

SCONUL Shared Services Feasibility Study

UK HE Sector Survey – 6 May to 22 May 2009

We recommend that you read and print this document before completing the survey. It will help plan your responses and provides short introductions (in blue print) to each survey section. When you are ready, you can access the survey at www.sero.co.uk/sconul-ss-survey.html

Definition

What do we mean by Shared Services? In the simplest terms, we refer to the joint use of any combination of hardware, software, human resources or purchasing power to enhance the economy, the efficiency or the effectiveness of your library service. Such joint use may involve a focused partnership or a more general sharing in a generic service offer, perhaps from a vendor.

You will be familiar with the JANET (UK) shared service proposition in network provision. You may also be aware of library consortia in the UK and overseas that have embraced shared services – some more successfully than others. Some undertakings are simply purchasing arrangements. Others share the IT platform, but with all operations still performed locally by institutional staff. Others have taken the opportunity to ‘outsource’ some operational responsibilities such as licensing, electronic resource management and cataloguing.

The core rationale and value may lie in cost savings or in less tangible benefits relating to service improvement and positioning. Ideally a shared service will deliver both.

You will have your own opinions regarding **desirability and practicability** across this potential spectrum of shared service opportunities. You may recognize that Web 2.0 developments provide opportunities for large scale user-facing services relevant to the UK HE sector. You will sense the attitude and business case for your own institution.

We hope you will use this survey to share those opinions and insights.

This Survey

This online survey seeks a single response from each SCONUL member library, preferably completed by the Director of Library Services or equivalent. In 16 questions (plus 2 areas for open comment) we hope to capture your opinions relating to Shared Services possibilities. The questions cover:

- Part A – Your Details:** Respondent, Library Service (page 3)
- Part B - Scope:** Current Shared Services, Partnership, Boundaries (page 3)
- Part C – Priorities:** Immediate, Longer term (page 4)
- Part D – Benefits:** Cost benefits, Intangible gains (page 5)
- Part E – Shared Activity:** Systems Functions, Library Operations (page 5)
- Part F – Implementation:** Solutions, Governance, Risk (page 7)
- Part G – Response:** Interest, Involvement, Additional comments (page 8)

You can access it at www.sero.co.uk/sconulss-survey.html

We would appreciate your completed responses by **Friday 22 May 2009**.

Part A: Your Details

M1. Respondent

- Your Name
- Position
- Institution
- Email Address
- Phone

M2. Your Library Service

- Converged Service (Yes/No):
- Library Management System used:
- Electronic Resource Management system used (if any):

Part B. Scope

This part of the survey seeks to understand the scope of your interest in shared services and the boundaries that might constrain your response. Some universities have already entered into shared library services. For others, shared services are just a possibility. Either way, there will be limits to your interests and to the delivery and partnership vehicles you might consider.

3. Current Shared Services

If you are currently operating or planning a shared services operation in the library domain, please provide outline details of the scope and the partners.

4. Partnership

If you were to join in a shared service, what types of partners would you consider working with?

[Tick all that apply]

- Universities with a similar background
- Universities in the same region
- Universities buying in to the same business model
- An existing partnership (e.g. WUN, M25, White Rose)
- A national service (as JANET (UK) provides for connectivity)
- A partnership involving a systems vendor
- Any arrangement that delivers benefits

5. Boundaries

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements
(Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. I would like to reduce our physical holdings by adopting digital solutions

2. I would like to reduce our physical holdings by consolidating physical assets with other libraries
3. I would consider abandoning local cataloguing with the exception of location information
4. The purpose of the local institutional OPAC could be fulfilled by a well organized consortium service
5. The most economic and efficient way to manage licensing of electronic resources is not at the institutional level
6. Some traditional LMS functions could be delivered by other institutional systems
7. Some traditional LMS functions could be delivered by external shared services
8. Whenever the option exists, business systems (such as the LMS) should be based on Open Source software
9. The UK HE sector is too diverse to generate a shared service on a scale that would deliver dividends
10. Shared services will bring more problems than solutions to library operations

Part C. Priorities

Your level of interest in any form of shared service will be linked to your library service priorities. Those priorities will reflect the demands of your clients and your institution, the UK sector and the wider information environment. They will change over time and therefore your immediate and 3-5 year perspectives may be very different.

6. Immediate Priorities

Rate the following with respect to your immediate service priorities (High, Medium, Low, Not a priority)

- Improve the value of the service to users
- Re-deploy resources within the service
- Reduce the overall cost of the service
- Reposition human resources within the service
- Reduce the establishment
- Leverage larger scale services

7. Longer Term Priorities

Rate the following with respect to your 3-5 year service priorities (High, Medium, Low, Not a priority)

- Improve the value of the service to users
- Re-deploy resources within the service
- Reduce the overall cost of the service
- Reposition human resources within the service
- Reduce the establishment
- Leverage larger scale services

Part D. Benefits

Shared services can be predicated on specific cost benefits (typically savings not revenue in the HE sector) and also on intangible gains relating to the customer and the service. An institutional business case is likely to combine both. Part D aims to establish the cost benefits and intangible gains that are most important to your service in order to understand what you might be looking for in any service improvement (for example, a shared service).

8. Cost Benefits

Rate these areas of cost saving (which may potentially be related to shared services) in order of importance to your library service
(High, Medium, Low, Not important)

- Physical space
- Management Time
- Cataloguing staff
- Systems staff
- Support staff
- Content licenses
- Books Purchases
- ILL fulfillment
- Software Licenses
- Hardware
- Hosting
- Procurement
- Other areas of saving

9. Intangible Gains

Rate these intangible gains (which may potentially be related to shared services) in order of importance for your library service
(High, Medium, Low, Not important)

1. Increasing user satisfaction
2. Encouraging user generated contributions to the library catalogue
3. Integrating the library with other learning, research and knowledge systems
4. Securing and developing the role of the library service within my institution
5. Securing and developing the role of libraries in the 21st century knowledge economy
6. Enhancing flexibility and agility for developing electronic services
7. Opening opportunity for new value added service partnerships
8. Other intangible benefits

Part E. Shared Activity

Shared services can involve either systems functions (e.g. hardware, software, processing, web services) or human operations (e.g. pooling human roles in such as licensing, cataloguing or user support) or both. The likely shared software

functions are not necessarily drawn from the traditional LMS; for example, they may be 'value added' functions that build on the local LMS, such as resource discovery or inter-lending management.

10. Shared Systems Functions

Which of the following software functions or systems would you consider as candidates for delivery through systems shared with other UK HE libraries?
(Tick all that apply)

- Electronic Resource Management (ERM)
- e-Journals Licensing
- e-Books Licensing
- Other Digital Content & Rights Management
- Digital Preservation
- Cataloguing
- Reading Lists
- Local OPAC
- Open Data Services
- Search / Locate
- Circulation
- ILL Request / Deliver
- User Records
- User Profile & Recommendations
- User Contributions
- Alerts
- Specialist Interest Forums
- Help Desk
- **Other systems functionality**

11. Shared Library Operations

Which of the following human roles would you consider as candidates for delivery through operations shared with other UK HE libraries?
(Tick all that apply)

- Electronic Resource Management (ERM)
- e-Journals Licensing
- e-Books Licensing
- Other Digital Content & Rights Management
- Digital Preservation
- Cataloguing - General
- Cataloguing - Local details
- Reading Lists management
- Local OPAC management
- Circulation
- ILL Request / Deliver
- User Records management
- Help Desk
- **Other operational roles**

Part F. Implementation

Having considered shared service objectives, there remains the question of how to go about it. We need to consider to what extent will a new software solution be required and how a shared services operation should be governed. Whilst full consideration of these issues requires a lot of detail, it is likely that you will have some fundamental views about what will and will not work and also about the risks involved.

12. Solutions

What sort of systems solution would you consider viable?

(Tick all that apply)

- Build a new system
- License a vendor system with 'shared service' capability
- License an Open Source system
- Integrate 'best of breed' components
- Integrate Open Source components
- **Another approach**

13. Governance

What sort of governance approach would you prefer?

(Tick all that apply)

- Single university leads and recruits library partners
- Outside operator leads and recruits clients (e.g. a vendor)
- Sector agency such as JISC operates a mechanism (like JANET (UK))
- New company formed (not for profit, limited by guarantee) in which partners share the risk
- Existing consortium arrangements are used
- Suppliers and non-HE services could be part of the partnership
- Suppliers should be held at arms length
- **Another approach**

14. Risks

Rate the risks associated with shared services as you have envisaged in this survey

(High, Medium, Low, Not a risk)

- Building the critical mass of partnership
- Sustaining partner commitment
- Justifying tangible benefits to my institution
- Establishing a working software system
- Migrating to the shared service from existing systems (e.g. LMS, ERM)
- Integrating the shared service with other internal systems (e.g. VLE)
- Balancing shared service opportunities with internal integration benefits
- Providing systems for the local library services that are not part of the shared service (e.g. Print management)
- **Other risks**

Part D. Response

Finally, it will be useful to understand the extent to which you are interested in and wish to engage with the detailed possibilities of shared service developments arising from this study. Bear in mind that Phase 2 of this work (from August) goes on to consider a preferred option that may be piloted by committed institutions in 2010.

15. Interest

What level of interest do you have in adopting some shared services?
(Tick one only)

- Shared Services are not a consideration
- There are possibilities but not in the short or medium term
- Shared services may be of interest once a working model has been established
- Shared services will be of interest once a working model has been established
- We are open to involvement given a realistic business case
- We have ideas and interests to bring to the table

16. Involvement

To what extent do you want to be involved in this study?
(Tick all that apply)

- I want to be involved in shaping the service model
- I want to contribute to the system design
- I want to be actively informed of developments and options
- I am happy to track the development via SCONUL communications
- I have no immediate interest

17. Further comments about your library

Is there anything further you would like to say about service development opportunities for your library?

18. Further comments about wider developments

Is there anything further you would like to say about wider shared service developments?