



Extending the Research Collections Online (RCO) service

Final Report of the RSLP SCONE project
Annexe C

1 Background

The Research Collections Online service is based on a subject strength analysis exercise carried out the the older Scottish universities in the early 1990s.

The analysis uses the Conspectus scheme developed by the Research Libraries Group.

A Conspectus level of 3 (instructional support), 4 (research), or 5 (comprehensive) is assigned to relevant subject headings taken from a fixed list.

The subject headings are organized into two levels of groupings to create a three-tier thesaurus.

2 Incorporation of RCO in SCONE database

RCO data was converted to electronic format as part of the SEED project¹.

It was then integrated with the database of the Co-operative Academic Information Network for Scotland (CAIRNS)² to provide a "dynamic clumping" mechanism for selecting catalogues for cross-searching.

As part of the CAIRNS database, the RCO data was imported, without restructuring, into the SCONE database. **See Annexe B.1: 1.4.1.1.4**

The CAIRNS version of RCO did not store data for subject headings without an assigned Conspectus level of 3, 4, or 5 for the collection.

The SCONE version explicitly stores a Conspectus level of 0 (out of scope) for these unassigned headings.

2.1 SEED project

The SEED project aimed to "support the data preparation and input of co-operative collecting responsibilities (CCRs) and other research collections among Scottish university and research libraries; to ensure that it is kept current to reflect changes; and to find a means to include information about research collections held in public libraries and elsewhere in Scotland."

2.1.1 NLS exercise to update existing Conspectus levels

The National Library of Scotland (NLS) undertook an exercise to update the existing Conspectus levels for the original RCO members.

The data-gathering phase of this exercise is complete.

The NLS intends to use the SCAMP interface to amend the online RCO service records accordingly.

Some of the NLS updates have been applied to the RCO service during testing of the SCAMP interface.

2.1.2 Special collections in public libraries

After discussion with SLIC³, information about special collections in public libraries was gathered as part of the updating procedures for *Scottish library and information resources* (SLIR). **See Annexe B.1: 1.4.1.3**

Incorporation of this information into the SCONE database and service indicated that the RCO scheme was not suitable for direct extension to special collections.

Subject headings are attached to special collections in SCONE as part of the collection level description schema.

Further research is required to determine methodologies for cross-searching subject headings used to classify collections and subject headings used to indicate the strength of collections.

¹ SEED project. URL: <http://seed.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/>

² Now the Co-operative Information Retrieval Network for Scotland. URL: <http://cairns.lib.strath.ac.uk/>

³ Scottish Library and Information Council. URL: <http://www.slainte.org.uk/slic/slichome.htm>

3 Use of SCAMP to update RCO subject strengths

The Scottish Collections Access Management Portal (SCAMP) allows Conspectus subject strengths to be updated for RCO. **See *Annexe B.2: 2.1.1.1.9***

SCAMP also allows collections to be added to RCO, with all subject strengths set to 0 (out of scope) by default.

Subject strengths for individual headings can then be updated to the correct value.

4 Extension of RCO coverage to new universities in Scotland

4.1 Application of Conspectus to special collections of new universities

The University of Abertay Dundee, Glasgow Caledonian University, Napier University, University of Paisley, and The Robert Gordon University carried out an exercise to apply the Conspectus scheme to their special collections.

Difficulties were reported with the subject heading terminology, as very few Conspectus terms were applicable to any particular collection, and the contextual effect of the thesaurus approach was diminished.

There were indications that the Conspectus headings were not precise enough to accurately reflect the strengths of the special collections.

4.1.1 Addition of data to RCO

The data supplied by the new universities was added to the RCO sections of the SCONE database by direct input to the data tables.

4.1.2 Removal of data from RCO

The data for the new universities was subsequently removed from the RCO sections of the SCONE database as SCONE developed the subject component of its collection level description schema.

4.2 Pilot collection strength assessment exercise carried out at Napier University

A separate exercise was carried out by Napier University to apply a sub-set of the Conspectus scheme to its general collection.

A report on this exercise is available. **See *Annexe A.2: Appendix B***.

Napier University Learning Information Services also assisted in the testing of the RCO updating functions of SCAMP.

4.3 CoSMiC/SHERAL consultation day

A consultation day with the Confederation of Scottish Mini-Cooperatives (CoSMiC) and the Scottish Higher Education and Research Acquisitions Librarians (SHERAL) was held on 3 May 2002 to discuss the use of the SCONE service as a tool for collection management.

A practical exercise to update some RCO subject strengths was carried out by participants, to test the SCAMP interface and inform discussion on maintaining the RCO records.