

**Researchers of Tomorrow:
A three year (BL/JISC) study tracking the research behaviour of 'Generation Y' doctoral students**

Following the 'Google Generation' report published in 2008, the British Library and JISC have commissioned a further three year research study into the information seeking and research behaviour of doctoral students born between 1982 and 1994 – commonly dubbed 'Generation Y'. The study will establish a benchmark for research behaviour against which subsequent generations of scholars can be measured and ultimately provide guidance to the community of libraries and information specialists on how best to meet the research needs of Generation Y scholars and their immediate successors.

At the heart of the Researchers of Tomorrow study will be a longitudinal study of at least 50 full-time UK doctoral students from across all subject disciplines. This tracking study will use a range of web-based and face-to-face qualitative research techniques to engage with the students in order to monitor and assess the evolution of their attitudes and behaviour over the course of three years. It will investigate their overall research behaviour and habits in digital (online) and physical environments and also track their usage of library and research resources both online and off.

This longitudinal or tracking element of the research will be augmented by an **annual** survey of full-time or part-time students in their first year of doctoral studies. The survey sample will include international students studying in UK higher education institutions, and it will be recruited largely from those 1st year researchers who attend the British Library National Postgraduate Training Days (NTDs) across a spread of disciplines over three years.

To provide a wider context for these two pieces of focused research, a large scale quantitative research study will also be undertaken **annually**, surveying the research and information behaviour of a representative sample of **all** doctoral students studying in the UK, whether UK citizens or international students. The research team will be seeking to collaborate with higher education institutions to disseminate the survey invitation to their doctoral students.

These three inter-related research initiatives will gather evidence about researcher behaviour over a three year period to:

- Map emerging research trends across Social Science, Arts & Humanities, Science, Technology and Medicine;
- Investigate how doctoral scholars currently in higher education in the UK, particularly those from Generation Y, seek information both on and offline;
- Measure the use of digital resources and physical resources (including research spaces) during the period of the study;
- Understand how Generation Y students search for and use digital content for research, and how they use emergent technologies to do so;
- Compare the attitudes and behaviour of the Generation Y scholars with those of the larger national body of UK-based doctoral students.

The conclusions and recommendations drawn from this research will aid the British Library and the JISC in determining how best they can meet the current and future research needs of academic researchers and the potential impact of changing research behaviour on academic institutions, as well as providing valuable information for the Higher Education sector more widely,

The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world's greatest research libraries. It provides world class information services to the academic, business, research and scientific communities and offers unparalleled access to the world's largest and most comprehensive research collection. The Library's collection has developed over 250 years and exceeds 150 million separate items representing every age of written civilization. It includes: books, journals, manuscripts, maps, stamps, music, patents, newspapers and sound recordings in all written and spoken languages. Further information is available on the Library's website at www.bl.uk.

The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) supports UK further and higher education and research by providing leadership in the use of information and communications technology in support of learning, teaching, research and administration. JISC receives funding from all the UK further and higher education funding councils. Further information is available at www.jisc.ac.uk.