LSE

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RIDLs:
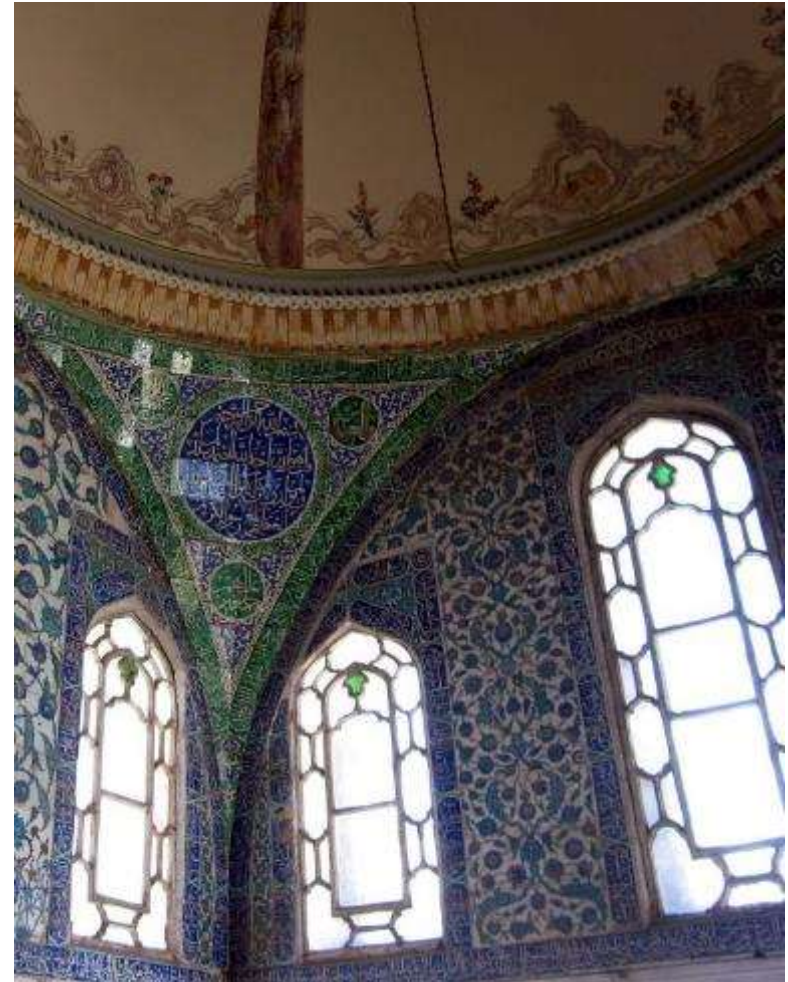# a collective approach to IL in higher education

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ECIL2013
Istanbul
24 October 2013

Library of Sultan Ahmet I, Topkapi Palace
Photo credit: Sofia Sweetman, on Flickr

What is RIDLs?

- **Research Information & Digital Literacies Coalition**
- **A coalition of partners** in the UK working together to promote the value of information and research data literacy for HE researchers
- **A collectively-run programme** to enable activities which help to advance LIS knowledge and skills
- **Grant-funded by Higher Education Funding Council for England** for one year initially (June 2012 – May 2013)

Important premises:

- Partners not limited to the academic library world: other players have a stake!
  - Academic librarians, data management specialists, career & professional development experts, information sciences researchers…
  - Important to build a network that capitalises on different outlooks
- Broad view of what constitutes information: also includes research data

RIDLs achievements

- Providing networking opportunities for partners

- Criteria for describing, reviewing & assessing training interventions

- Identifying & promoting documented cases of good practice in IL training interventions in UK universities

- Promoting Vitae's Researcher Development Framework inasmuch as this applies to IL

  - Thematic workshops

- Study and report on training & skills in open data

- International engagement

  - Contribution to FP7 bid on training in open access

RIDLs next steps

A plan has been drawn up for developing RIDLs beyond its first year. Two key focal points for the future:

- ❑ supporting institutions with the development of their information and data literacy training programmes

  - ❑ notably through the deployment of the describing, reviewing & assessing criteria

- ❑ promoting information and data literacy as a transferable set of skills beyond academia and as an important factor in the employability of graduates and postgraduates

RIDLs: beyond search & discovery (1)

Despite the broad definitions IL has tended to focus on 'search and discovery' i.e. finding information. Should other aspects of IL be given more emphasis?

Why?

- Locating and using the information landscape is important

- Critical reflection (discernment) on sources and the information retrieved is important

- However, what people find far more challenging is identifying one's information needs and deciding on the information that is most appropriate

- People also find more challenging the cognitive skills associated with processing information e.g. analysis, synthesis.

RIDLs: beyond search & discovery (2)

Why?

❑ Search and discovery (location and access) are the particularly important in higher education and where people conduct independent research

❑ However, outside this environment other IL capabilities are often more important, for example:

   ❑ Knowing how to share information (what to share, with whom and how)

   ❑ Ensuring that data is of high quality

   ❑ Knowing what information or data to keep or throw away

   ❑ Knowing how to store information effectively

   ❑ Dealing with information securely

RIDLs: beyond Higher Education

RIDLs: beyond libraries

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Joint working across the professional divide

RIDLs has successfully brought different groups of players together within the HE environment. Is there value in emulating this collaborative approach more broadly beyond HE?

Why?

- ❑ We are currently preaching to the converted

- ❑ There is a clear need to share our work beyond our own profession to maximise expertise and prevent re-inventing of wheels

- ❑ A great deal of excellent work is not having the desired impact

- ❑ We need tap into parallel agenda's e.g., BCS newly launched Digital Literacy campaign

- ❑ Ultimately we need to have a greater influence on practices and policy

□ **How?**

 □ Can we pool our collective contacts from our personal/professional networks?

  □ Bottom up or top down?

 □ How can we work internationally?

□ **When?**

 □ The sooner the better

□ **Who?**

 □ Can we identify key influential people?

 □ Do we need to identify key sectors (public/private/voluntary) or industries?

 □ Is there a role for learned societies, professional bodies and accreditation agencies?

□ **What?**

 □ Face to face or virtual events to bring like-minded people together

 □ Income generation to finance further work

□ **Where?**

 □ Outside the information service/profession – government, employers' organisations or similar?

Thank you for taking part!

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