

A partnership approach to promoting information literacy for higher education researchers

Stéphane Goldstein

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What is the RIN?

- A small policy unit funded by the four HE Funding Councils, the seven Research Councils and the three National Libraries
- Aims to enhance and broaden the understanding of how researchers in the UK create and use information resources and services.
- Supports the development of effective policies and practices for researchers, institutions, funders, information professionals and all others involved in the research information landscape.

What does RIN do?

- RIN's remit covers information in all forms, and how this relates to libraries, data archives, research funders, HEIs, publishers as well as researchers and all involved in the research process
- This encompasses work of particular relevance to information literacy:
 - developing the case for a better environment in information-handling training
 - promoting improved access for researchers to information sources

RIN commissioned *Mind the Skills Gap*

- To review the extent, quality and impact of training in research information methodologies and tools provided for academic researchers by HEIs and other agencies, with particular reference to implementation of the Roberts Report's recommendation on career path development for postdoctoral researchers.
- Founded on the view from librarians and information professionals that researchers often lack relevant skills and understanding.



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www.rin.ac.uk

Mind the Skills Gap conclusions

A lot of good work going on especially in HEI libraries – but rather *ad hoc*, so need for:

- strategic coordination and collaboration between organizations with an interest in training provision;
- matching training to researchers' needs;
- improving the quality and delivery of training provision within institutions.

www.rin.ac.uk/training-research-info

So how can all this be made to happen?



- Joined-up approach is obviously crucial.
- Opportunity provided by formulation of RDF.
 - Joint response, led by RIN, to RDF consultation
- End 2009: working group bringing together key players

A new advocacy group

Working Group on Information Handling

- Acts as a focal point for discussion of the development of information-handling training for researchers in HE
- Raises the profile of such training in context of professional development for researchers at all career stages
- Advocates for greater coordination and a more strategic approach to the provision of training across the UK
- Becomes a collective interlocutor for research funders and other agencies with an interest in such training
- Initiates and disseminates work to develop evidence base and advance policy and strategy at national level
- Prepares joint responses to consultation exercises

A coalition of partners

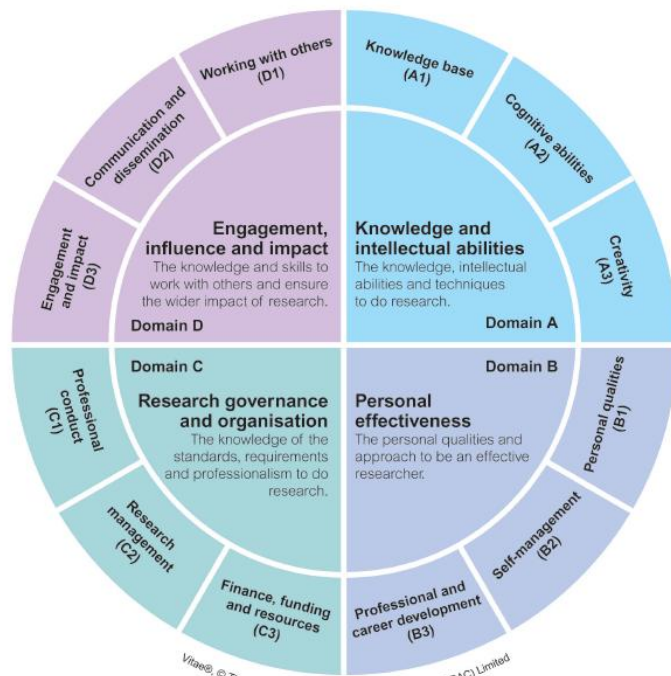
Current stakeholder organisations on the Working Group

- BAILER
- British Library
- CILIP IL Group
- Digital Curation Ctre
- HE Academy
- Information Literacy website
- JISC
- Jorum
- RIN
- RLUK
- SCONUL Working Grp on IL
- UKCGE
- UUK
- Vitae

Activities under the auspices of this coalition since December 2009

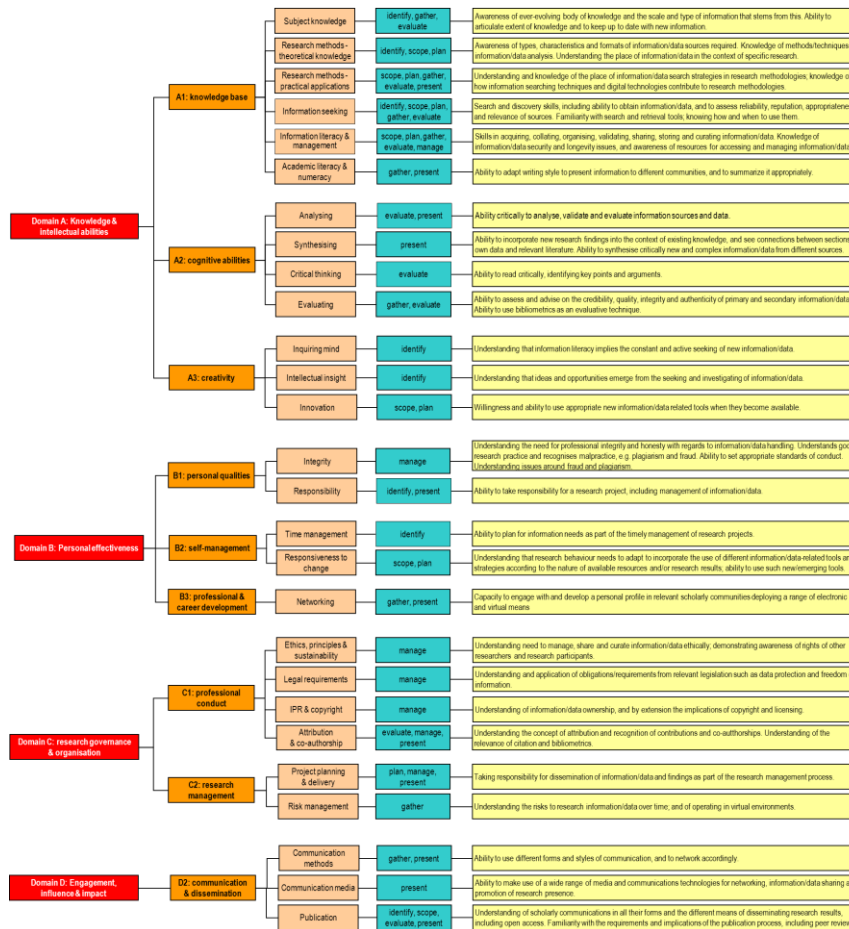
- Proactive programme of practical, manageable activities
 - Some building on or amplifying pre-existing initiatives...
 - ...others involving the initiation of completely new projects
- Collective action creates synergy...
- ...and makes outputs more credible

Researcher Development Framework



- Working Group provided coordinated input
 - extending and strengthening IL content
- RDF now properly addresses information-handling and data management knowledge and competencies

Highlighting IL content in the RDF



Mapping the RDF against SCONUL's Seven Pillars of IL

- drawing out IL components of RDF
- getting synergy and ensuring complementarity between the RDF and the Seven Pillars
- addressing Vitae's notion of an information 'lens'

Taxonomy of IL competencies drawn from RDF

Dissemination

- Encouraging reflection on the use of RDF for IL through practical workshops:
 - Vitae researcher development conference, Manchester, Sep 2010
 - Sheffield (White Rose Consortium), Nov 2010
 - Newcastle, Feb 2011
 - Warwick (in association with UKCGE), Mar 2011
 - LILAC, London, Apr 2011
- Future events of this nature are being envisaged

Guidance for researchers

- Preparing guidance, drawn from the content of the RDF and Seven Pillars, to provide clear and practical advice to researchers
 - to explain clearly and succinctly what information literacy means in the context of HE research, and
 - how it can help researchers at different stages of their careers make the most out of the information that they handle both as an input to and an output from their work
- Part of Vitae series of booklets, to be entitled *The Informed Researcher*
- To be published in September jointly by RIN, Vitae and SCONUL

Good practice in IL training

- Identification and dissemination of instances of good practice
 - to support advocacy of IL
 - initial batch of a dozen cases identified in 2010
- Making use of resources such as Vitae database of practice and Jorum
- Defining of criteria to describe and review IL training
 - quality assurance criteria to help trainers with self-review
 - criteria should be ready for circulation during the summer

Role of research supervisors

- Commissioning of a study (Dec 2010) on the place and role of PhD supervisors in the drive to ensure that research students possess the necessary level of information literacy to pursue their careers successfully in academia and beyond
 - investigation and analysis of current practices in this area among PhD supervisors
 - analysis of variations in practice across institutions and disciplines
 - analysis and judgment of the ability of PhD supervisors to impart relevant skills and provide appropriate advice
 - identification of the areas where improvement in practice would be beneficial
 - recommendations on the development of best practice and the provision of support mechanisms

- Study founded on surveys of supervisors and students, cases studies across a representative range of institutions and strategic interviews with stakeholder organisations
- Recommendations founded on current practice and perceptions, and therefore reflect the reality of interactions between supervisors and students
- Of particular interest to senior institutional managers, graduate school staff, policy makers and also researchers with an interest in promoting good supervisory practice
- Report from study expected in September 2011
 - dissemination effort to follow, involving many of the partners from the Working Group

Data management training

- Data Management Skills Support Initiative (DaMSSI): contextual support for JISC-funded projects in data management training
- Facilitating the use of tools such as RDF and Seven Pillars, and testing their effectiveness for consistently mapping/describing data management skills and competencies
- Guidance through case studies and career profiles
- Encouraging deposit of training materials through Jorum

Regional initiatives

- Fostering the development of regional networks
 - to connect professionals involved in researcher development relating to information handling and use
 - to provide a forum for such professionals to meet in person and discuss relevant issues, reports and research
 - to present examples of good practice in researcher development
 - to facilitate collaboration on training for both professionals and researchers
 - to act as a single contact and conduit within the region for information from and to national bodies involved in researcher development and information handling and use
- Very important that such networks bring together individuals from different professional backgrounds, i.e. not just librarians



- First such regional network emerging in Yorkshire/North East
- Interest expressed in setting up a similar network in London, and possibly in Scotland
- Useful to get support from Vitae regional hubs

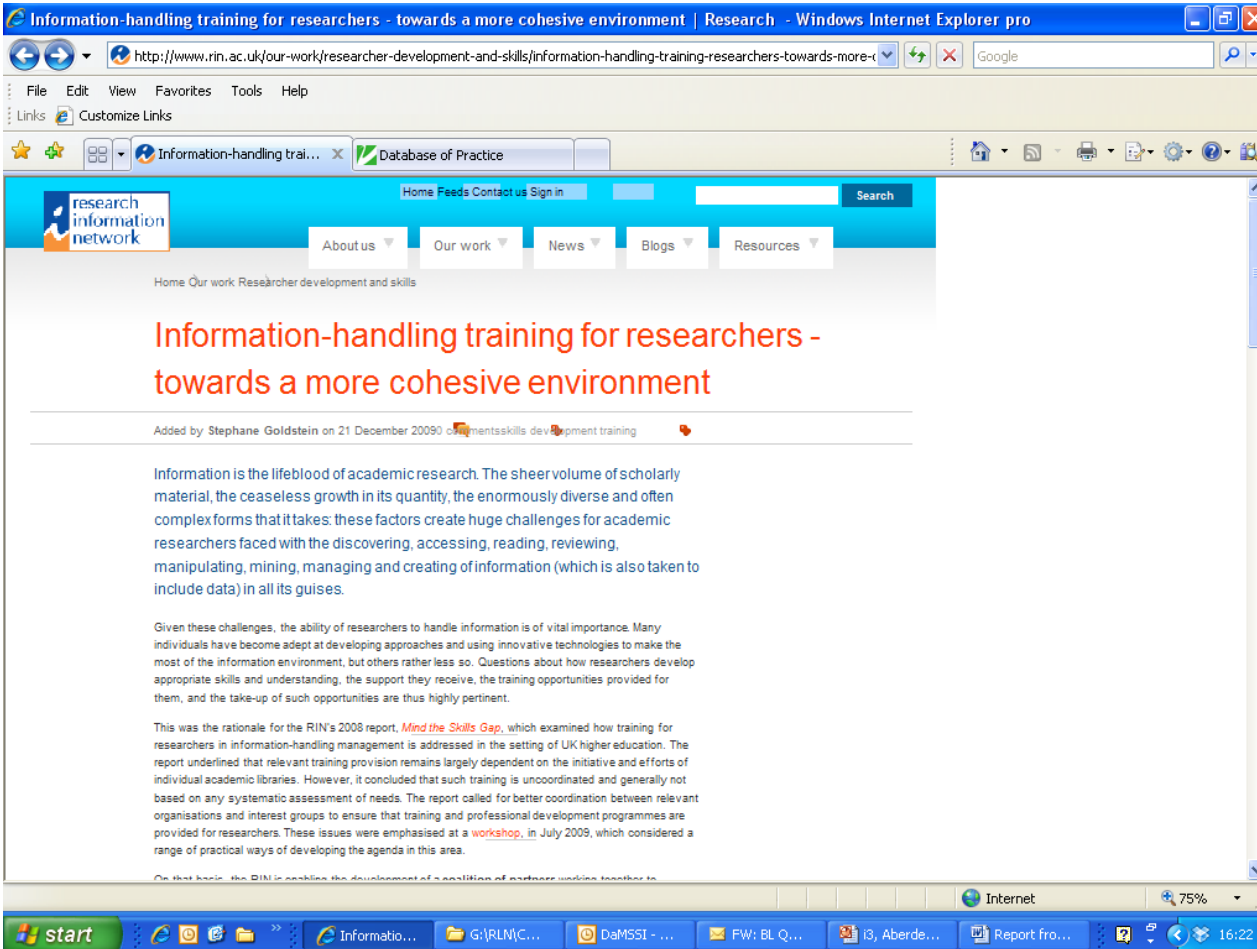
An evolving agenda

- RIN is keen to engage with all those who have an interest in promoting research information skills
- Open to suggestions about how to develop and take forward the agenda
- Challenge of sustaining the work of the coalition in difficult financial times

So can this apply in Europe?

- Particular circumstances led to the setting up of the coalition in the UK...
- ... but the issue and challenges addressed by it are not unique to the UK
- Different national contexts may favour this approach too
 - although it helps to have enthusiasm and commitment on the part of different players, and a coordinatory body to act as a catalyst
- It's up to the players in different parts of Europe to decide what is possible – transnationally as well as within countries
- RIN is happy to assist and advise – also keen to draw from the experiences of LIBER members

More information at www.rin.ac.uk/info-handling-training

A screenshot of a Windows Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar shows the URL "http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/researcher-development-and-skills/information-handling-training-researchers-towards-more-c...". The page content includes the RIN logo, a navigation menu with "About us", "Our work", "News", "Blogs", and "Resources", and a main heading "Information-handling training for researchers - towards a more cohesive environment". The text below discusses the challenges of information handling in academic research and the importance of training. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button and several open applications, including "Informatio...", "G:\RLM\C...", "DaMSSI - ...", "FW: BL Q...", "i3, Aberde...", and "Report fro...". The system clock shows "16:22".

Stéphane Goldstein

stephane.goldstein@rin.ac.uk

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ResearchInformUK>

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