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11th June, 2008

Prof. Desmond Fitzgerald,
Chairperson - Vice Presidents/Deans of Research Group,
Vice President for Research,
UCD,
Belfield,
Dublin 4.

Dear Prof. Fitzgerald,

Re: The Future of the Irish Research eLibrary (IReL)

I am writing to you in my capacity as the current Chairperson of the IUA Librarians' Group (IUALG).

A recent initiative of the IUALG has been the establishment in 2005 of the highly successful IReL consortium service. IReL provides access to approximately 25,000 peer reviewed electronic journals and tens of thousands of eBooks by the entire Irish university community. The consortium is operated by IRIS Ltd, a company which is owned by the universities and managed by their Librarians/Directors of Library Services. The IReL website at www.irel.ie <<http://www.irel.ie/>> provides detailed information about the service.

IReL has transformed the ability of Irish researchers to access the latest and best regarded sources of publication in their fields. The service spans the humanities and the sciences.

IReL is funded by a programme of grants by Science Foundation Ireland and the Higher Education Authority. Annual funding from these sources is in the region of €9M which serves to maintain the selected publisher subscriptions. Both SFI and HEA have guaranteed funding to the end of 2009.

I am writing to you to alert you and your colleague IUA Vice Presidents/Deans of Research to the need to preserve IReL beyond 2009 if we are to sustain our current research programme and the sector's ambitions for the future. Reduced funding beyond 2009 could prompt the cancellation of subscriptions to the sources currently available: this would have disastrous effects on existing research initiatives and on

John FitzGerald
University Librarian

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Ireland's attractiveness to international research teams and individuals.

My colleagues and I in the IUALG would greatly appreciate your support and that of the IUA Vice Presidents/Deans of Research Group in our efforts at maintaining the funding required for IReL beyond 2009. Your vocal support for the extension of IReL for at least a further six year term would carry significant weight within the funding bodies and across the university system.

I would be very happy to provide any additional information required to assist you and your IUA counterparts in your advocacy for the continuation of IReL beyond 2009. Your colleague in UCD, Pauline Corrigan, Acting Librarian, is also on hand to advise in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



John FitzGerald
Chair - IUALG

