'New Lamps for Old': Current Awareness and Profile-Raising

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Introduction

Over the last three years, the DrugScope ILS, www.drugscope.org.uk, has streamlined its acquisitions, cataloguing and indexing processes so it has been possible to increase its current awareness services. This article illustrates how it is quick and easy to promote new material through these services, and how the services themselves have raised the profile of the ILS internally and externally.

Current Awareness in 2003

Three years ago, the ILS had a catalogue, DrugData, which was added to daily and updated online once a month. A traditional monthly acquisitions list, 'Library Latest', was emailed once a month to around 350 DrugScope members. A select bibliography of recently published and acquired books was included in *Druglink*, a bimonthly journal distributed to around 500 DrugScope members and subscribers.

Drivers for Change

User Needs – Although DrugScope is a membership organisation, the ILS is open to the general public, and is used by a wide range of people, including drug workers, primary care staff, social workers, health information professionals, journalists and editors of mainstream newspapers and specialist journals. Interest in DrugScope acquisitions is not limited to DrugScope members, and many of our users were running searches on our inhouse database to see what we had added to stock since they last visited us.

Software Upgrade – A major upgrade to our Library Management System in 2003 allowed our online database, DrugData Online, to be automatically updated overnight every night. This provided us with an ideal opportunity to assess and streamline our acquisitions and cataloguing procedures.

Plugging a Gap – During the upgrade, DrugData Online had to be offline for several weeks. So that our users would not be without new publication information in that time, we posted Library Latest online and produced two new lists also posted as pdf on our website. These were listings of Monograph and Grey Literature Acquisitions produced in that year. The services were so popular (assessed by download statistics and feedback from users), that we have maintained all these lists ever since.

Satisfying a Growing Demand – By 2005, the demand for our listings had grown to such an extent that we looked into ways of providing daily listings. We found that blogging met our needs: *DrugData Update*, http://drugscope.blogspot.com provides a listing of newly-published and acquired material on the day it is catalogued, which users can view on the blog's own page, or through an atom or RSS-feed.

Opportunities for Promotion – Creating a blog for bibliographic listings also gave us a canvas for service promotion. We provide a short 'focus article' each Friday on a topic of interest – perhaps on a part of the collection, on one of our wider services, or a 'frequently asked question' from our enquiry service. Over a short space of time, other DrugScope departments have got involved in the blog, and we have run articles written by education professionals, our press and policy office and our Chief Executive – always with a clear link to DrugData, from which we generate all the bibliographic information.

Current Services

Any new item that we acquire may, and usually will, feature in each of these services:

1. DrugData
2. DrugData Update
3. Library Latest
4. Grey Literature (items produced by government departments or NGOs)
5. Monographs (commercially-published books)

Selected items are also included in:

6. *Druglink Booklisting* (brand new books)
7. *Members' Briefing* (hard-to-obtain items of interest to members)

8. Pathfinders and Reading Lists (on a variety of subjects)

Certain items are highlighted further through:

9. Posting the cover page image in the highlights section of our 'new books and reports' page

10. Inclusion in specialist reading lists covering individual subjects

All these services are free to download from the 'new books and reports' section of our website,

http://www.drugscope.org.uk/library/librarysection/lib_results.asp?file=\wip\7\books.htm

More Services, More Time?

In 2003, it took a day of one person's time to create the monthly listing, Library Latest. In 2006, we spend 5-10 minutes each day running two reports and pasting them into Blogger software. Adding something to the highlights section takes about 5-10 minutes as and when, and the other current awareness lists are run on a monthly basis, for which an afternoon is scheduled with the idea of updating Library Latest, Grey Literature (for the current year) and a couple of the other lists (last year's Grey Literature, this year or last year's Monographs Listing). A couple of hours is spent each month on listings for *Members' Briefing* and *Druglink,* whereas in 2003, it took another day of staff time just to compile the single booklisting for the journal.

In short, we spend the same amount of time producing current awareness services as we did three years ago, but the number of services produced has increased five-fold.

Selection 'on the Fly'

In 2003 we used the software upgrade as an opportunity to tighten up on quality and to analyse exactly what our users needed to know about each item.

We added a 'bulletin' field in which we enter current awareness service names, like 'LL May 2006' (for this month's Library Latest), 'Booklisting July-August 2006' (for the next *Druglink* Listing) or 'Grey 2006' (for this year's Grey Literature list). This means

that as we catalogue, we are also selecting the items we wish to include in our current awareness services.

Same Information, Different Presentation

Library Latest can fill anywhere from 30-200 pages of A4 paper. Because it is a general listing, we decided to break it down into broad subject categories, so readers could go straight to the sections that interest them. These categories, or 'bulletin headings' are not as specific as our indexing terms, as their purpose is simply to divide a long list into relevant clusters of items. For example, items written specifically for nurses can be found under the heading 'Health Profession' alongside items of interest to doctors, pharmacists and allied professions. We know from user feedback that this arrangement is fit for purpose.

The Grey Literature listing, on the other hand, is listed by corporate author, since the people who use it are most likely to be looking to acquire material produced by a particular organisation. We know from feedback that this list is also used by other information services, not only for acquisitions, but also to work out how to enter corporate authors in their own databases.

When we introduced the daily listings in *DrugData Update,* the selection criteria was that the material should be newly-published and should have been catalogued that day. The existing group of users who had been requesting a daily service really wanted to be able to access the full-text quickly and easily. For this reason, we present material under the headings 'New Online', 'New for Document Delivery' and 'New Books.' In the case of the last two categories, we give details of how to visit the library or request document delivery. For new books, we also provide publisher details in case the reader wishes to order their own copy. 'New Online' entries are presented so that the title has a hyper-text link to the full-text of the document.

Catalogue Once Then List Ten Times

The key to all our current awareness is our cataloguing procedures. The minimum data entry for each item that appears in our current awareness services is:

Document Number (which is the way that we retrieve items from our shelves)

Author / Editor / Corporate Responsibility (where applicable)

Title

Publisher

Date of Publication

Abstract

URL (where free access is available)

Publisher website (for books, where available)

Bulletin (for all services except the blog)

Bulletin Heading (for Library Latest and *Druglink Booklisting*)

Accession Date (for the Blog and also for management statistics)

With this information recorded accurately and consistently, it is possible for the item to be listed up to 10 times, as well as to be retrieved from DrugData (Online or inhouse).

Current Awareness in Action

RCGP guide to the management of substance misuse in primary care (London: RCGP, 2005) was one of the major texts published last year. Aimed at the whole primary care team, it provides an analysis of the roles that nurses, GPs and pharmacists can play in treating those with substance use problems.

We acquired the book in May 2005, and listed it and its chapters in Library Latest for that month and in our Monograph Acquisitions 2005 list. Its cover and details were posted in the highlights section of our 'new books and reports' webpage. Later, it was featured in the booklisting published in *Druglink* 20(4) p.22, and the editor of the journal selected it for a review in a subsequent issue. Later in the year, we were asked to contribute the Substance Misuse section to the BMA's *Core Collection of Texts for Primary Care* (due for publication this year), and, of course, we included this text. This month, we have launched a new reading list, 'Substance Misuse – Selected References for Primary Care'

and, again, this book was a natural choice for inclusion in the reading list itself (http://www.drugscope.org.uk/wip/7/PDFS/primary.pdf) and the blog article about it (http://drugscope.blogspot.com/2006/05/friday-focus-primary-care-for.html). All of these current awareness listings were generated from the original catalogue record we created back in May 2005.

Had the blog existed when we acquired it, the book would also have been listed there on 6 May 2005, the day it was catalogued. Had it been grey literature instead of a commercial publication, it would have appeared in our Grey Literature listing. Had it been less 'core' to our collection, it would have featured in *Members' Briefing*.

This is the route of just one item. You can trace the listing of each newly-published item we acquire and see its details land on the computer screens and / or desks of a diverse range of people through a variety of different listings.

Impact

The impact of increasing our current awareness services, and particularly of creating a blog with RSS and atom feeds, has been felt in ways that are both predictable and unpredictable.

Our current awareness downloads are consistently in the top five downloads from our website, and, in fact, make up 55% of all downloads. As our website receives over 1 million views each month, the actual quantity of current awareness downloads is high – 4000-5000 monthly.

It is difficult to track visitors to the blog in a meaningful way, but we know that downloads from our blog article archive are constant at around 2000 a week.

In 2003, booklisting formed a small section of 7 or 8 titles in *Druglink*. The latest issue 21(3) contains four full pages – a select bibliography of books about young people and another of biography and memoir. Similarly, *Members' Briefing* consists largely of

bibliographic references of hard-to-find items and, from April 2006 onwards also contains a 'Book of the Month,' selected and reviewed by the cataloguer. Our Publishing Department has picked up on the market we recognised and developed through our current awareness services.

Similarly, the Friday Focus articles we run on the blog have become an example of cross-departmental working. Always including bibliographic and / or web references, articles have been written not only by the ILS team, but also by our Head of Education & Prevention, our Press Officer and our Chief Executive. The popularity of *DrugData Update* has grown to the extent that we are able to include articles by colleagues outside DrugScope, including those in the USA and mainland Europe.

Tying the blog into a theme – such as International Health and Safety at Work Day, US Alcohol Awareness Week and World Book Day - allows us to promote our services in places we might not have imagined before. For example, on International Women's Day (8 March), we ran an article on Women and Drug Use, which we promoted to feminist and women's studies lists. This resulted in DrugScope's being listed on the website for International Women's Month, so any woman looking for health information on that site will be directed to us.

Using new technology, such as blogging and newsfeeds, has also impacted on the image of our skills within our organisation and user group. It demonstrates the IT skills that, as information professionals we take for granted, but which seem surprising to some of our colleagues, fettered as they are by the stereotypical image of us as people who stamp and shelve books all day.

Creating and maintaining the blog exemplifies our communication skills – in sourcing ideas for articles and people to write them; writing articles ourselves and disseminating the output widely (through email list in appropriate disciplines, etc.). Crucially, it demonstrates the relationship that we have with our wider user group. While bibliographic listings might have sounded dull as a concept for growing a market, we, as

information professionals helping people find answers to their research and practice questions on a daily basis, knew that good current awareness services was what they needed.

Improving and increasing our current awareness services has increased our presence and visibility in our organisation and our group of users and potential users. Most importantly, it has benefited and increased the knowledge of our users and has succeeded in bringing bibliographic information from the backroom into the light, where it can be seen and used by those who need it.