'Cybrarian' hits 10-year mark

Gillian Doran, ICGP Librarian

I was appointed ICGP librarian in 1999 and immediately set about researching the information requirements of ICGP members and staff. I know that it would not be a library and information service in the 'traditional model', not least because GP members were and are busy professionals and would not be dropping in to borrow books or pay fines!

IT was improving and e-mail and the internet changed the nature of the requests from members and also the way that we could provide the information for those requests.

From 2000 onwards journal subscriptions were in place for over 30 general-practice related journals and we became a member of the Health Sciences Libraries Group, which has been invaluable in terms of advice and support and provided access to journals held by other libraries throughout the country. Membership of the British Library and later Subito were added to our services.

The ICGP website

In 2000, the college was enhancing its own membership database and moving from a DOS based system to a more web-enabled set-up. I was part of the team involved in developing and implementing this new system.

We also worked with the web developers to progress the basic web presence that already existed on www.icgp.ie We collaborated with Campus IT and later also SMR Consulting to integrate aspects of the ICGP membership database with the website. These new developments were designed to work in tandem with the ultimate goal of being a complete database for information and bookings for members.

During this time we developed features including 'find a GP' and I also piloted the discussion groups and secure pages area of the website with the college executive. Our web content manager, Angela Byrne, appointed in 2004 has expanded these facilities to other college groups including NEGs, NAPD and E-Learning.

We now have an ICGP Library and Information Service homepage on www.icgp.ie/library This homepage contains news, 'hot topics', useful links, tips for searching, database advice, clinical guidelines (members only) and college statements. The two main features of the library section on the web is the access to Forum online (indexed from 2000 onwards) and the ICGP library catalogue.

The catalogue was launched in September 2006 and contains over 1,500 records relating to many aspects of general practice, primarily in Ireland which can be browsed and full-text provided where available. Additional elements of interest that have been created in the library catalogue include a research listing and an area for CME tutor bids.

In addition to our work in-house, we have also provided training on request in many areas of the country.

We have given presentations to many college interest groups over the years including the trainers, the examiners, CME tutors, e-Learning participants and GP trainees. These have all involved developing bespoke sessions and handouts.

We have provided training sessions on web-searching and critical evaluation of information resources to both individuals and groups involved with the ICGP. Some electronic resources are used by the ICGP library staff to facilitate college information requirements. These include Refworks (produces

references) and SurveyMonkey (online surveys). Various college activities have been assisted in this manner including course evaluations, training requirements, submissions to outside bodies and college membership surveys.

Similar to the work of a GP, no two days as ICGP librarian are ever the same! It is one of the aspects of my job that I love, the fact that you never really know what query is going to arrive in your inbox.

It can be anything from, "can you get me a review article for such and such" to "can you find me a GP who speaks Chinese" to "can you help me with this research proposal", to "I need to do a quick survey …"

This year marks 10 years of my role as college librarian, or 'Cybrarian' as I have become. It truly has been an exciting challenge developing the ICGP Library and Information Service and working alongside my ICGP colleagues.

Collaborating with Terri and Patricia to expand the services and Angela to implement new features online for members has been an excellent experience.

I would particularly like to thank Fionán and Dermot for their support, advice and enthusiasm in enabling us to provide what we hope is a worthwhile service to college members and we look forward to what the next 10 and indeed 25 years will bring.

Major developments on the ICGP website

Sept 1999 First online distance learning course – diploma in therapeutics. Twelve courses are now available in e-Learning format covering a range of topics. (See www.icgp.ie/courses)

2000 College website launched

2002/2003 Secure area for executive members created where important topics can be discussed confidentially and decisions made on many subjects without the necessity of face-to-face meetings.
'Find a GP' directory goes online with details of members' practices. From autumn 2009 this service allows members to amend their practice and personal information using a web interface. Members will also be able to add information such as opening hours, special interests, practice services and location on Google mapping. (See www.icgp.ie/findagp).

Jan 2003 College journal Forum goes online. Copies from 2003 to present are now available. (See www.icgp.ie/library)

June 2004 Full-time web content manager appointed

Nov 2004 Website redesigned to include an improved navigation system and content management system.

Jan 2005 GP training programme intake takes place entirely online. Over 200 applicants use the system and results in a significant reduction in the amount of administration effort to manage the application process.

Jan 2006 MICGP examination application takes place online for the first time.

Sept 2006 Library catalogue goes online. Members can now search for publications and journals held in the college library and download electronic copies or order them from the college librarians. (See www.icgp.ie/library)

Nov 2006 Online discussion boards launched. Currently more than 20 college groups use discussion boards to communicate regularly.

Jan 2007 Online event calendar enhanced to include CME information so that members can find accredited meetings in their area including CME small group meetings. (See www.icgp.ie/events)

Mar 2007 Members can register and pay for college courses and events online.

May 2007 Interactive core curriculum for GP training launched. (See www.icgp.ie/gptraining)

June 2007 GPIT group information integrated into ICGP website at www.gpit.ie including data protection advice, publications, reports, useful links, GMS circulars, frequently asked questions and information on GP software.

May 2008 Website redesign

June 2008 First multimedia e-learning course made available on Level 1 methadone training.

2009 Online classifieds system

– Angela Byrne, Web and Communications Manager