

**Notes/Report of contribution to ISSN Directors Meeting in Madrid. 1<sup>st</sup> to  
3<sup>rd</sup> October 2003**

**(Peter Burnhill, SUNCAT Project Director and Director of EDINA, the UK National Data Centre)**

Thank-you for the opportunity to speak to you about SUNCAT. This will be a short statement as briefing to you all. I hope to meet with several of you and discuss over the next two days. (I will be leaving late on Thursday afternoon).

**What is SUNCAT?**

SUNCAT is a project to build the National Union Catalogue of Serials for the UK.

- a. It is funded by UK higher education (via the JISC and RSLP) in cooperation with the British Library.
- b. Phase 1 is for 2 years. It started in February 2003.

We have a website [www.suncat.ac.uk](http://www.suncat.ac.uk)

Reflecting two aims, SUNCAT will be:

1. An online system to allow academic staff and students to locate serials, held in libraries other than their local library.
2. A source of high quality catalogue records for serials that include the ISSN to allow upgrade of local catalogues. At present, the quality of serials records in UK libraries is highly variable and mostly poor. Less than 40% of records have ISSNs.

There are two partners. University of Edinburgh and ExLibris. It is led by EDINA, using Aleph 500 and a similar approach to that taken for the California Digital Library.

It will be a challenging project. There will be three phases.

Phase 1 will include:

- ISSN db – We intend to put ISSN at the heart of SUNCAT.
- Conser db
- 22 larger research libraries including the National Libraries in the UK.

Libraries contributing records to SUNCAT during Phase 1 have been divided into three Clusters. Cluster 1 Libraries are also Project Associate partners. They are:

- Libraries of Cambridge University
  - Libraries of Oxford University
  - Libraries of Edinburgh University
  - National Library of Scotland (indicating wider scope than universities)
- \*British Library is to be included in 2004.

Around the Heads of Cataloguing for these libraries we have established a Bibliographic Quality Advisory Group. This also includes:

- Tony Kidd from UK Serials Group
- Slawek Rosenfeld, as advisor to the project.
- Natalie Schulz, working part-time on SUNCAT. She also works part-time as secretary to AACR Revisions CHTE.

### **Key Questions**

EDINA, like ISSN-IC was partner in CASA – so we hope to build on designs made there. A lot more could be said. I will highlight the key questions.

- I. SUNCAT will accept, hold, and export data in MARC 21 – A lot of pre-processing involved.
- II. We import records on ITEMS (to use FRBR terminology), but will provide access to TITLES (manifestations/expressions).
- III. We have begun ‘matching’ or ‘de-duplication’. This exposes whether (or not) to take ISSN-db titles as ‘Spine’ highlighting ISSN/AACR issues. Less than half of titles have ISSNs present and very many have yet to be assigned.
- IV. Requires SUNCAT-ID to stand proxy for ISSNs yet to be assigned. We need to devise efficient and mutually acceptable workflow/priority procedures. The ISSN-IC and the SUNCAT and British Library are to collaborate closely. Cooperation and understanding of all ISSN Network is wanted -wide international coverage. We are producing statistics on country of publication of titles needing ISSNs. We also seek cooperation with other national union catalogues.
- V. Holding Statement. We have plans, but not a quick win.
- VI. Electronic Publications!! Part of the UK Digital Library.
- VII. “What is a serial?” *De facto* definition: What any library regards as a serial e.g. Annual Report!

Thank-you. I am here until 5 pm tomorrow. I hope to meet and talk with many of you. It’s a long journey. We have made the first steps and we welcome company along the way.

To contact the SUNCAT Offices, please see the website ([www.suncat.ac.uk](http://www.suncat.ac.uk)) or email [edina@ed.ac.uk](mailto:edina@ed.ac.uk).