



Editorial

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Is it really only eight years ago that the most widely held opinion in the cataloguing department where I worked was that only a national library could provide valid and unbiased bibliographical data good enough to serve users? And that these data had to be produced by experienced cataloguers? And that if users did not understand the workings of the library catalogue, they had to be educated?

I certainly do not mean any disrespect to cataloguers, but no manual workforce is big enough to deal with information flows in the digital age, and the ensuing shifts in librarians' thinking are reflected in at least two articles in this issue of *LIBER Quarterly*. Jens Hofman Hansen and Arene Sørensen of the Danish State and University Library at Århus take Google and its user friendliness as their starting point for the development of a new library system which, moreover, does not wait for users to come to the library but pushes information out to them. Hofman Hansen and Sørensen are convinced that *open* library systems are the only way to go in the twenty-first century. Raymond Bérard agrees with them, but concludes that in order for open (library) systems to work, bibliographic data must be made freely available. As we all know, there are still many restrictions on the free exchange of bibliographic records. Bérard concludes that the new rules OCLC adopted — after a first draft had been rejected by the library community — are a step in the right direction, but that more fundamental steps need to be taken.

LIBER itself is firmly committed to the cause of *open access* to research outputs, as is reflected in a contribution by LIBER's chair, Paul Ayris, which reviews the many ways in which LIBER itself is involved in the movement.

Open access is, as it turns out, not a one-way street, but it encourages active involvement by user communities. Martin Moyle, Justin Tonra and Valerie

Wallace of University College London report on a project to leverage *crowd sourcing* in order to increase awareness and knowledge of Jeremy Bentham's writings, but also to increase libraries' expertise on how to handle crowd sourcing as a tool.

Is this the end of libraries' neutrality as we know it? Hardly, asserts Quincy McCrary from California. Libraries and other cultural heritage institutions have never been value-free. Their work in collecting, interpreting and presenting cultural heritage has always tended to represent the dominant cultural value, but that digitisation and user participation may cause shifts in the power balance. A timely reminder for us all, especially at a time when commercial interests such as Google have their own impact on communications.