraduate School of Librarianship at Sheffield University. This set the pattern for the remaining reviews, i.e. known experts in the field providing their opinions on the given work.

Over the years the roll call of those who have written reviews includes many of the leading figures in library and information work in the UK, along with some reviewers from overseas. Also, there have been some (but not very many) reviews of works not published in English. For instance, in 1970, Michael Gorman (then of the BNB and currently the President of the American Library Association) wrote a review of a

report, in French, of the MONOCLE project which was developing a MARC-type format for cataloguing French-language materials.

Managing the reviews, i.e. identifying suitable titles for review, acquiring these from the publishers, choosing appropriate reviewers, requesting reviews, chasing reviewers who may be a little slow in their writing, is very time consuming. In 1983 a decision was made by the Editorial Board that one of the board members should take on the role of Reviews Editor so that the Editor could concentrate more on the published papers. Bob Young, then of Sussex University Library, became the first Reviews Editor in 1983. He was succeeded by Paul Burton, then of Strathclyde University in 1987 who, in turn, was succeeded by the current holder, John Eyre, in 1998. During the quarterly Editorial Board meetings under Aslib's ownership of the journal, the books for potential review were placed on the table and board members suggested suitable experts to be approached. In some instances there were books that were deemed of 'some' interest – but not worthy of a full review and these were included as an 'Other item received' and the Reviews Editor wrote a brief note. Nowadays decisions about potential reviewers are made via e-mail. Typically there are six or seven book reviews in each issue of *Program*.

6. People involved in *Program* and some other final aspects

Program was edited for its first six volumes by its founder, Richard Kimber.

However, an Editorial Board for *Program* was established in 1972 with the aim of providing assistance to the Editor in the selection and refereeing of contributions. The 'workings' of *Program* were modelled on those for its big 'sister' the *Journal of Documentation* and so the Board met four times a year at Aslib's London offices to discuss possible content for the next issue in the cycle, as well as plans for future

contributions. Kimber announced the setting up of an Editorial Board in Volume 6, Number 3, stating that he would become the Chairman of the Editorial Board and Bob Young, then Assistant Librarian responsible for automation at the University of Sussex Library, would become the Editor. Other members of the initial Board were:

Richard Coward (British Library Planning Secretariat)

Chris Wilson (Librarian, AERE)

Peter Vickers (Aslib Research Department).

The system for referee-ing submitted papers was instituted at this time. Each paper submitted is refereed by at least two people – one an Editorial Board member and the other a known ‘expert’ in the field. A challenge then for any Editor is to be aware of a wide range of experts whose opinions can be requested. Each paper and the comments on it from the referees were discussed at the Editorial Board meetings. By 1979 the Board had increased to include John Eyre (School of Librarianship at the Polytechnic of North London), R.J. Wall (Birmingham Public Libraries) and Rollo Woods (Southampton University) and Eyre had taken over as Editor. Jane Wainwright (Head of Computer and Technical Services, House of Commons Library) became the first female member of the Board in 1982 and then I joined as Editor in 1984. Also in 1984 Richard Kimber became the Editor of the *Journal of Documentation* and Chris Wilson became the Chair of the Board – a post held until his retirement in 2001. In the mid-1980s there were many changes in membership as Coward and Wall departed and others joined including John Ashford (consultant), Mel Collier (then Chief Librarian, Leicester Polytechnic) and Pat Manson (then Editor of *Vine* at the Polytechnic of Central London). *Vine* was established in 1971 as a Very Informal Newsletter produced by the OSTI Library Automation Officer to provide an overview of the state of the currently-funded projects, as well as other related developments. By 1985 its

role had developed to provide up-to-date news of the automation of housekeeping procedures in libraries, principally in the UK. Manson later moved to work for the Commission of the European Communities in Luxembourg and continued as a board member until 2001. Her successors as Editors of *Vine* were also board members as it was felt to be mutually beneficial to be aware of each other's publishing plans. *Vine* is now also published by Emerald (<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/info/journals/vine/jourinfo.htm>). During the 1990s the number of board members was extended to include more overseas members and some younger people including:

- Chris Batt (then Deputy Chief Librarian, Croydon Public Library)
- Paul Burton (University of Strathclyde)
- Lorcan Dempsey (then at the UK Office of Library and Information Networking)
- Jonathan Eaton (London Business School Library)
- Paula Goossens (Royal Library, Brussels)
- Michael Malinconico (University of Alabama, US)
- Stephen Pinfield (then at the University of Birmingham Library)
- Robin Yeates (then at the Library and Information Technology Centre).

Four of the original board members (Kimber, Vickers, Wilson and Young) continued to offer sterling service to the journal until the early 2000s. By then more members had joined the board, again to reflect a younger group, international coverage (with members from Singapore and Zambia), and type of organisation (with members from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and the Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute), as well as continuing input from academic libraries (with members from Exeter University Library, the

Centre for Learning Technology at the London School of Economics and the London Business School). The current members, with Mel Collier as Chair, can be found on the Emerald Web site

(<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/info/journals/prog/eabinfo.htm>). In total some 32 people have served over the years as Editorial Board members.

A member of Aslib's staff was also present at each Editorial Board meeting under Aslib's ownership to report on various issues including the number of subscriptions and the annual subscription rate. The annual subscription rate increased steadily over the years under Aslib's ownership as can be seen in Table IV, with varying charges depending on whether the subscriber was a member of Aslib or not.

Take in Table IV

Table IV Subscriptions charges for *Program* 1970-2001

		Aslib member	Aslib non-member
Vol. 4	1970	£1.50	£2
Vol. 8	1974	£5	£8
Vol.12	1978	£12	£15
Vol.16	1982	£19	£23
Vol.20	1986	£35	£45
Vol.24	1990	£65	£75
Vol.28	1994	£79 (£89)	£98 (UK and Europe) £111 (rest)
Vol.32	1998	£104	£130

Vol. 35 2001 £130 £162

With the acquisition of *Program* by Emerald all editorial discussions are carried out electronically and there are no regular Editorial Board meetings. Although this inevitably saves time and money there nevertheless is a certain loss of ‘collegiality’ amongst board members. However, online access to the content of *Program* has been greatly improved under Emerald ownership and the Emerald Fulltext service. As a lecturer involved with distance learning students living all over the world I believe that the way in which they can access articles published in *Program* is greatly improved and appreciated. Details of the current costs of subscription are available from Emerald.

Program continues to have an international readership. Emerald’s statistics show that individuals from 87 countries accessed *Program* during 2005 and that the subscriptions to the print version by region were:

UK	33%
Rest of Europe	27%
North America	16%
Far East	7%
Other	17%

Program is covered by a number of abstracting and indexing publications including:

- *Library and Information Science Abstracts* - which included 996 entries back to 1968 and up to the first issue of Volume 39 in September 2005

- *Social Sciences Citation Index* and the *Science Citation Index* - which included 2,113 entries from 1975 to the third issue of Volume 39 in September 2005. News items are included which explains the larger numbers.
- ZETOC from the British Library – which included 774 entries from 1993 to the third issue of Volume 39 in September 2005 (although the publisher is still indicated as Aslib).

Hopefully this paper has outlined the development of a newsletter from modest beginnings in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s to a respected, international journal 40 years on in the mid-2000s. The success of such a venture is due to the energy, professionalism and enthusiasm of the people involved in the early days as board members and their successors, the dedication of the chairmen of the Editorial Board, the hard work of the editors, as well as to the large number of authors worldwide who submit their papers to us for possible publication and our professional colleagues who agree to referee papers as well as to review books. The papers covered within the 40 volumes reflect closely the history of computer systems in libraries and information services over the years. Happy 40th birthday to all!

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