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Editorial

Steve Rose

Chair, Editorial Team

SCONUL Focus

Steve.Rose@solent.ac.uk

Welcome to issue 63 of *SCONUL Focus* – the first to be published in digital format exclusively. We hope that you will find the new e-format easier to navigate and read.

Perhaps fittingly, the main theme of this issue relates to how we are delivering e-content to our users. The Library Management System (LMS) remains a key player with regard to e-delivery. With this in mind, three articles describe how Westminster, West London and Limerick libraries have moved to a hosted solution in terms of LMS provision, whilst at Kingston University, the authors share their experience of migrating to a fully cloud-based solution. All of these contributions demonstrate the importance of robust project management in this not insignificant task, whilst highlighting a number of benefits to be derived from taking a Software as a Service (SaaS) approach.

Delivering e-content to support research has also emerged as a key theme in the contributions received for this issue. At Westminster, Suzanne Enright outlines the key drivers for greater investment in supporting the research agenda and describes their approach in ensuring that researchers are fully supported by the library through the development of a research management platform. The authors from Birmingham City University describe how a collaborative approach with researchers resulted in the development of an online resource to support the research journey, whilst the article by Crilly and Meece demonstrates the library's role in the development of a research repository and the support of research data management at the University of Arts London. On a similar theme, the article from the University of Salford describes the library's approach to providing online access to their archive collections.

Projects to enhance e-resources to support teaching also feature. Andrew Barker demonstrates how partnership working with the University Press has resulted in the move to publish two key texts at the University of Liverpool, whilst Matthew Lawson describes an initiative to provide all students with free e-books at the University of Middlesex.

The ability for libraries to manage their e-resources, subscriptions and licences is of course of utmost importance and so this issue also includes an update on KB+. This service aims to do just that; it is managed by Jisc's Digital Resources Directorate, and is currently free to all UK Universities.

Not every article in this issue focuses exclusively on the delivery of e-content. This is fine, as the editorial team has not adopted a policy of refusing to publish items, if we think they will be of interest to readers. However, we do intend to continue with a themed approach for future issues and aim to link these themes to those of SCONUL's strategy groups. With this in mind, we have recently put out a call for articles on the topic of 'knowing our customers and responding to their needs'. We have set a copy date of 30 June.

We think that this theme ties nicely into the work of SCONUL's User Experience and Success Strategy Group – see <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/user-experience-and-success> and for the terms of reference see <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/user-experience-and-success-strategy-group>. You might wish to consider some of the topics pertinent to the work of this group in relation to article submission.

We look forward to receiving contributions on this theme for issue 64.

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Moving the library systems at the University of Westminster to a hosted service

Ann Munn

Project Manager for the move to a hosted service (and Systems Development Officer, Library)
munna@westminster.ac.uk

Suzanne Enright

Interim Registrar and Secretary
University of Westminster
s.enright@westminster.ac.uk

Context

The university of Westminster uses the Ex Libris applications ALEPH (integrated library management system), MetaLib (federated metasearch), SFX (openURL link resolver for scholarly linking) and Primo (discovery and delivery layer) to support the library service. The university is experienced at supporting the Ex Libris products, being the second UK customer for ALEPH in 1998, having used SFX and MetaLib for more than ten years and Primo since 2010. Prior to moving to a managed hosted service the applications were housed on servers at the university and were supported by in-house infrastructure and application teams in the Information Services Department, from 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday (excluding periods of university closure).

Identifying the need

Our discussions about a possible move to a hosted service began in late 2011 in an environment in which the university was moving from wholly in-house infrastructure and support to a hybrid cloud / in-house environment and had already moved a number of key services out onto a managed services / cloud basis. This included Google mail for our students, the Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard) and the corporate website (the CMS running on Squiz Matrix). There were competing demands on infrastructure and on our human resources, coupled with a demand for increased availability of the services with a requirement for 24x7 support and better capacity for fixing faults. An increase in staff numbers was unlikely, so there was a pressing need to free resources from routine tasks and allow their redeployment to the development of the service. Given that a replacement library management platform was not on our immediate planning horizon, a cloud-born solution was excluded in the medium term, so it was timely to consider whether there were benefits to a move to a hosted service.

Options and decision-making

A working group was established, consisting of the Director of Information Services, the library systems team and managers from library services, infrastructure and applications teams; there was additional input from the security team.

Our requirement was to retain the flexibility of being able to customise and configure the service, to free up time for staff to enhance the service or work on other projects, and to create extra resilience. We considered key areas in respect of both in-house and managed services, based on two options:

Option 1 – Do nothing

- **Activities:** All activities are performed in house.
- **Availability:** Service availability (as calculated from the statistics of the previous 12 months) 97%
- **Support and fix:** 08:00 – 18:00, Monday to Friday (excluding university closure periods)
- **Disaster recovery:** Replication to another site and, provided both sites are unaffected at the same time, near to no downtime in case of disaster.

Option 2 - The application is installed and hosted on a server located at the Ex Libris Data Centre.

- **Activities:** Split between in-house activities and the managed service. Time saving across the applications and infrastructure teams
- **Availability:** Service availability 99.5% (equal to 1.83 days of downtime in any calendar year) as per contractually guaranteed Service Level Agreement (SLA)



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- **Support and fix:** 24x7 x 365 as per agreed SLA
- **Disaster recovery:** Up to 7 days of data update loss for ALEPH (medium impact, very low risk)

We analysed statistics of downtime from May 2011 to May 2012 and compared this to the contractual SLA for service availability offered by Ex Libris. We also analysed the number of staff and the activities involved in supporting the service. Our security and records management team examined the hosting agreement to make sure it satisfied our security needs and for legal compliance in respect of data protection and security.

In meetings with Ex Libris we concentrated on clarifying the terms of the proposed agreement, for example: 'was database management part of the agreement'? We also asked for changes to the contract in the event of the SLA not being met.

In-house activities	Managed activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the servers • SQL reports • Customisations • Application-related administration tasks • Connections of third party products • Management of local peripherals • Authentication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application hosting on data centre servers • Version upgrades and service pack installations • Hardware maintenance • Database management • Backups • Disc space monitoring • Service availability monitoring 24/7 • SFX knowledge base updates

Table 1 Division of activities for the hosted option

Option 1 (doing nothing) would not prejudice the service, and past experience suggested that there had not been any catastrophic failures or instances of failed delivery connected with the library systems infrastructure; however, this option had no human resource savings. Option 2 (application is installed and hosted on a server located at the Ex Libris Data Centre) would free internal resources in both infrastructure and applications teams, which could be used to develop additional functionality and services. The 24x7 coverage of supporting and fixing would contractually guarantee a level of availability higher than that achieved in the previous twelve months. The technology and practice were established. The cost comparison was favourable. Upgrades would be streamlined and would be implemented during off-peak times. It met our needs for data protection and security.

Having looked at the pros and cons and clarified the terms of the contract it was agreed that we would choose option 2 and move to a hosted service. The move to the Ex Libris hosted environment would continue to deliver to the university's then evolving strategy of using external providers to host and manage services where it was clear that there was a functional or economic benefit and the provision of the service stood to benefit.

We accepted that running the service would still be dependent on some university systems (namely the authorisation and authentication systems) and the university network for access to the LMS via clients and self-issue machines. This would reduce some of the advantages of hosting externally. These services could still be adversely affected by either a scheduled or unexpected outage at the university.

Implementation

Our project team consisted of librarians and members from the library systems support, information security, communications and infrastructure teams. The university and the supplier (Ex Libris) each assigned a project manager.



Moving the library systems at the University of Westminster to a hosted service

We were moving four products, all of which were linked to each other. We still had dependencies at the university. We also had a need to transfer data securely between the university and the Ex Libris data centre. In addition, both ALEPH and Primo were to be upgraded as part of the move to a hosted service.

We decided to move the products during vacations. SFX and MetaLib moved at Easter and ALEPH and Primo in the summer. The planning for the move needed to take into account all services communicating or interacting with the library systems. These are many and varied. ALEPH is both a Z39.50 client and server, Google Scholar crawls our electronic serials subscriptions, vendors have links to our OpenURL link resolver and we send EDI orders to vendors. There is also a need to take data from other systems: borrower data from the identity management system and bibliographic data harvested from the archives database (CALM) and our research repository, WestminsterResearch stored in Eprints.

A specific area of discussion was around the borrower data feeds. The Identity Management System (NetIQ Identity Manager) supplied borrower data directly to our LMS server. In the hosted environment it is not permissible to load third-party software on to the hosted servers. Instead we used a local server to load the identity management software and transferred the data to the hosted server from there.

The applications were successfully moved in the vacations and there was very little disruption to the service for staff and students. Moving on different dates and on a timeline of several months reduced disruption to the service and decreased risk, but meant additional complications as temporary firewall rules were needed to ensure that the applications that had moved could still communicate with those yet to move.

Outcomes – a mixed picture

Our requirements were to retain the flexibility of customising and configuring the service, to free up time for staff to enhance the service or work on other projects and to create extra resilience.

We have retained the same flexibility to customise and configure the service. There have been no problems accessing the servers. Regular Knowledge Base updates to the OpenURL link resolver are automatically done now. Staff no longer spend time discussing how to do backups or analysing server level problems. Staff time has been released and one member of staff has been moved full time to the library team to lead projects, and is currently working to implement a new reading-list system (Talis Aspire).

The creation of additional resilience is much more of a mixed picture. The move of all applications to the hosting centre was completed at the end of August 2013. There was an outage across all applications for approximately one hour in September 2013 and also several outages for SFX up to January 2014 and another for approximately one hour in October 2014. Although the overall availability was within the agreed SLA, the initial instability of SFX was a retrograde step and a surprise because it was a service that had rarely failed when supported in house. Most recently, we have had periods in both January and February this year (2015) when the Aleph client has been too slow to use.

On the plus side, support from Ex Libris is much simplified. Having all our applications hosted with the company providing support means that ExLibris has simple access to our servers in order to advise on configurations and customisations. We now have out-of-hours detection of service availability. The statistics for our original analysis of downtime for 2011 were adversely



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affected by several days' undetected loss of our discovery service Primo over the Christmas period. This will not happen within the new model. Another advantage, although infrequently needed, is the availability of Oracle support. We previously had access to just one person with Oracle knowledge to do ad-hoc support; now this is available at all times from Ex Libris.

We have only just taken advantage of the managed upgrades, to upgrade Primo to version 4.8.2 on the 15 December 2014. This upgrade began at 02:00, reducing the amount of downtime for an upgrade which we would otherwise have had to carry out during normal working hours.

Conclusion

When we first started the discussions about a hosted service in 2011, the Information Services department had an evolving strategy on hosting. The decision to move our library management platforms to external hosting was not taken lightly, but with our longer-term replacement strategy not yet fully in place, it was seen as a good 'halfway house' to enhance availability and resilience to the benefit of our users. Since then a Service Evaluation Framework has been created with a requirement that *'for each service that is introduced or reviewed an all-inclusive supply-host-manage solution should be sought in the first instance'*. As and when we decide the future of our library management platforms this will be a key issue to address and our current experience will help inform that.

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You wait twenty years for a new LMS and then two come along at once ...

Elizabeth Malone

Co-director Library and Learning Services
Kingston University
e.malone@kingston.ac.uk

Cathy Murr

E-Services Developer
Library and Learning Services
Kingston University
c.murr@kingston.ac.uk

Sarah Lusznat

E-Services Developer
Library and Learning Services
Kingston University
s.lusznat@kingston.ac.uk

At Kingston University we have just implemented our second library management system (LMS) in just under three years. As a result, you might consider writing this article to be some form of group therapy – far from it! We have found ourselves in the privileged position of being able to learn from our experiences and put some of those lessons into practice. With so many libraries embarking on this type of project, we felt that there was value in sharing our experience.

Why so many changes?

First, some background as to why we have implemented two library management systems in such a short time. Like many institutions, we had been with the same library management systems company since the year dot. With the growth in digital material, we had bolted on various third-party tools, which had created what one colleague described as a patchwork quilt of systems administration. Whenever the stitching failed, this contributed to the growing tide of dissatisfaction from both a staff and student perspective. In particular, locating e-content was a growing challenge involving a combination of Talis Prism, AquaBrowser, 360 Search and a SharePoint list. This entirely unsatisfactory position led us in 2010 to embark on a full OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) tender for a single new system that would meet all our requirements and place us in a stronger position to manage the digital future. Our winning tender was from Ex Libris who, at that stage, at least offered a package that would interact seamlessly (a suite of fully integrated products: Aleph, Primo, Metalib, SFX, Verde). However, it was with some astonishment that we read the announcement of the launch of their new product, Alma, only days after signing our contract. With its seamless approach to managing print and digital resources, in many respects it was the product that we had hoped to find during our tender – what bad timing on our part! However, amendments to contract enabled us to agree to migrate from Aleph to Alma when we felt the new product was sufficiently mature. This met our obligation to the university to deliver an improved student experience through an integrated discovery tool alongside a commitment to cost reduction while also enabling us to upgrade to the latest technology when the time was right.

Novelty factor

For some staff it came as quite a shock that we really were thinking of taking our custom elsewhere. Suddenly a system that was unloved began to regain some of its popularity. This may have been partly due to the fact that, in appearance, we were switching to a system that looked broadly similar to what we were already using in terms of its staff-facing functionality. Had we been transferring to Alma immediately, this would have been seen as a significant change. For other staff, the system change was seen as an exciting opportunity to provide input into the biggest departmental project for many a year. Initially we adopted a very inclusive approach, with teams examining the requirements lists for their area; but there came a crunch point when all that feedback had to be analysed and refined into something that a potential supplier could actually respond to. So the first lesson we learnt was about maintaining a subtle balance between consulting with a wide range of staff while ensuring that we could still produce a focused and meaningful tender specification. Involving so many staff in the early stages built an expectation that they could be involved in every stage of the project, which just wasn't feasible. On reflection, providing a draft calendar indicating the points of engagement for different groups of staff could have provided clarity and managed expectations. When we launched our Alma project, the novelty factor had worn off, but there was also more of a sense of projects being embraced as business as usual.

Procurement

Our procurement was done via a full OJEU tender, a process with which many of you will be familiar but on which I suspect very few librarians would



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claim to be experts. From discussions with other institutions, it appears that procurement teams run with different nuances, which can be confusing for those relatively new to the process, and we certainly found ourselves questioning just how much training in this area key library staff now require – after all, there is a lot at stake and none of us want accidentally to bring our institutions into disrepute with a tendering blunder! Better advice on how to prepare a marking and evaluation scheme for the submissions would have been welcome. Subsequent to our procurement experience, we did propose this to our Central Finance team as an area for staff development, particularly for senior managers who need to have a moderate grasp of the process. This training has not materialised and it would be interesting to know if other universities offer something similar.

Our project teams

What we have learnt is that it is very easy to refer to the 'project team', whereas the reality was at least two teams with a number of sub-groups.

Initially we expected procurement and implementation to be carried out by the same team, but we should have recognised earlier that not everyone would necessarily need to follow the whole process through from beginning to end. Whilst there were overlaps between procurement and implementation, regarding them as different teams would have provided more flexibility and enabled us to have a smaller, more targeted procurement / selection team. This would have been a distinct advantage when carrying out site visits, as finding suitable locations and dates for a team of ten plus felt more like mobilising an army. Admittedly the challenge was exacerbated by unseasonably early snow and a London tube strike!

When it came to assembling the team for the Alma implementation, the majority of the original project team were still in place. One or two new faces joined the team but essentially the whole experience felt much more calm and measured, with staff being able to anticipate what was required second time around. There was increasing emphasis on the 'project team' being a steering group which then reached out to other staff with expertise in specific functional areas.

Love your project manager

Our LMS replacement project was the first large corporate systems project for some years, during which time the university had made its first tentative steps towards a more structured project management approach. When we came to carry out the upgrade to Alma in the summer of 2014, our project governance had developed significantly.

Back in 2010, being assigned a project manager was a novel experience and one that was eyed with some suspicion by some of the team members in the first instance. However, as the project progressed, a great respect for our project manager's skills emerged. The project team appreciated her rigour in setting up meetings, pulling together reports and, most importantly, in negotiating resource from non-library teams whose input was essential to the success of the project.

For the 2014 Alma upgrade the entire team waited in anticipation to see who would be assigned as our project manager and fully embraced the approach of this new person joining the team. Organisational change meant that we were now implementing this project within a deconverged department and a very recently implemented project governance structure that presented its own challenges to non-Prince2 practitioners. However, working with our project manager continued to be a positive experience as whenever a crisis arose she was able to maintain objectivity in a way that was less possible for staff directly affected by the change.



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Keep the comms coming

Communication is always the challenge of any big project. Too much and everyone switches off, too little and everyone complains that they don't know what is going on. For both projects communications fell into three key areas – communication within the team, communication within the department, and communication across the university.

Within the project team itself, we needed a quick way to ensure that any library staff could contact the project team at any time and a shared email distribution list proved a simple but effective solution. Sharing all our internal documentation on a SharePoint project site also ensured everyone was looking at the latest version of documents. As well as project documentation, testing schedules, training calendars and user guides were all kept here. However, it wasn't possible for the Ex Libris staff to access this site, and so for the Alma project a Basecamp¹ site was created. This facilitated the sharing of documentation whilst enabling questions and queries to be resolved via discussion boards.

Within the department, a project newsletter was launched; it was circulated monthly to begin with but became more frequent as the go-live date approached. On the first project, I handled this work as a key stakeholder but without a specific work area to implement. However, for the second project we decided to involve two members of staff who also did not have a specific work area to implement and who could therefore keep an overview and write from the end user perspective. A project blog would also have been a good alternative.

For both projects we created a Comms Plan that identified internal departmental communications as against external university-wide engagement. Just listing all the potential stakeholders and identifying the most effective channel for reaching them was a valuable exercise. It also made us question exactly what was required. For example, we kept university-wide communications for the Alma upgrade to a minimum as we were hoping for a smooth transition that most staff and students wouldn't really notice. Our biggest university-wide communication with Alma was celebrating its success and ensuring the team received recognition for delivering a very successful project via the staff portal announcements.

Testing, testing, 1,2,3

Migrating data from one supplier to another was inevitably more complex than migrating to a new product with the same supplier. Testing with your own data is critical to the success of the project, but technical issues with our first project meant that we had very limited time to do this and, despite our best efforts, trying to simulate how our data would behave just wasn't good enough. We spent the first month after go-live finding and correcting problems in our circulation parameters, learning the hard way that our testing should have been far more rigorous.

Our Alma testing was managed to the finest detail by our project manager, and although our test log listing every possible scenario in every module looked very daunting, it was essential in ensuring that day one after the switchover ran smoothly. The data migration aspect was easier but still, encouraging staff to spot what isn't there (as against whether what is there is correct) was a skill in itself.

Integrations with other IT systems were inevitably complex, but are an area that we greatly underestimated first time around. Ensuring our student data imported correctly into Aleph absorbed over 500 hours of IT staff time. However, the tools to support systems integrations are becoming less complex: the same task for the Alma project took much less time and we were even able



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to tackle integration with the university's online payment system as an added bonus within the project.

Prepare for the big day

This could be summarised as training, training and more training. First time around, our project suffered from tight time constraints, which meant that we had little choice but to adopt a very hurried 'sheep-dip' approach. Equally, the resources provided by Ex Libris were relatively unsophisticated, whereas for Alma they were much improved with an extensive range of webinars that supported on-site meetings. Learning from our previous experience, our project manager for Alma created a tracking tool to ensure that everyone received the appropriate training and she constantly pushed and sent out reminders to ensure that each module was completed on time.

Being a multi-campus institution brought additional challenges to the 'go-live' day. Ensuring that messages were passed on promptly was very important. However, feedback we received when preparing for Alma was that sites remote from the project team had previously felt uncertain as to what was happening, so we agreed that, for Alma, a member of the project team would be on hand at each site and that they would then provide a single point of contact back to the systems staff.

It is also important to bear in mind that 'go-live' day is not the end of the project. There will be teething troubles, and all new systems and working practices need time to embed and become 'normal', so don't immediately plan to go on holiday! Make sure you schedule time for resolving immediate issues and then time to reflect on the project.

Celebrate!

It was with huge relief that we reached our original Ex Libris installation date and survived it. Our original procurement delays had knocked a whole month out of our original schedule and so everything was being done in double quick time. Contractual obligations meant that, without Hermione Grainger's Time Turner,² the team could only work furiously to turn around all the necessary tasks. The pop of a champagne cork as 'go-live' was announced brought smiles all round (as did the chocolate cake!). When the Alma go-live day dawned, everyone was clearly much calmer, more confident and anticipating a successful outcome, which, in itself, demonstrated the lessons, we had learnt.

Key reasons for success

Reading back over our End of Project report for the Alma migration, I was interested to see that our project manager had listed the following as key reasons for the success of our project:

- the allocation of sufficient team members with the right expertise,
- allowing an adequate amount of time to do the project,
- previous experience of the team,
- support at the senior level so that decisions were made in a timely fashion and escalated when necessary,
- strong teamwork.

Outcomes for our students

The fundamental driver behind both of these projects was to improve the student experience. We wanted a discovery interface that was user friendly, met the expectations of the Google generation, and that saw the library as a single resource rather than compartmentalised collections of print and digital. This has certainly been achieved and now, with our second implementation complete, the improved staff functionality means that we are able to deliver



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resources to our students more efficiently, all of which helps to underpin the excellent service we aim to provide.

Note: Use of the first person refers to Elizabeth Malone.

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Hosted library services

Clouds with silver linings



Caleb Derven
Head of Technical and Digital Services
Glucksman Library
University of Limerick
Ireland
caleb.derven@ul.ie



Michelle Breen
Librarian
Administration,
Glucksman Library
University of Limerick
Ireland
michelle.breen@ul.ie

Introduction

Software as a Service (SaaS) is becoming increasingly common as a delivery method for many software products. The Glucksman Library at the University of Limerick (UL) was the first university library in Ireland to move its library management system (LMS) from locally held servers to the vendor-hosted cloud. During the previous decade UL had increasingly relied on the LMS as a source of both efficiencies and integrations with other enterprise university systems. The move to the cloud allowed us to focus more resolutely on service improvements rather than systems administration.

Driven by the cost-saving mandate of the higher education authorities in Ireland and by our commitment to service improvement in our library, we engaged with a trusted vendor and a proven technology to move our services forward and explore new uses of staff time at the University of Limerick.

Background

The Glucksman Library's LMS has been with Talis / Capita since 1998. For much of this time, library staff managed the servers and technical processes for the LMS. In 2011 key senior staff members retired, leaving a vacuum in terms of the library's ability to maintain legacy hardware and deploy the technical processes necessary to run the LMS service. Secondly, in 2012, the library contracted Capita to conduct a business process analysis. The resulting report concluded that the library could gain definite efficiencies through a hosted or managed service. To provide a seamless, personalised service via the information desks, via the internet and self-service technologies, the library needed to have real-time access to staff and student records. Heretofore the synchronisation of student records on the LMS was a challenge and the entry of staff records was a manual process.



Information desk

Hosted library services

Clouds with silver linings



Self-service issue desk



Swipe access

Technological and cultural shift

UL Library prides itself on implementing new services early. It was one of the first Irish libraries to make wide use of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and to fully exploit shelf-ready book purchasing technologies. Developing further new services brings associated challenges, culturally and in the way we work, placing the emphasis on innovative and unfamiliar activities with an already reduced headcount. We engaged Capita in late 2012 as our partner in the move to hosted and managed LMS services and set ourselves an ambitious project schedule.

On both an infrastructure and technical level, the hosted systems meant a sea change for our processes. The cloud architecture proposed by Capita meant a much more complex set of relationships between the various nodes in the system. On a soft level, the move meant a much less granular level of control. A hosted system would not provide direct access to the application, database or server levels. To best navigate these profound changes for the library, a team of stakeholders was convened to vet thoroughly the proposed system and architecture.

At an infrastructural level, one major change necessary to support the hosted system was the creation of an AES 256 bit encrypted VPN (virtual private network); while the client side of the architecture remained with UL, the virtual servers sat in London and Birmingham. The university's Information Technology Division (ITD) was a tremendously supportive partner in the deployment of the LMS service, from the legacy system to the shift to the cloud. While the core components of Capita's hosted and managed services were located at Capita's network centres, the infrastructure itself is very much a collaborative effort between Capita, ITD and the library.

Historically, front-of-house staff assumed responsibility, in conjunction with systems staff, for a variety of tasks related to circulation. The move to the managed system meant that Capita would now complete this work. While these tasks were transitioned to Capita, Reader Services staff had the opportunity to focus their energies on new areas of the service or on reconfiguring existing services. For example, staff could move their focus away from the 'what' of configuring notification systems to the 'how' of providing an integrated circulation communication process for staff and students.

The move to the cloud

The transition to the hosted system took place over one month and effectively drew in the various collaborative strands defined earlier in the project. For instance, the library team rigorously tested the VPN and firewall setups created by ITD.

On the morning of the go-live, there was little to indicate that such a radical change was afoot. We transitioned over to the hosted system with only minutes of downtime on the changeover day.

Benefits of moving LMS to the cloud

The shift to cloud-based LMS allowed us to focus our energies on previously impossible service offerings and to move forward on our strategic imperatives of providing a range of new digital services. The most immediate effect of the migration was in allowing systems staff to focus on innovative services such as the deployment of a web service that would integrate staff and student records real-time in the LMS. The initial deployment of the service went through a minor, but totally unavoidable technical hiccup in the early days. Servers at the data centre had to be replaced and this issue was resolved by the vendor in a speedy fashion due to the critical nature of the planned roll-out of our hosted service.



Hosted library services

Clouds with silver linings

While the hosted and managed service does come at a cost, it provides a definite financial advantage. When these savings are combined with the release of staff time, the hosted service is financially advantageous over the traditional local model. However, in our experience, cloud should not be synonymised with cheap; it offers flexibility, and that is more difficult to quantify.

Initially the move to the cloud was a challenge to some long-standing habits of systems staff. However, the release of time did translate into the creation of the digital library infrastructure during the summer and autumn of 2013. Technical Services staff were able to implement many of the suggestions of the 2012 business process improvement report. The shift to the cloud facilitated a major organisational restructuring of the Technical & Digital Services Department during the summer of 2013.

Following this development, a number of new library services were introduced, including real-time integration of the student record system and the staff HR system with the library management system. This move to the hosted service enabled the introduction of a building access control system, the roll-out of Summon, the Discovery interface that searches our print and electronic resources, and the library's unique collections. The hosted service will further allow us to continue to integrate our LMS with the university's financial systems in 2015.

Conclusion

The main benefit of moving to a cloud-based system is to reduce costs and staff time by outsourcing hardware and software maintenance and support. The myriad ways in which money is saved by moving to the cloud are big headline news, but efficiency, stability and reliability of service are the less counted benefits.

Our experience in moving our LMS to the cloud was an overall positive one. This was a step we couldn't afford not to take. The many service enhancements described would not have been possible had we remained on a locally supported system. Our commitment to continuously moving our services forward has been given a tremendous boost by the hosted service. Our energies are now concentrated in the area of digital services; applying ourselves to newer and more challenging service delivery options for library users at the University of Limerick.

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Cloudbusting UWL's Library Management System

Tim Wales

Director of Library Services
The University of West London
tim.wales@uwl.ac.uk

Background

The University of West London (UWL) Library Services uses a Library Management System (LMS) from Capita called Alto. This is a core system that underpins key library operations with various supporting modules. The key functions include:

- library catalogue for locating items with user account functionality (Prism)
- circulation control of physical stock, including handing of reservation and charges
- acquiring, accessioning and cataloguing physical items, including ordering, invoicing and book fund management
- interlibrary loan handling
- library metadata exchange with other library / university systems: Talis Aspire (reading lists); Summon (library search); 3M self-service kiosks; Portal, etc.

In the UK, about fifty other universities use the Capita system and a further fifty public library authorities. The UWL implementation dates back to 1991 – its pre-Thames Valley University days, when the then Ealing College of Higher Education procured the BLCMP Integrated Library System, which ultimately became Talis Alto and later Capita Alto.

Concerns

- Back in early 2014, Alto was running on life-expired physical servers (with nearly full disk space) in a difficult-to-access server room in the middle of new campus building works. The system was at high risk of terminal (sic) failure if hardware problems occurred. Data backup and recovery was not guaranteed in the event of server failure.
- The new IT strategy developed by IT Services would require the decommissioning of these servers anyway, as part of their data centre project, in order to reduce the number of physical servers in favour of hosted solutions.
- Library Services was paying a considerable annual maintenance bill, which was not deemed to represent value for money, especially in comparison with LMS maintenance charges at some other institutions at which the Director had previously worked.
- The LMS agreement at the time did not include the option of additional modules that would be needed to support our future plans – for example, a book sorter in our new library space. More importantly, such modules
- depended on a solution to the infrastructure issues above and on the latest version of the system being installed.
- A further constraint was that the staff resource was not available in 2014 (either in the library or IT Services) to commit to a major new LMS, even assuming that the current set-up could last a while longer.

Strategic options

Various options were identified as a way forward:

- migrate current system to a new local physical server
- migrate current system to a new local virtual server
- migrate and upgrade system to an externally hosted physical or virtual server
- migrate and upgrade system to a Software as a Service (SaaS) or managed service
- take the opportunity to procure a new LMS, using a variant of the one of the options above



Cloudbusting UWL's Library Management System

Justification

After various consultations with the supplier and internal stakeholders around resource availability, priorities, timings and technical feasibility, a pragmatic decision emerged in favour of a Cloud-based solution. It was proposed to the formal IT Project committee that, subject to final technical approval by IT Services, Library Services should migrate and upgrade to Capita Chorus (the externally hosted version of Alto) and take advantage of the Capita Managed Service while at the same time outsourcing most major server administration work, given that:

- the current LMS software was broadly meeting UWL needs;
- the supplier could offer different delivery options (hosted and managed LMS service options) consistent with the new IT Strategy's approach to hardware infrastructure;
- additional modules were available that could help Library Services deliver benefits in future;
- the disruption and expense of a new LMS implementation project was not feasible at this time, given other priorities;
- the new system could be built in parallel to the old one as 'a greenfield server' and data migrated across minimising downtime;
- the LMS market was (and still is) in a transitory state as new web-scale systems are being developed and shared service operations being tested – there was therefore some value in making the best of our current set-up and waiting for first and more generously-resourced first-movers to resolve the problems with the next-generation systems on our behalf!
- UWL could realise cost savings by changing hosting method.

Depending on IT resource availability, it was preferable to try and make this change in the June to August 2014 vacation window as it minimised disruption during term time and also offered a chance of e-payments being ready for the new session in September 2014, including at our Reading site, which was being upgraded to a full site library. There were also strategic staffing reasons for completing the move before the end of August.

Review

Nearly twelve months since the original proposal was made and given the green light, and five months since the main transition was completed, how did the LMS project go?

Positives

- The upgrade itself went smoothly, even using the old server infrastructure.
- There was minimal loss of access (half a day?) for end users whilst the switch to the Cloud was happening
- The servers had failed in the run-up to the migration, thus necessitating the short-term renewal of Oracle server support agreements for the problem to be identified and fixed – this further vindicated the decision adopted with 99.8% up-time since the upgrade and server hosting outsourcing.
- New modules that fitted in with other work were available quickly
- We were able very quickly to get better value for money from our new agreement
- Project management by the supplier helped reduce the overhead for IT Services project team.



Cloudbusting UWL's Library Management System

Negatives

- We have experienced some local problems with rolling out the VPN tunnel (which enables local staff PCs to connect securely to the remote server hosted by Capita) and associated client configurations on library staff PCs using a packaged software approach. But these difficulties (which were due either to network time-outs or system configuration privilege issues on host PCs) were resolvable.
- It became apparent that libraries still need some form of dedicated systems resource even when they are paying for a combination of external hosting and managed services. This resource is required to provide the local first point of contact with the supplier, to monitor progress on outstanding calls logged, to serve as a source of local knowledge and also to serve as an honest broker between various internal agencies and the LMS provider. Delay in recruiting such a resource has meant that some new modules have not yet been implemented, and old inefficient processes and workflows have had to remain in place.
- Additional needs emerged as the implementation progressed and the extent of local workarounds for known limitations of the old system became apparent. Some of these could be resolved by taking advantage of new functionality in the upgraded system (e.g. user notifications), others required additional paid-for modules – e.g. for management information and reporting.
- The short timeframe meant that there was little time to resolve internal differences of opinion around Payment Card Industry compliance for e-payments; this has delayed roll-out of this module

Conclusions

Every LMS implementation is unique to each institution, even with supposedly standard systems. This means that it may be difficult to draw conclusions from this particular project that help other institutions.

Nonetheless, it is fair to say that the trend (whether from a library or IT Services perspective) is definitely towards externally hosted or true SaaS systems. The UWL experience shows that an LMS migration project is best regarded as a change management or business process review project that will surface all the legacy data and other issues that have been circumvented or ignored in the past (in much the same way that discovery systems highlighted metadata issues in OPACs), rather than as a purely technical implementation.

Such projects are therefore best phased carefully to allow time and energy to be devoted to ensuring that key priority functions work efficiently and effectively. It is also important to be realistic about the financial savings that can be made, for example on staffing resources, given local support for the system is still required. As always, getting internal stakeholders on board as early as possible can help avoid (but not avoid completely) tricky technical issues at a later stage.

Ultimately this kind of project is a natural evolutionary step towards a full-scale re-think of the library systems environment at UWL in a few years' time, when the fun will begin again with a full-blown tender – who knows whether as part of some regional consortium or cooperative like the original BLCMP (Birmingham Libraries Co-operative Mechanisation Project) all those years ago back in 1969!

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The Liverpool Scene – University Library and University Press as partners

Andrew Barker

Head of Academic Liaison
Special Collections & Archives
University of Liverpool Library
Andrew.barker@liverpool.ac.uk

Over the last few years, the University of Liverpool Library and Liverpool University Press have been working towards a partnered approach to developing new resources and sharing knowledge and expertise. This article will outline what we have already done, what we are in the process of doing and how we might collaborate further in the future.

Background – the beginning of a collaborative relationship

I began in my post as Head of Academic Liaison, Special Collections & Archives at the University of Liverpool Library in May 2013. I am responsible for heading up support for research, learning & teaching and for ensuring that the holdings of our Special Collections & Archives have the visibility that they deserve.

The starting point for what I wanted to achieve in my new role was to try to find a way for the library to be cleverer in the way it meets the needs of our undergraduates and researchers and to ensure that the holdings of Special Collections & Archives were more aligned in supporting the university's learning and teaching.

In the almost two years that I have been in Liverpool that objective has not changed, but much else has.

Once I began working at Liverpool, our then Head of Collections, Content and Discovery, Terry Bucknell, and our Research Support Lead, Martin Wolf, talked to me about the work they had been doing with Liverpool University Press (LUP) and suggested I meet LUP's Managing Director, Anthony Cond to find out more about the Press. So that's just what I did.

Liverpool University Press – some background

Liverpool University Press is housed just a stone's throw away from our Sydney Jones Library; founded in 1899, it is the third oldest university press in the UK and has a long history of publishing exceptional research. Following a re-birth in 2004, when it became a limited company, it has expanded rapidly and now publishes around 70 books and 25 journals a year. Its specialisms are literature, modern languages, history and visual culture. In essence LUP is an ambitious press, committed to disseminating the research and teaching that comes out of the University of Liverpool. However, LUP has gone far beyond being just the 'university's press', and publishes material from other institutions and from writers not attached to any university, most often those writing on subjects relating to the great city of Liverpool.

Developing the partnership

Although a great part of this article might suggest that the partnership between our library and LUP began when I arrived in 2013, join-up had been established well before I took up my new post. There was already a Library Advisory Board in place and plans were well advanced between Anthony Cond and Martin Wolf to develop 'Modern Languages Open' (MLO), an open-access platform for the dissemination of interdisciplinary research in the modern languages. The development of this platform as a partnership between press, library and University of Liverpool academics positions Liverpool strongly in this area, and the partnership was already well established.

The role of the Library Advisory Board is to discuss and select ongoing, mutually beneficial collaboration centred on the needs of the university, while each entity continues to do their 'core business' independent of the other. In every aspect of our relationship, it is a partnership of equals.

The starting point for my own involvement with Anthony and LUP was what one might call an 'informal' relationship: Anthony and I met occasionally for lunch, talked of our strong shared love for the Beatles and other beat groups of the



The Liverpool Scene – University Library and University Press as partners

period, while plotting how our partnership might grow beyond the advisory board and MLO.

Our nascent thoughts in this direction were (perhaps rather obviously) about collaboration on the development of e-books. Our thinking was that universities are the primary producers of the content of scholarly publications, through the research, writing and peer reviewing of their academic authors and editors, while it is the university library that is often the primary home to those publications, whether they are monographs or textbooks recommended by an academic for their students.

In sum, as a producer and consumer of content the university has a significant investment in academic publishing. If you throw into the mix advances in technology, the rise of open access and external economic pressures, it makes sense for us to move to the concept of the university as book publisher. These informal discussions then led to thoughts about what we might publish and where funding might come from to turn the discussions into something near reality.

What we might publish was easy to answer, certainly for me, from a library perspective. The increasing challenge for university libraries is to ensure that we have sufficient copies of key textbooks in the right numbers at point of need. Survey feedback from students suggested that if we could successfully collaborate on textbooks, this would make a significant impact on our students' experience of the library. LUP agreed that a real benefit would come from collaboration on textbooks.

That strategic decision was very easy; the challenge was where the money might come from to fund such an initiative. The timing of our discussions was perfect, for just as we were thinking about how we might move on, JISC put out a call 'inviting UK higher education institutions (HEIs) and further education colleges (FECs) to participate in a three-year national project to explore the viability of institutions becoming e-textbook publishers'.¹

Developing the bid

Although the timing of the JISC call was perfect, the timescale for responding to the call was very tight. We had to move our thoughts from 'wouldn't it be great to publish an e-textbook' straight to 'this is what we want to publish, this is the impact our textbooks will have and this is how much it will cost us to develop the books' in around two weeks. Although it was a short turnaround, the timescale was ideal for a library / press partnership. We had the complementary skills in place to produce a workable bid very quickly.

Being responsible for academic liaison, I had the necessary academic contacts across the university. I could also see which subject areas might benefit from our creating bespoke textbooks. The press could use its editorial expertise to send a call for proposals for textbooks to Liverpool academics. Clearly, LUP's experience of commissioning books meant we could put out a call for submissions, assess the likely impact of each, price the proposal and complete the bid to JISC's timescale. Without our complementary skills, we just wouldn't have been able to make a bid within the timescale.

However, with that combined expertise, we turned the eleven expressions of interest that we received into two workable proposals. Our bid to JISC would be built round two possible textbooks: *'Essentials for financial management'*, to be written by Jason Laws, an academic from the University of Liverpool Management School; this textbook would be used on the largest taught course in the institution (replacing a £56 textbook from a commercial publisher used by 900 students), while the second would be, *'Using primary sources'*, to be edited by Jon Hogg from our History Department, and to be used across



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twenty modules in the School of History. Crucially, the proposal for the Primary sources textbook would make use of material held in the library's Special Collections and Archives. So, for the library these two proposals would be closely aligned to our strategy of improving student experience and raising the visibility of our collections. This was key; the proposal of institution as textbook publisher would only be worth pursuing if the textbooks would bring real value to our stakeholders. The two textbooks that we selected would do that.

The textbooks would be open access under a creative commons licence. The library would be responsible for supporting the technical infrastructure with *Essentials* being produced on the openly available 'Xerte' platform; *Primary sources* would be made available via 'Biblioboard' (purchased by the library through a JISC deal). A print-on-demand copy would be sold alongside the open access digital textbooks. Although the prime focus of the development of the textbooks would be for University of Liverpool students, other institutions would, of course, utilise the open access materials but they would be LUP branded.

From bid to books... and beyond?

We got our bid in to JISC and, within a month, we had the great news that it had been successful. Alongside the University of Liverpool, there were successful applications from University College London, the University of Nottingham and the University of the Highlands & Islands in partnership with Edinburgh Napier University. The projects are doing very different things, and the books will be published over the next two years. Our two books should be published in 2016. At present they are being written, while library staff work with the academics to support the transition from the written page to the selected platform.

Although the books are not yet written, LUP and the library are looking at our next steps. We face some significant challenges in taking this pilot further. We were very fortunate indeed that JISC Collections put the call out for funding an e-textbook project. Without that funding, however much we talked about the possibilities, we would have been unable to get the idea beyond the fantasy stage. So our challenge beyond these JISC-funded books comes down to sustainability. However successful these books are, there is not yet an answer to where ongoing funding would come from to enable us to scale up.

However, the success of the partnership in establishing the Library Advisory Board, in the development of Modern Languages Open platform and in the successful bid for the two e-textbooks suggest that we can continue to develop ideas that will have significant benefit to students and researchers of the University of Liverpool and beyond. One thing is certain: whatever we go on to develop, this partnership of equals will continue.

Note

- 1 JISC Collections, 2014. Call for participation: Institution as e-textbook publisher [online]. Available from: <http://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/News/Institution-as-e-textbook-publisher-call-for-participation/> [Accessed 27 February 2015]

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Free e-books for all: the Middlesex University Library experience

Matthew Lawson
Head of Library & Learner Development
Library & Student Support
Middlesex University
m.lawson@mdx.ac.uk

Academic libraries are operating in an increasingly competitive market. Recent changes to the higher education system have encouraged private providers, raised tuition fees to £9000 and removed the cap on student numbers. This means that students are likely to compare what different institutions have to offer, in addition to the courses themselves.

At Middlesex University, these changes have led to a greater focus on all aspects of the student experience, which has in turn presented opportunities to develop library services. The university's relative position in league tables and NSS ranking provided an incentive for the Executive to consider investing in the library. We used the SCONUL statistics to argue successfully that we were comparatively underfunded in terms of learning materials budgets and that this was impacting negatively on student satisfaction. Subsequently we bid for 24x7 opening and worked on a project to provide free printing for students. These improvements appear to have had a positive impact on both informal and formal measures of student satisfaction and to have contributed to the university rising up the league tables.

New initiatives quickly become part of the standard service expected, so there is pressure to identify further areas where we can add value. The idea of giving free stuff to students has been explored in the last couple of years at a number of universities. Plymouth University and Imperial College London have given free e-books to students on particular courses. The University of East London has a bursary card that can be used for a range of products and has this year given all first-year students a tablet preloaded with e-books.

During 2012–13 the library developed a bid with the Business School to give their students free e-books to support them in their studies. Although the bid was not successful it generated considerable interest and it was widely thought that it should be revisited for all Schools. In November 2013 we drafted a proposal for the Executive suggesting that the university provide free e-books to students in the coming academic year. It was agreed that there should be a pilot in the first year of operation, and that the offer would be extended to the whole university in the second year. The principle was that the university would give a free e-book to every student for each module they studied.

The main reasons for supporting the scheme were as follows:

- to support the university's strategy of 'enhancing student achievement and satisfaction'
- to improve NSS results
- to provide an additional means of attracting students to the university
- to demonstrate value for money in the face of higher tuition fees
- to assist with course delivery, in that lecturers would be sure all their students have the essential text
- to enhance pedagogy through the ability to annotate passages and share notes.

Finance was provided centrally, from outside the library budget, with the expectation that any money saved on not buying multiple copies of essential texts would be used to broaden the collection. This guaranteed the funding of the project on an ongoing basis and answered one of the library's main concerns – that the project might be supported for a year and then cancelled. It was feared that a short-term approach could have a negative effect on student satisfaction, as it could be deemed that a valued service was being taken away.

There were various options for providing books to the students, and the decision to offer e-books reflected the way our students work and study as 'digital natives'. Logistically both the storage and the distribution of hard-copy



Free e-books for all: the Middlesex University Library experience

books would be challenging for a campus where space is at a premium.

A tender process was undertaken and among the criteria set out for potential suppliers were the following:

- value for money
- compatibility with the Moodle VLE
- access both online via streaming and offline on a variety of devices once downloaded
- a publisher-neutral platform
- assistance with negotiation with publishers
- support services

Several companies participated in the tender process; it consisted of a questionnaire and presentation, and was won by John Smith / Kortext.

The tender process was concluded barely six months before the start of the academic year. A project officer was seconded internally to lead on key operational activities. These included: gathering information about the courses running in the coming academic year; collecting recommendations from module leaders; integrating the Kortext system with Moodle.

Gathering course details

Gathering course details was essential in order to ensure that every student had a book for each module they studied. It also provided us with information about what courses were running, whom to contact and projected student numbers. It quickly became apparent that our (somewhat naïve) assumption that there was a central list of university programmes and modules was unfounded. We spent weeks gathering data manually and were never entirely confident that we had information on all the courses. We learned for the future to work closely with the School administrative staff as they have a clear overview. This data has myriad uses across the university, and work has been undertaken to centralise it.

Contacting module leaders

It is essential that the module leader recommend the books chosen. This ensures that they are relevant and maximises support of academic staff for the scheme. Unfortunately, by the time we contacted academic staff for their recommendations, they were deep into exam marking, which led to a lot of chasing up on our part late into the summer. A longer lead-time and a more systematic approach to collection have been developed for year 2 of the project.

Integration with Moodle

It was considered important that students should be able to access their free e-books by clicking a link in the VLE where their other course materials are provided. Close working between the university's IT department and Kortext ensured that there are no unnecessary passwords or systems to navigate in order to access the e-books. It was not possible to automate the placing of these links for the pilot, but a plug-in is being developed for year 2 of the project.

The time taken by these tasks meant there wasn't the focus on publicity and marketing that there might have been, either internally or externally. We aim to develop a more coherent communication plan this year.

The project launched in September 2014 as planned. Emails were sent out before students arrived, followed by induction talks; staff from Kortext provided support on campus for the first three weeks of term, which meant that the majority of queries or problems were quickly resolved.



Free e-books for all: the Middlesex University Library experience

Online support has been triaged via the student portal by Kortext and Middlesex staff. Issues have been remarkably few – 300 queries from 5000 students, with most of them requiring a quick fix. Difficulties arose when e-book recommendations came very late – for example when a new module leader was appointed at the last minute and wanted to change the chosen book. If students had already downloaded the original book it could get 'stuck' in the system. The longer time-scale in the second year of the project should mitigate this.

It is important that every student knows about their free e-books and takes advantage of them. The emphasis on communication at the start of term meant that by week 3 around 50% of students had registered. Through liaison and reminder emails and text messages this had risen to at least 85% by the end of the first term. (It is likely that this percentage is actually higher and that some of the students who had not activated their free books had withdrawn from their course.)

Informal feedback has been gathered from course boards and student surveys, and has been generally very positive. More formal feedback will be in order to improve the project.

Plans were made to scale the pilot project up to cover the whole university. Additional time was allowed for the elements of the pilot that had proved most complex, and the project was placed on a more formal footing, with a steering group of representatives from Schools and relevant services. There are several advantages to having the library manage the project:

- The library is perceived as neutral but supportive of the Schools. It means that collaboration with other teams is usually positive. Fostering good relations (and calling in favours) has been essential in moving the project forward.
- The library is seen as making a direct and active contribution to the education of students and contributing to the student academic experience. The added functionality that the e-books offer as teaching objects adds to this.
- Rather than just being a procurement exercise, the e-books project is part of a range of activities taking place in the university to enable students to succeed in their course.
- E-books would be seen as library resources even if the library were not leading the project, so it is in the service's interest to actually be responsible for them.

There is still a great deal of work to be done in preparation for every Middlesex student having e-books but we see this as a great opportunity to place the library at the heart of a bold new initiative as well as putting the university at the vanguard of a new model of service delivery.

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Supporting researchers with a research information management platform

Suzanne Enright

Interim University Registrar and Secretary
University of Westminster
s.enright@westminster.ac.uk

Research at the University of Westminster is increasing: in volume, importance and impact.¹ Advancing our research programme is one of the main pillars for the university's strategic plan, Westminster 2020, with renewed priorities for increasing research income, research student numbers, creating more world-leading research and international research alliances.

While the university's focus is on a mixture of world-leading research, pioneering teaching and providing education for all regardless of background or financial status, historically the Information Services department has been engaged more on supporting taught courses than research. In response to the university's shifting strategic priorities, an earlier review of the Information Strategy determined the need to rethink how the department could improve support for research. This challenge was also taken up by the university's researchers, doctoral students and research support communities, the Graduate School and Registry and the Research Committee.

Approach

We engaged an independent consultant to interview our researchers in order to identify their requirements.² This revealed that it was not that our traditional library services supplying books and journals to researchers needed to change, as these were well established and well used. Rather, our data and information management expertise was needed.

Information and data management pain points for researchers were varied and spread throughout the research lifecycle. We identified four main areas where researchers required assistance:

- 1 Research administration and governance
 - inefficiencies in submitting funding bids and managing grant contracts
 - managing information about projects and outputs and making this available to the various bodies requesting information on research activity
- 2 Collaboration
 - finding collaborators in other disciplines
 - collaborating effectively with researchers in other institutions
 - ensuring the confidentiality of sensitive information
- 3 Marketing and profile raising
 - ensuring a researcher's web profile is up to date and findable by search engines
- 4 Research outputs management
 - managing large volumes of research data collected and produced during a project
 - storing and making appropriate datasets available after a project

We recognised that many of these problems were interdependent: web profiles help attract funding and collaborators; published data sets help build a web profile. Given the interrelated nature of these problems, and the need to reduce the barriers to researcher adoption, we opted to create a research information management platform rather than tackle each problem with a separate initiative. We named our platform a 'Virtual Research Environment' (VRE), upon which we could build a series of solutions that together form a streamlined, integrated system.



Supporting researchers with a research information management platform

The guiding principles of our approach are:

a) A single system

With a single system, we had one 'system of truth' for information on our research activity. This made it easier for users, easier to maintain, and improved the quality of the data.

b) Collaboration and responsiveness

As a new initiative, our approach throughout the project has been to work collaboratively with researchers, to understand requirements and to adapt our solution as we learnt more.³

c) User driven

The information should be editable and controlled by the relevant researcher (with appropriate checks by other staff where needed). This has the advantage that the data owner was more likely to be motivated to keep their research profiles up to date, and more likely to notice where data is incorrect.

d) Automating administration

We were keen to automate time-consuming administrative processes through the VRE, to ease the administrative burden on researchers and improve the likelihood of important administrative processes being completed on time.

e) Insight

The VRE, even at the conceptual stage, showed the potential to provide an unprecedented level of reporting insight into our research activity, capacity and capability. Our intention is to use the system to help the university better understand where research support would have greatest impact.

FUNCTIONALITY

Researcher directory

Our first priority was to create a rich and searchable directory of our researchers. Basic details for each researcher are fed from our human resources system with extra details added directly by researchers in the VRE. With a mix of automatic and researcher-controlled input, the profiles we are creating

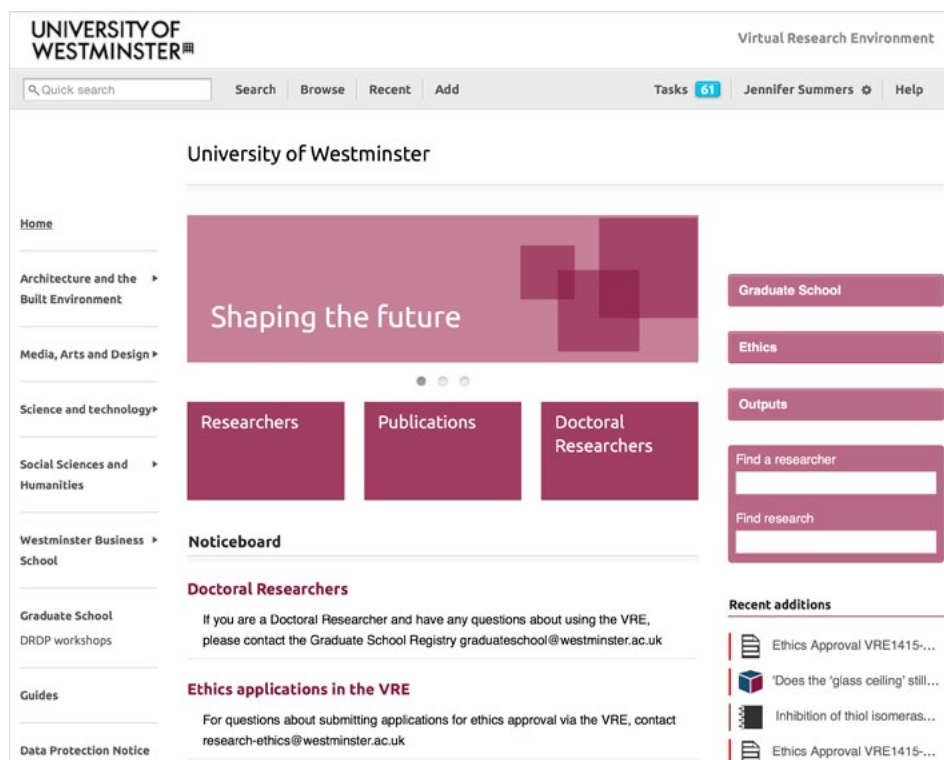


Fig. 1 VRE homepage



Supporting researchers with a research information management platform

are rich in detail, accurate and up to date. The VRE researcher directory will shortly become the source of our public website academic directory, removing duplication of information and effort in maintaining separate profiles in our website content management system.

The directory enables researchers to find potential collaborators in other disciplines, and doctoral research supervisors and examiners.

Graduate School

Our interviews with researchers revealed managing information about (student) doctoral researchers as a severe pain point. Existing information was spread across many systems: from our student record system (with limited access), to spreadsheets and notes kept within faculties and individual supervisory teams. Inevitably information became out of sync between these different sources.

The student record system, designed for managing cohorts of taught students, was limited in its ability to support doctoral research projects:

- Access was limited to a few administrators, but many different people support a doctoral research project and need access to project information.
- The system itself could not absorb all the information needed for an appropriate record of complex doctoral research projects.
- The student record system did not provide sufficient flexibility to handle the multiple changes inevitably required during a long-running project.
- The student record system could not support the individual nature of each doctoral research project.

The VRE provides a central, secure space to collate and share all relevant information about doctoral research projects in one place. With appropriate access rules applied, project details are restricted to the doctoral researcher, their supervisors, and faculty PhD coordinators; our Graduate School Registry is able to view all projects.

The screenshot shows the 'UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER' dashboard for 'Doctoral Researchers'. It features a search bar, navigation tabs (Search, Browse, Recent, Add), and user information (Tasks 21, Emily Russell, Help). A sidebar on the left lists various departments like Architecture, Media, Science, Humanities, Business, Graduate School, and Guides. The main content area displays a table with 371 doctoral researchers, filtered by name and faculty. The table columns are Doctoral Researcher, Faculty: Department, Director of Studies, Start, and Status.

Doctoral Researcher	Faculty: Department	Director of Studies	Start	Status
Susanna Owen	Humanities: Politics and Internatio...	Dr Christos Dunn	16 Sep 2013	Active
Mila Banks	Media: Journalism and Mass Com...	Dr Nikita Cooke	09 Jan 2012	Active
Emilia Burton	Science: Human and Health Scien...	Dr Frederick Cooper	19 Sep 2011	Active
Hana Dervishi	Business: Business Information M...	Prof Hassan Mackenzie	17 Sep 2012	Active
Jasmine Mills	Business: Leadership and Develo...	Dr Kira Reynolds	09 Jan 2012	Active
Henry Cooper	Media: Journalism and Mass Com...	Dr Nikita Cooke	19 Sep 2011	Active
Jessica Hart	Humanities: Politics and Internatio...	Dr Noel Garcia	19 Sep 2011	Active
Jacob Payne	Science: Psychology	June Byrne	05 Oct 2009	Active
Darius Chambers	Architecture: Architecture	Dr Leandro Price	19 Sep 2011	Active
Uxue Michel	Humanities: Law	Prof Emilia Nicholls	17 Sep 2012	Active
Mane Allen	Science: Human and Health Scien...	Dr Louise Burke	19 Sep 2011	Active
Ronja Ismail	Media: Journalism and Mass Com...	Prof Anthony Carter	05 Oct 2009	Submitted
Gregory Faber	Humanities: Law	Dr Marc Wilson	07 Jan 2013	Active
Anna Torres	Science: Human and Health Scien...	Dr Rebecca Karlsen	17 Sep 2012	Active

Fig. 2 Example of VRE Graduate School dashboard



Supporting researchers with a research information management platform

Doctoral researchers are required to pass a series of key stages during their doctorate, enabling the Graduate School to monitor successful progression. The paper-based processes were inefficient and opaque. We added workflow to support these processes through the VRE, dramatically cutting the time to complete each process and increasing visibility of the progress of each application.

By solving the problem of managing doctoral researchers, we helped engage researchers with the VRE and gained their support for the rest of the project.

The screenshot shows the 'UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER' logo at the top left. Below it is a navigation bar with a search box, 'Search', 'Browse', and 'Recent' buttons. On the right of the navigation bar are 'Tasks 1', 'Susanna Owen', and 'Help' links. The main content area is titled 'Doctoral research project' and features a sidebar on the left with categories: Home, Architecture, Media, Science, Humanities, Business, Graduate School, and Guides. The main content area displays a table of project details:

Title	Doctoral research project	Overview
Researcher	Susanna Owen	Supervision
Supervisor	Director of studies: Dr Christos Dunn Second (i): Dr Aimar Foster	Registration
Doctoral research project stage	Active	Ethics
Registration dates	16 Sep 2013 to end of 30 Sep 2017	Transfer
Key dates	Registration: 01 Oct 2013	DRDP
Project mode	Full-time	Request changes
Cohort	2013 September	
Doctoral research project type	M.Phil.	

At the bottom of the main content area, there is a 'Tasks' section.

Fig. 3 Example of Doctoral research project

Research ethics

It is not only good practice to encourage researchers to consider the ethical implications of their research, but for an institution it is critical that we fulfil our duty of care to our researchers and their research subjects, and ensure that all research activity is covered by university insurance. Although we have a long-standing requirement for researchers to complete a research ethics form for all projects, until the implementation of the VRE it was complex to monitor compliance. With a simple-to-use online form, it is now easy for researchers to complete a form and feasible for faculties to monitor completion.

Where research ethics approval forms require additional consideration, forms can be forwarded to the appropriate research ethics committee through the VRE, which provides tools for committees to schedule applications, notify applicants, and support an online discussion where applications are being considered outside a regular committee meeting.

As the chair of one of our faculty ethics committees reports, 'The VRE has allowed the process [of applications for ethics approval] to be transparent, creating a significant reduction in staff and student frustration levels and importantly it has reduced the number of errors that occurred in our old procedures.'

Supporting researchers with a research information management platform

Research outputs repository

Like most UK higher education institutions, the university of Westminster has a well-established institutional repository (WestminsterResearch⁴) using ePrints software. We were keen to improve the completeness of our collection and increase the number of open access files in preparation for the next Research Excellence Framework exercise.

To achieve this we wanted to enable researchers to add and edit their own research output records, essentially to 'own' their records, as they are more likely to notice errors and omissions, and to quickly add the missing material.

The screenshot shows the University of Westminster Virtual Research Environment (VRE) interface. At the top, it displays the university logo and the text 'Virtual Research Environment'. Below this is a search bar and navigation links for 'Search', 'Browse', and 'Recent'. The user's name 'Viren Swami' and a 'Help' link are also visible. The main content area is titled 'Outputs: Dr Viren Swami' and features a 'Back' button. On the left, there is a vertical navigation menu with categories like 'Home', 'Architecture and the Built Environment', 'Media, Arts and Design', 'Science and technology', 'Social Sciences and Humanities', 'Westminster Business School', 'Graduate School', 'Guides', and 'Data Protection Notice'. The main area shows a summary of outputs: 'Journal article (202)', 'Book chapter (23)', and 'Book (4)'. Below this are filters for years (2015-2007) and types (Peer-review, Research, Scholarly, Open access). Three output records are listed for 2015, each with a title, author list, and publication details.

Fig. 4 A researcher's outputs

It is our experience that ePrints does not provide sufficiently flexible access permissions to enable researchers to add and edit their own outputs directly. We therefore decided to use the VRE as a feed to ePrints. Researchers could add their outputs in the VRE, which by this time is well embedded in their working practices. The repository team are alerted to new submissions, check and amend the record before sending it to the institutional repository.

The VRE provides faculty research directors with an overview dashboard of the number of outputs being produced and, importantly, the provision of versions suitable for open access. In collaboration with the repository manager, this enables faculties to ensure ongoing compliance with open access policies.

Our intention is to extend the VRE management of outputs to include datasets, with workflow to support ingest services, including setting appropriate access and licensing.

Supporting researchers with a research information management platform

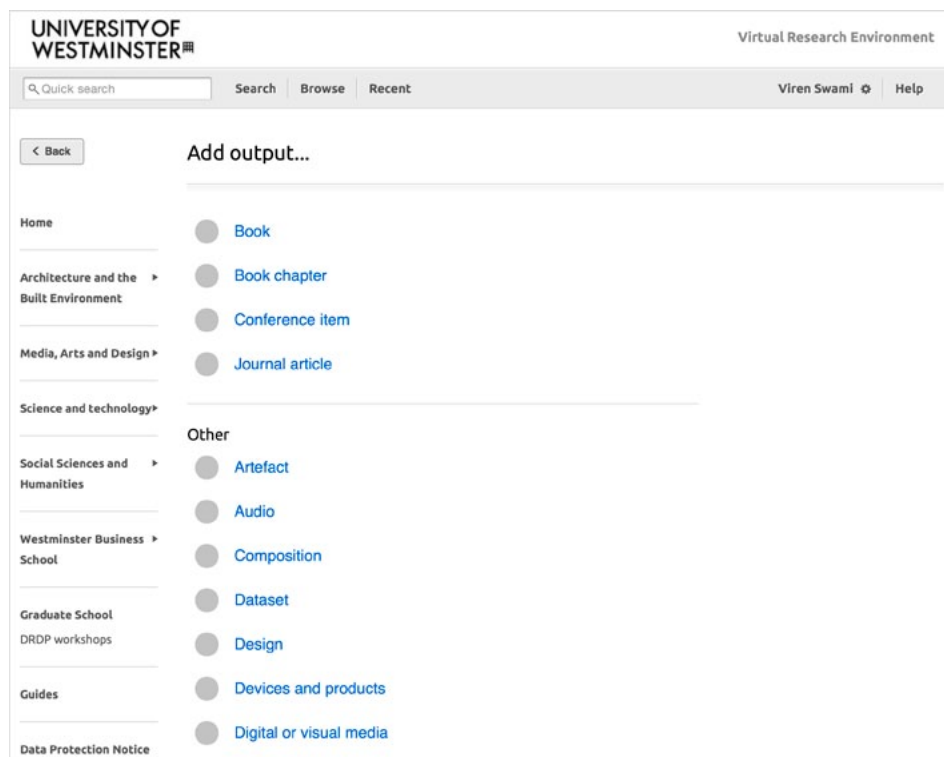


Fig. 5 Adding outputs

Future functionality

Our next round of development will focus on improving support for funding applications and contract management. This will include the completion of data management plans, and enable the VRE to support the management of data throughout the project, thus helping to ensure compliance with contractual requirements regarding the availability of data at the end of a project.

University of Westminster Press

In parallel, the creation of a University of Westminster Press (UWP) was approved in 2014, with the aim of being an open access publisher of high quality, peer-reviewed, academic publications. It will be primarily an online publishing operation and is being developed in conjunction with Ubiquity Press. The launch is due in 2015. Although the press will support initiatives in widening access to university research, it is primarily aimed at reputation-enhancing activities. UWP will support a wide range of disciplines from the natural sciences to the creative arts, and in formats including journals, conference papers, books and monographs and edited book series. We intend that UWP will make rigorously peer-reviewed research freely and widely available on an affordable and sustainable basis. There is of course the added benefit of being able to use UWP directly as a route to publishing for early career researchers or those just returning to research.

UWP is governed by an editorial board comprising university staff and alumni, the latter with publishing experience. The board is responsible for ensuring that the UWP profile maintains the highest standards, developing the business model and ensuring that submissions to the press follow ethical guidelines of both the university and Ubiquity.

We have recently appointed a Press Manager, who is key to the successful start-up of this new venture for the university and will be extensively involved in promoting the benefits of publishing with UWP. The Press Manager will work closely with the UWP Board as well as with researchers, academic staff and editorial boards of individual journals, monographs, conference proceedings,

Supporting researchers with a research information management platform

as well as liaising with prospective editors of journals and book authors in the development of open access titles for publication.

VRE Technology

Our ambitious plans for the VRE could only be realised with appropriate technology. We selected the Haplo⁵ open source platform as the foundation of the VRE. We were the first higher education institution to use Haplo, although it has been in use in other information-intensive sectors for several years.

Flexibility

The key to being able to represent such varied information in one system was flexibility. The Haplo platform uses a non-relational data model based on the semantic web, enabling it to provide the flexibility and ability to evolve that we required.

Workflow

As we wanted administrative workflow within the same system as our database of researchers and projects, we needed a platform to support both. The Haplo platform supports workflow around the information it manages, implemented as simple JavaScript plugins.

Integration

Although our intention is for the VRE to hold a comprehensive collection of information about our research activity, we will inevitably need some information to be fed into and out of the system. The Haplo platform is easy to connect to, with data accepted in many formats and with minimum effort required on our part. Data can be provided in its source format, with any data transformations undertaken by the Haplo team.

Hosting

Our policy is to use externally hosted solutions wherever they meet our requirements for secure data hosting:

- hosted in the EEA
- personal data encrypted in transit and at rest
- active / passive disaster recover with service restoration within two minutes
- backups at least daily.

Using a hosted service, we can deliver solutions faster to our researchers with no delay in setting up and purchasing hardware. It enables us to benefit from the supplier's expertise and knowledge of the system, and avoids our IT staff from having to learn and maintain a multitude of external systems.

We have a 99.5% service availability contractual guarantee with the platform providers, and have been satisfied with 100% uptime since launch 18 months ago.

Ease of operation

A key requirement for the university was that any solution must be easy for busy researchers to adopt. We have found that the simple user interface, together with functionality that has been highly tailored for our processes, has contributed to high engagement with minimal training. With a platform, researchers just have one new system with which to become familiar and any future functionality would just be added to the familiar interface.

Custom plugins

We chose to commission the Haplo team to build custom functionality for the VRE, thus benefiting from their business analysis expertise and experience in



Supporting researchers with a research information management platform

designing and developing functionality on top of the platform.

Change requests and new functionality are implemented quickly with minimal support required from in-house staff.

As an open source platform, it is possible for institutions to build their own functionality using JavaScript plugins.

Support

Our partners at Haplo provide third-line support. We have contractually guaranteed response and fix times for any issues. The Haplo platform includes a detailed system audit trail and active monitoring, enabling the Haplo team to provide quick diagnosis and resolution of any problems. On several occasions, they have alerted us to problems before we heard from our own users.

Supplier changes and export

We are not tied into a long-term contract with Haplo. Unusually, we are required to give just thirty days' notice of cancellation. Data can be exported easily should we wish to change platform supplier in future.

IMPACT

Data quality

The first noticeable impact of introducing the VRE was an improvement in the accuracy and completeness of our data on research activity. For example, with doctoral researcher records previously kept in our student record system and on a spreadsheet with limited access, inaccuracies may not have been noticed. Once our records were visible to supervisors and doctoral researchers, data problems were quickly noticed and rectified. In future, having integrated administrative workflow means records will be automatically updated during application procedures.

Time saving

The breadth of administrative functions now taking place in the VRE has provided a broad spectrum of time-saving benefiting individuals in every role: from doctoral researcher to supervisor, faculty PhD coordinators and Registry administrators.

The time taken to approve applications has been significantly reduced – the turnaround for some types of applications undertaken as part of our doctoral research programme has decreased from over six months to less than six weeks. Where the VRE has been used to administer the assignment of supervisors for taught student research projects, supervisors are now being assigned in hours rather than weeks, significantly increasing the amount of time available to students for their research projects.

Visibility and transparency

As an institution, we are always keen to improve the transparency around our processes and decision making, to engender trust and respect and to reduce the frustration of not knowing when decisions will be made. The VRE is improving the visibility of the records we hold on research activity and the transparency of our administrative process, leading to reduced frustration and improving researcher engagement.

Increased numbers of doctoral researchers

Streamlining the administration of our doctoral research programme has helped increase our capacity to manage a larger doctoral researcher community. We believe the VRE will also help us to improve the quality of our support for doctoral researchers, helping our supervisory teams work more effectively and aiding in the early identification of doctoral research projects which are not progressing well.



Supporting researchers with a research information management platform

Understanding our research capability

Integrated dashboards provide real-time views of the current status of research applications and projects.

We have focused this year on improving data quality and making optimising the workflow functionality. Now we are in a position to benefit from the detailed insight gained through tracking long-term trends. The VRE gives us an excellent basis for whatever reporting is required by us or by external bodies (including the REF): good quality data, every aspect of the research process administered through one system, ease of interoperability and export of data.

FUTURE PLANS

We are delighted that other higher education institutions are now using the Haplo platform. For some this may just be for managing specific elements such as their doctoral research programmes,⁶ whilst others will benefit, as we have done, from the streamlined integration of multiple functions.

Functions built on top of the open source Haplo platform can either be developed and available commercially, or open source. We hope that as more institutions use the platform, we can collaboratively fund more open source functions to the benefit of the whole sector.

At the University of Westminster we continue to add functionality to the VRE to solve emerging research information management challenges. With each new function added, our researcher engagement increases and our insight into our research capability is enriched.

Both the VRE and Press ventures reflect the commitment of the university to excellence and impact in research, ensuring its highest quality work is made available to benefit audiences in a global context, and to advance the development of open access academic publishing.

Screenshots (of anonymised data) and details of the Haplo platform provided by Jennifer Summers, Founder, Haplo. jennifer.summers@haplo.org

Colleagues are invited to join us for the launch of PhD Manager and Haplo at the University of Westminster, April 17th 2015, where they can find out more about these systems. <http://www.phd-manager.co.uk/launch>

References

- 1 The university was ranked 66th out of 128 institutions in the recent Research Excellence Framework. The proportion of research outputs judged as world leading in the 2014 REF was double that achieved in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.
- 2 For more information on this preliminary project, see Chad, K. and Enright, S. (2014). The research cycle and research data management (RDM): innovating approaches at the University of Westminster. Available from: <http://uksg.metapress.com/content/j7m660w305183240/?p=005b25cf7ae6487ea71bcf7e74f0ccc1&pi=8> [accessed 16 February 2015]
- 3 Our 'agile' and collaborative approach to the project was described in a presentation at the Internet Librarian International 2014 conference. Enright, S. and Summers, J. (2014). The agile library: developing services for researchers. Available from: <http://www.infotoday.eu/Articles/Editorial/Featured-Articles/The-agile-library-developing-services-for-researchers-100145.aspx> [accessed 16 February 2015]
- 4 <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/westminsterresearch> [accessed 16 February 2015]



Supporting researchers with a research information management platform

- 5 Haplo is the open source version of the ONEIS platform <http://www.haplo.org> [accessed 16 February 2015]
- 6 <http://www.phd-manager.co.uk> [accessed 16 February 2015]

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Revolutionising the research journey

Developing an online planning tool for researchers

Stephen Gough

Liaison Librarian- Learning & Teaching
Birmingham City University
0121 331 7030
Stephen.gough@bcu.ac.uk

Annmarie Lee

Liaison Librarian – Enquiry Services
Birmingham City University
0121 202 2500
ann-marie.lee@bcu.ac.uk

Jane Richards

Head of Library Liaison – Enquiry Services
Birmingham City University
0121 331 7024
jane.richards@bcu.ac.uk

This article describes how Library and Learning Resources at Birmingham City University developed an online planning tool for postgraduate and doctoral researchers through the use of new software and collaboration with academics. Our aim is to demonstrate how digital developments can be used to open up access to content for researchers by providing an online planning aid with links to relevant resources.

Introduction

In 2011 a Library and Learning Resources project team developed a time-management tool designed to guide undergraduate students in the completion of their first assignment. This tool, My Assignment Planner (MAP), was based on the Assignment Survival Kit developed by Staffordshire University and immediately proved a great success. In 2013 work began to develop a similar tool to map the research journey for postgraduate and doctoral researchers. The name ResMap was chosen in order to link with the premise of MAP while also distinguishing it as a research tool.

The timing of the project was felicitous as it tied in with a fundamental reorganisation of support for research, which now had a university-wide focus rather being largely faculty-focused.

ResMap Working group

As with MAP, a project group was formed representing all strategic teams in Library and Learning Resources. However, it quickly became apparent that a small group working closely with key research academics in each faculty would be more effective.

The major benefit of this collaborative approach was that the group could draw upon the expertise and experience of active researchers in developing the content and structure of ResMap. By default, it also raised the profile of Library and Learning Resources in the university's research community.

A decision was made at an early stage not to use the same software as MAP as it was felt that the use of an online calculator may not be relevant for a research project. The group was also aware that the research process is uniquely personal and felt that guidance was more appropriate than advice about time management.



How research informed practice

An initial draft comprised the key elements of the research process: planning, research, methodology, data analysis, writing, evaluation and dissemination. This was circulated to groups of postgraduates across the university, along with a short online survey to obtain feedback.

85% of respondents stated that they would find the tool useful, 89% stated that they found the steps appropriate for their research and 89% thought that the level of the information given in the steps was appropriate. These findings helped to prioritise areas for inclusion in the tool.

The next step was to decide on the platform for the tool. Library and Learning



Revolutionising the research journey

Developing an online planning tool for researchers

Resources had recently purchased the Springshare software, Libguides, the functionality of which complemented the format of the content of ResMap. The Libguides software allowed the group to make the content more visually appealing and interactive, with features such as Twitter feeds, the Library Online Chat widget and links to the library catalogues and search engine.

Using Libguides



We started the development work with LibGuides version 1, using tabs to denote home, getting started, literature review, methodology & data, evaluation, final steps, potential pitfalls, support and latest research news. Each tab has a drop-down menu with sub-sections. The pages have a narrow column on the left for boxes with tips and additional information / links. The wider right-hand column has the main content. This structure gives the user the opportunity to work through the research process sequentially or to go straight to the relevant topic.

Other design criteria were applied, such as the use of images to break up the text, to link to quality resources already available in the university or from other organisations and to ensure that there was a consistent look and feel to the pages.

Use of images

Our draft contained images from services such as Thinkstock and Wikimedia; in the final version we replaced any image that might infringe third-party rights. Where we needed an image that was not available from convenient stock-holding services, one of the team with either created one or repurposed stock material. This proved time-consuming but ensured that images reflect the university's research.

Linking to existing material

The key difficulty here was ensuring that links would work in the future. Although a lot of relevant high-quality material is openly accessible on the web, we decided only to link to resources information was strictly relevant to our community – so several US and UK institutional sites were rejected. The problems of keeping links up to date also applied to resources available within the university. Research governance and the supporting resource are gradually being standardised to a university-wide rather than faculty-led model. For this reason we could not include the links appearing in the university's own material without first checking that they were still valid. This too was time-consuming.



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HTML or not to HTML

The use of HTML raised some issues, particularly for copying text into a page. Word and other copy functions can also copy any embedded commands – such as font size – into a new page, and subsequent attempts to fix a font using the editor does not always overwrite the embedded commands. When viewed on another terminal the unwanted coding can force changes of font and layout, so a working knowledge of HTML proved useful to clean the pages prior to publication.

Layout

We discovered, after the launch of ResMAP, that when viewed on an iPad the boxes on the left display at the top, sometimes necessitating in a lot of scrolling down before the main text appears. This will be amended when ResMAP is updated.

LibGuides 2 was released near the end of the ResMAP development period, offering much greater functionality including the use of tabs within sections. Consideration was given to re-editing ResMAP to make use of this new functionality and improve navigation, but we decided against this as it would have delayed the planned launch. We shall reconsider this before the next update of ResMAP.

Content



The content follows established generic models of the research process. The first iteration used the research interests of the Faculty of Health as a starting point, but feedback from researchers in Engineering, Music and Art showed that it was too detailed and favoured the human as research subject. Rather than seeking to provide equivalent detail for all interests, the team edited out any discipline bias and increased the range of examples of approaches and data gathering methods. We also shifted the balance toward the journey the individual researcher takes, thus placing greater emphasis on the researcher's health and well-being, the relationship with supervisors, other sources of help and support and tools such as referencing managers. The purpose of ResMAP is to provide an overview, not a detailed 'How to...', which is provided elsewhere. ResMAP, by taking a wider view, has highlighted where other library and learning resources teams can usefully develop services to meet discipline-specific needs.



Revolutionising the research journey

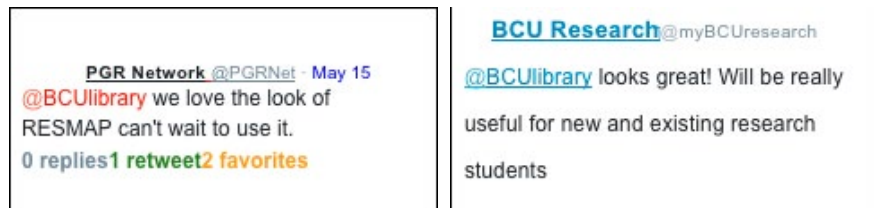
Developing
an online
planning tool for
researchers

Reception

Since it went live in September 2014, ResMap has been showcased at the university's annual research conference Rescon14, as well as at various Faculty Research Cafés. The Learning & Teaching, Enquiry Services and Centre for Academic Success teams, which are all part of Library and Learning Resources, are also promoting it.

In the five months since the launch in September 2014, ResMap has had 2,676 visitors to the page. It has been highly commended by members of the university's research community.

'PhD is a journey surrounded with hidden uncertainties, Resmap provided a great support in terms of revealing many of these uncertainties' (Mohammad Mayouf, PhD Researcher in BIM [Building Information Modelling] and Building Performance, Birmingham City University).



Conclusion

At the end of this academic year the working group is planning a review of ResMap, again using PGRNet, to ensure the content remains relevant, up to date and easy to navigate.

The development of ResMap was the first occasion on which Library and Learning Resources had collaborated with academic staff and students to develop a support tool from scratch. Initially unsure if this approach would work, we were delighted by the level of interest and willingness to participate from Birmingham City University's research community. ResMAP is owned by the university's researchers, not by Library and Learning Resources.

ResMAP can be found at: <http://libguides.bcu.ac.uk/resmap>

My Assignment Planner can be found at: <http://library.bcu.ac.uk/MAP2/freecalc-mail/>

ASK – Assignment Survival Kit can be found at: <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/ask/>

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The role of Library Services in the collaborative development of research repository and research data management at University of the Arts London

Jess Crilly

Associate Director and Head of Resources

Library Services

University of the Arts London

j.crilly@arts.ac.uk

Stephanie Meece

Scholarly Communications

Manager

Library Services

University of the Arts London

s.meece@arts.ac.uk

Research activity at the university

University of the Arts London is Europe's largest specialist arts and design university, drawing together six colleges with international reputations in art, design, fashion, communication and performing arts. The constituent colleges are Camberwell College of Arts, Central Saint Martins, Chelsea College of Arts, London College of Communication, London College of Fashion and Wimbledon College of Arts.

The university has a vibrant research culture across its six colleges, with eight University Research Centres and the University Innovation Insights Hub, which lead on innovative research and disseminate this through exhibitions, publications, conferences, festivals and workshops. The student body includes more than 2,500 students on postgraduate taught programmes, and 240 who are conducting postgraduate research. We have over 800 staff in our academic community of researchers and practitioners.

The recent Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) placed the university in the overall top 30 UK research institutions for the quality of research submitted. It was placed in the top five research universities in its broader peer group and first in the Power ranking in the Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory category. The university's research can be described as being both practice and theory-based. Practice-based research is by its nature complex and varied, and this is reflected in the range of formats of the outputs submitted to our institutional repository, UAL Research Online.¹

Repository development: UAL Research Online

UAL Research Online was launched in 2010, and was developed as an outcome of the JISC-funded Kultur project,² which ran from 2007 to 2009.

At the time of the project, existing repository software, with its origins in the science, technology and medicine (STM) scholarly communications model, was not appropriate for the archiving and promotion of research in arts and design. The Kultur project was the first attempt to address these needs, with the aim of creating a transferable and sustainable institutional repository model for research outputs in these disciplines. The Kultur project partners were the University of Southampton (lead), University of the Arts London, Visual Arts Data Service and University for the Creative Arts.

This approach therefore included consultation and interviews with researchers at the project partner institutions, the better to understand practices and seek engagement with repository requirements (Shepherd 2008).

A major outcome of the project was the launch of EPrints software repositories for the project partners; this is adapted to managing and displaying the outputs produced in arts-based research practice.

This initiative proved to be the first of a series of JISC-funded projects in the area of repository development in which institutions collaborated within the discipline to develop services.³

The role of Library Services in the collaborative development of research repository and research data management at University of the Arts London

UAL Research Online today

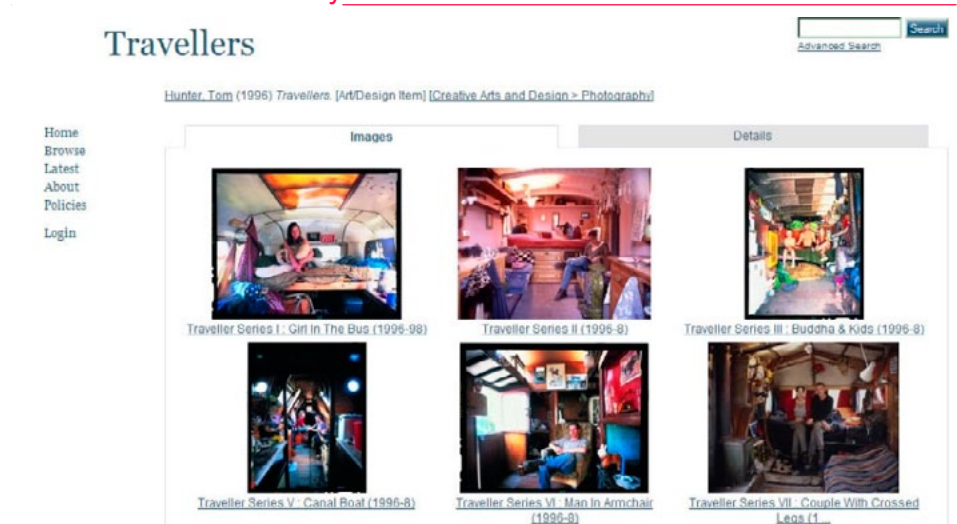


Fig. 1 Detail of an output on UAL Research Online (Travellers by Tom Hunter)

Since its launch in 2010, UAL Research Online and has grown steadily, establishing a position as an international exemplar of an online repository for research outputs in the arts and design disciplines. The repository now holds around 4,800 items, of which 47% have downloadable content: over 35,000 files. The collection reflects the diverse types of research outputs we produce, including:

- art/design Item (924)
- article (728)
- book (381)
- book section (655)
- conference, symposium or workshop Item (827)
- patent (7)
- performance (90)
- report (45)
- show/exhibition (1009)
- thesis (131)

Just under half of the items in the repository are text-based research outputs, with the remainder being practice-based work or a mixture of the two. There has been much discussion of the relative benefits and challenges of managing Green or Gold open access policies: for text publications, the university maintains a Green only open access policy, as this is the most appropriate for our subject area: we do not pay article processing charges as a matter of policy.

Managing practice-based research outputs

The management of non-text outputs presents particularly interesting challenges: non-text research outputs have been described as defiant objects (Nadim and Randall, 2013): they can be more slippery, and harder to define and control.

For non-text-based research, the research output with which the repository is concerned ideally consists of the artifact (an object, performance, or event, etc.), documentation of the process by which that artifact was created, and any relevant contextualisation. It can include images, movies, sound files, and any combination of these. For a performance, for example, there may be a film, still photos and sound recordings of interviews. Links can be provided



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to the gallery web page and the artist's web page. Related images are also relevant: scans of flyers and publicity materials, which reiterate and reinforce the artworks and the event.

Thus, one output is likely to be represented by a diverse collection of files. The aim is to curate the best collection of digital materials to provide the fullest representation of that research output.

A metadata schema for non-text outputs must be flexible enough to describe physical items, to describe multiple items within a single record, to include collaborators' contributions, and to record both objects and events in the same record. The prestige of the gallery in which an exhibition is held, for example, is analogous to the ranking of a journal in which an article is published, and therefore must be prominent.

Supporting research information management

UAL Research Online is not only an outward-facing disseminator of research, however; it also has an important role in research information management. In common with many arts-based institutions, the university has not found a satisfactory Current Research Information System (CRIS); the institutional repository has thus taken on some of the functionality of a CRIS.

Academic staff are required to report their research outputs via UAL Research Online as part of the annual performance review process each year, further embedding the repository in the university's workflows. UAL Research Online also provides content for the staff profiles hosted in the research web pages (see Fig. 2).

Both of these partnerships reinforce UAL Research Online's role as the single, authoritative location for details of the institution's research outputs. Our aim is that researchers should have to update details about research outputs in only one location – UAL Research Online – rather than repeatedly reporting to various university departments throughout the year.

Open access to theses

UAL Research Online makes available all the university's newly submitted PhD theses, by agreement with students, and plans to increase access to older theses through a digitisation project. Theses are one of our most important and highly viewed collections, as these unique, original research outputs are not available in print form without visiting the college library in which they are held. UAL Research Online thus opens them to a global audience. The planned retrospective digitisation, which will involve personal communication to every pre-2012 PhD graduate, renews the university's connections with its alumni, strengthening our community, and resurfaces research for a new audience.

Research data management developments: UAL Data Repository

The university's Research Management and Administration department (RMA) has developed policies and tools for research data management to support principal investigators with the application process and in meeting funder requirements.

A policy for research data management⁴ was approved by our Research Standards and Development Committee in 2012, and a University of the Arts London Data Repository is now in place, again an EPrints repository.⁵

These developments were given momentum by Library Services participation in the JISC-funded Kaptur project.⁶ The other project partners were The Glasgow School of Art, Goldsmiths, University of London and University for the Creative Arts, led by the Visual Arts Data Service (see Garrett *et al.*, 2013).



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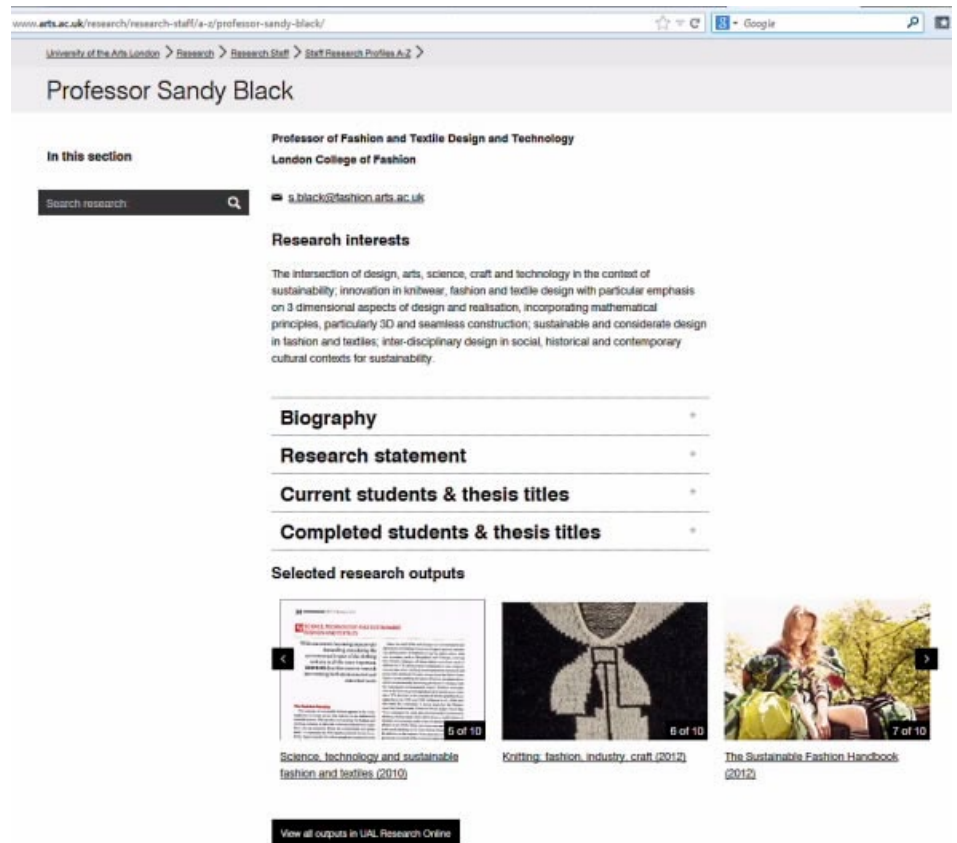


Fig. 2. Screenshot of a staff research profile page on the university website. The three images at the bottom of the screenshot are dynamically pulled from UAL Research Online, and are links to the repository where full details and more content can be accessed. The black button at the very bottom is a link to the full list of the researcher's work in the repository.

The Kaptur project objectives were:

- to investigate the nature of visual arts research data and make recommendations for its effective management
- to develop a model of best practice applicable to both specialist arts institutions and art departments within multidisciplinary institutions
- to apply, test and refine the model of best practice across the four partner institutions.

The university also benefited significantly in this area by working with the Digital Curation Centre through their institutional engagement programme.⁷

The research data repository is managed by RMA, in collaboration with the Library Services scholarly communications team. This is new territory, and the work is supported by a very active Community of Practice,⁸ which brings together researchers, RMA staff, librarians and other staff within the university, other higher education institutions and related organisations. The community is currently exploring multiple technical and theoretical issues around research data in the arts, thoroughly grounded in the use of practical case studies (Meece, 2014).

A collaborative approach

In summary, the initial development of these repositories, particularly UAL Research Online, was given stimulus through collaborative development in the higher education arts community.

However, a collaborative approach to the development of resources and services within the university is essential, notably between Library Services and

The role of Library Services in the collaborative development of research repository and research data management at University of the Arts London

RMA, to ensure a shared understanding of priorities, a joined-up approach to developments and co-ordinated communication with the research community. Similarly, continued close working and real empathy with the research community is required to understand practices and approaches.

This institutional collaboration was naturally intensified during the run-up to the REF 2014, with scholarly communications staff providing support to ensure the accurate description of research outputs for submission, and making sure that all the outputs were well represented on UAL Research Online. The institutional repository also informed and was cited in the Environment and Impact segments of the REF (REF 3a/b and 5). Work is now under way to plan processes around the next REF.

Changing roles: from institutional repository to scholarly communications managers

There has been much discussion within the profession of the role of librarians in supporting developments in repositories, open access and more recently research data management, and our plans and challenges here are in many ways typical of the sector (Cox and Verbaan 2014).

However, in developing and supporting services in the university there is an additional, discipline-specific context to be considered, and this context has been explored through collaborative projects in the sector, and continues to be explored in the university. One aspect of this is the heightened significance of the design of UAL Research Online: all repositories need to be as attractive and intuitive to use as possible, but in the case of the visual arts this is particularly important, as the repository becomes quite literally the online exhibition space for the researcher's work.

The period following the launch of UAL Research Online in 2010 has been one of rapid change in the scholarly communications environment, and the changing role of staff has been reflected here by a change of job title from Institutional Repository Manager to Scholarly Communications Manager. In addition to the work of managing the repository and ongoing advocacy can be added the interpretation and explanation of funder and HEFCE requirements, participation in institutional debates on open access, and ongoing investigation into the impact of these in our subject disciplines.

These activities are all indicative of the increasing role for libraries in the conservation, management and promotion of institutional intellectual assets, in addition to the more traditional activities of acquiring or arranging access to resources.

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UAL Library Services. Scholarly Communications Guide.
<http://arts.ac.libguides.com/scholcomm>

Notes

- 1 UAL Research Online <http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/>
- 2 he Kultur project (2007-2009) <http://kultur.eprints.org/index.htm>
- 3 Kultur 2 Group <http://www.vads.ac.uk/kultur2group/downloads/index.html>
- 4 UAL Research Data Management Policy <http://www.arts.ac.uk/research/research-environment/researcher-support/data-management/>
- 5 UAL Data Repository <http://www.researchdata.arts.ac.uk>
- 6 The Kaptur project (2011-13) <http://www.vads.ac.uk/kaptur/index.html>
- 7 Digital Curation Centre <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/tailored-support/institutional-engagements>
- 8 UAL Research data management community of practice blog <http://ualresearchdata.myblog.arts.ac.uk/>

All web sites accessed 26 January 2015

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Accessing archive collections: a pluralist approach

Ian Johnston

Archives & Special Collections
Co-ordinator
The Library,
University of Salford
i.johnston@salford.ac.uk

Jane Stevenson

Archives Hub Service Manager
Jisc
jane.stevenson@manchester.ac.uk

Salford University Library has, for a number of years, been working to facilitate online access to the archive collections it holds. We initially started this process by creating detailed descriptions of our collections using Encoded Archival Description (EAD), an XML standard for encoding archival finding aids. This information was made available on our website, but whilst it enabled users to browse individual collection descriptions, they were unable to undertake a single search across all our descriptions.

From the very beginning, we recognised the immense value in ensuring that all the EAD data we created was submitted to the Archives Hub, a gateway to thousands of the UK's richest archives. This is a Jisc service that brings together descriptions of collections, enabling researchers to explore content and locate archives relating to their subject interests, wherever they exist in the UK. It acts as a discovery focus for the archive community, supporting archivists in the vital work of making sure their collections are exposed over the web to the widest possible audience.

The Archives Hub has an ethos based on open access and 'making the data work harder'. In the online world, it should be possible for researchers to take different routes through to content; the idea of a single interface onto content is no longer practical or desirable. The Hub has recently developed a practical and lightweight solution for any higher education institutions wanting their own search application for descriptions stored on the Hub, and Salford University Library has become the first Archives Hub 'micro site' adopter.

This means that it is now possible to search remotely, direct from our website, across all the archive descriptions we have provided to the Hub. Users can search by keyword, title, creator, date, reference, subject and name. For example, a keyword search on *football* will retrieve information about material held in five of our collections, including links to digitised content in our Archives Repository. Simply select the Search Archives option from the Archives & Special Collections homepage: <http://www.salford.ac.uk/library/archives-and-special-collections>

The beauty of a micro site is that an institution has the benefit of being part of the Archives Hub, whilst also having the advantage of its own interface. The data is stored in one place, and is fed into both interfaces. This is very much a work in progress, and the Archives Hub are looking to gather feedback and suggestions for improvements. The Hub team started by working with four 'early adopter' institutions: Salford University, Brighton Design Archives, the University of Glasgow and the University of Manchester. They are now also working with Brunel University and the University of East London. The micro sites are based on the idea of a template approach, which means customisation is minimal. But it also means that the Hub can roll out micro sites to higher education institutions without significant overheads, which is vital for the sustainability of the service. Please take a look and let us know if you find any problems, or have suggestions for enhancements. The Archives Hub team are very happy to get feedback (archiveshub@mimas.ac.uk).

Note that the speed of the site has a direct relationship to the general speed of the Archives Hub, so you may find that it is faster at some times than at others. (Ways to improve response times are currently being investigated.) More information about Archives Hub micro sites can be found here: <http://archiveshub.ac.uk/microsites/>

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Getting to know our researchers and understanding their needs

Beth Hall

Research Support Librarian
Library and Archives Service
Bangor University
b.hall@bangor.ac.uk

Introduction

Our aim is to support researchers in accessing the information they need. Some of it is in our Library and Archives collections, but much of it is in other institutions across the world and across the world wide web. During a group discussion at a recent meeting at Cardiff University (WHELF/GW4, 2014) we had difficulty defining a research collection, and found that we were describing our role as 'gatekeeper to resources'.

Stephen Bell (2009) discusses an idea put forward by Seth Godin that library staff are not so much gatekeepers as 'gate openers'. 'Godin urged the audience of librarians to better understand what their community members need to accomplish, and to then open up the gates in order to deliver the resources they need for their learning, their research, their lifestyle, and their well-being, and to invite them to discover meaning through personalized relationships with library workers.' Bell goes on to discuss the user experience and how we can deliver meaning to library users. I shall discuss further the idea of librarians as gate openers and partners of researchers.

Background

Following a complete restructure of the service in 2013–14, an academic support team was put in place to act as liaison and point of contact in each college of the university, and a small research team was developed to cover open access, research data management, research skills and the needs of researchers. Over recent years we have invested significant time in getting to know our undergraduate students, the teaching staff and the organisation of modules, lectures and assignments. We now regularly hold undergraduate focus groups and work with them to explore their needs and their experience of our service. This has been underpinned this year by the establishment of a team of student library champions who work closely with the academic support librarians, the Students Union and the university's Student Engagement Officer.

However, we know a lot less about what researchers need from the Library and Archives Service. We need to acknowledge that the scholarly communication environment is fast moving and evolving. In recent years technology has had a huge effect on research and scholarly communication; big data is everywhere and digitisation and coding of texts and new methods for the analysis of results has changed the way information can be created and shared.

Researchers as partners

D. Scott Brandt (2012) states that 'to partner successfully with researchers requires an understanding of research not only as methodological problem-solving, but also as an academic enterprise. Identifying a discrete problem to solve is one thing; building a research service to partner with researchers involves understanding and leveraging the "business side" of research.'

Moira Bent (2014) recently spoke about how we engage with researchers; if we understand how researchers work we can use this information to find areas where we can add value. Moira suggested that by thinking of ourselves in the support role we may be placing ourselves in a secondary or subordinate role, and this could limit what we are able to achieve. Moira proposes that we re-evaluate our identity and our relationship with researchers.

At Bangor University, we are working closely with our researchers to develop our services to meet their needs. We are focusing on ensuring that we have a seat at the table and are involved in the right discussions. The Director of Libraries and Archives attends the Research Strategy Task Group, where we have a standing agenda item. The Academic Support Librarians, who also have a College-wide research function, attend School and College research meetings, while the Research Support Librarian and the Repository and



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Research Data Manager have an advocacy role across the institution. We are now leading on developing a new Research Data Management Service for the university, working collaboratively with the Research and Enterprise Office, IT Services and the Finance Department.

For the past two years, we have been raising awareness of open access publishing by organising regular key events during Open Access week, providing training sessions and attending School meetings. We manage the Research Councils UK block grant and are helping to prepare for the new open access requirements of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Recently we have started working with the university's Centre for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning to develop a new open access journal. We are looking to adopt a solution that could be rolled out to other potential open access journals across the university.

Understanding the needs of researchers at different points in their career is vitally important. We are developing training sessions for postgraduate students via the new Doctoral School at the university, and we are contributing to the Researcher Development Training Programme for researchers at all levels in the university.

We recognise that building relationships with researchers is critical, and we try to ensure that we are involved in their world, and learn more about the business of research. We attend research seminars, and create displays in the four libraries relating to research in the academic departments. We are actively aware of what research staff at the University are publishing, what grants are being received and the leading areas of research at Bangor. We work closely with the Research and Enterprise Office in collaborative projects and this allows us to see different sides of the research process including the grant application stage.

One of the best ways we have found to understand the research process is by being an integral part of a research group. Academic Support Librarians are costed in to support funded projects, for example on systematic review and realist review projects led by research staff in the School of Healthcare Sciences, and we are supporting a bid by researchers in the School of Computer Sciences as part of the JISC Data Spring Project. We are also writing collaborative research papers with academic staff.

The University Archivist has recently been involved with colleagues from the School of History in setting up and identifying funding for the Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates, which aims to support research on land estates in Wales, to collaborate on inter-disciplinary research projects, to organise conferences and workshops, as well as working with the heritage sector, schools and history groups and societies across Wales. Similarly the Director of Library and Archives and the Archives and Special Collections team are working closely with academics in the School of English Literature to establish a Centre for the Study of Arthurian Literature to support research, teaching and learning, community engagement and digitisation of the collection.

Working in these areas has given us opportunities to understand what researchers need, how they work and how we can add value. We have been able to identify and build relationships with research staff and research students willing to work with us to develop our services. This involvement has also given us opportunities to explain to researchers what we do and what our service is about.

Marketing and branding are essential so that researchers know the resources they are using have been provided by the Library and Archives Service, but it has proved invaluable to be there in-person, to point out in discussion that a resource is managed by the Library and Archives Service, or that Library and



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Archives staff have skills in the areas they have been discussing. We want to know more about the research tools that researchers are using beyond the tools we offer via library subscriptions, for example social networking sites for researchers, reference management tools, mind-mapping, visual searching, annotation and note-taking tools. There will be potential here for the Library and Archives Service to support researchers with new technologies, and also to explore new methods of communication with researchers.

We are still on a journey to a better understand what our researchers need to access and how they want to access it. In order to develop our services, we intend to work proactively and collaboratively with researchers as partners, just as we have been doing with undergraduate students in recent years.

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Literature search consultancy – partnership working



Suzie Kitchin

Research Support Librarian
University Library
Northumbria University
suzie.kitchin@northumbria.ac.uk

Context

Northumbria University's Corporate Strategy for 2013–18 states that the university's Vision 2025 is to be a 'research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence' (Northumbria University, <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/media/1898093/corpstrat.pdf>). Increasing emphasis on research is shifting Northumbria's traditional focus on learning and teaching, and presents challenges and opportunities for support services.

The university library has been exploring how to support this expanding research agenda. This is articulated in the creation of a new dedicated Research Support team, and services are mapped to the researcher lifecycle <http://library.northumbria.ac.uk/info-researchers> (accessed 28 January 2015).

Parallel to this, Gillian Maw, Senior Lecturer in the university's Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, acquired funding for a research project to explore the Nursing and Midwifery Council's requirement for continuing professional development for non-medical prescribers to (Nursing and Midwifery Council, Standards for of proficiency for nurse and midwife prescribers). The latter are health professionals such as nurses who have a clearly defined role in prescribing medication, but are not doctors. Gillian had funding available for someone to undertake the review of supporting literature for the project – she lacked time and specific expertise to do this herself, and wanted to capitalise on the expertise of the university library's professional support staff.

Literature search advice is central to service provision in any academic library and involves supporting staff and students in developing effective search strategies and searching of relevant academic resources. This article explores Northumbria's journey in developing a consultancy service to support literature searching in funded research projects.

Partnership working

As one of the library's Research Support Librarians, I was partnered with Gillian to source literature for her project, and also to evaluate the process as a pilot for a potential costed literature search service which the library might offer across the university.

Part of the university's ambition to achieve the Vision 2025 is to have partnership working as a 'stylistic trait' (Northumbria University). This attribute was central to the success of the pilot. Gillian and I had worked together when I was a Library Liaison Adviser for the university's health programmes including courses for which she had responsibility. Our existing professional relationship meant we started the pilot with a solid grounding of respect and openness. This is vital when you are starting out on something new and constantly need to ask each other questions, evaluating each step as you try out new ways of working!

'To say yes to using the service lifts a huge grey cloud off my head, as [the] library will be doing [the] literature searching part of the project. It will make the process easier' (Gillian's comment quoted in Kitchin, 2013a, p. 2).

Scoping the project

The starting point when sourcing literature for someone else is to have a very clear picture of what is required, which we did as a scoping exercise with flipchart pad and pens. As any librarian who helps customers with literature searching knows, you ask a lot of questions to help the person articulate what they need. My questions included clarifying publication dates, keywords, exclusion criteria and literature format. Other key elements discussed and agreed in our scoping meeting were how to share the literature search results



(via EndNote Online), how to keep in touch with each other and deadlines.

Gillian found my questions helped her to focus on what she wanted to explore in the research project: *'Once I received [the] written scoping document from library, I used it to map my project. It helped me walk through the issues, it caused me to change questions I used in my focus groups. The thought-processes [the librarian used] had were crucial in helping my thinking'* (Gillian's comment quoted in Kitchin, 2013a, p. 3).

We were an equal partnership, each fulfilling our respective professional roles. After I had completed the subject literature review, Gillian realised she also needed action research methodology literature, so we tested the scoping processes already trialled to ensure they worked for a second time. They did, and both the scoping discussion and document have been embedded as key elements in the now live service. Gillian articulated the benefit of this partnership:

'Sharing part of the work was therapeutic, e.g. [the librarian] suggesting I include X keyword; helping me to focus on what I needed. We both had to consider what we are getting out of this process. My fears started to disappear' (Gillian, in Kitchin, 2013a, pp. 2–3).

Impact

The pilot was very successful in two ways. Firstly, it provided the researcher with the literature she needed to provide as a basis for her research project. Secondly, it gave me as the Research Support Librarian the opportunity to appraise a new concept of service delivery and to take this forward to service implementation. *'Our existing professional relationship enabled us to be honest, practical and reflective throughout the process, to the benefit of Gillian's project as well as the service development'* (Suzie, in Kitchin, 2013b).

From the experiences gained during the pilot, I was able to translate these into procedures and practices, which are now ready to implement when we receive expressions of interest from researchers. Without the pilot the library would not have had that valuable customer insight to help move this venture into new service provision.

For the researcher it had benefit in the professional practice arena – *'this project could not have been completed within the time span requested by HENE [health organisation] without [the librarian's] help. The experience was both professional and essential but also a personal sounding board during which concerns, choices, and knowledge sharing was implicit to the success of the work. Without this aspect of the project I believe it would not have resulted in a such a robust study or indeed one which has such implications for prescribing practice'* (Gillian, in Kitchin, 2013b).

Reflections and mapping the journey

As this article documents the journey of our pilot, details about the live literature search consultancy service are not included. However, if you would like to find out more, please contact me.

We use a customer journey mapping tool in the library, whereby you map the journey a customer takes when using a particular library service and explores their experiences. We started doing this when we applied for our first Customer Service Excellence accreditation. The ideal is to have a customer do this, but if that is not feasible, you can ask a member of library staff unfamiliar with the specific journey to act as the customer instead. It is a great way to explore how your services are experienced by customers, and consequently how you can improve.



In this instance, Gillian and I used the customer journey map as a reflective tool after the pilot had finished, to help us evaluate our experiences and the processes we developed. This helped identify important elements to be included in the new consultancy service being developed by the library, as well for Gillian as the customer to highlight areas of potential concern. The specialist professional skills brought to the table by the librarian were highlighted as fundamental to the process.

'Key is the understanding of the whole subject and scope of search by library staff. Search would be much more tricky if didn't know this. Library staff need to understand whole context otherwise it is pointless. Sharing skills between library and myself is key' (Gillian in Kitchin, 2013a, p. 2).

We both recognised the benefit that our existing working relationship gave to the pilot, as did my knowledge of the health sector and relevant bibliographic databases. This was particularly useful in interrogating the processes and practices used in the pilot. In implementing the service across the university, it is acknowledged that this pre-existing knowledge will not always be available. However, the professional transferable skills of the librarians delivering the consultancy service mean we do not require specialist subject knowledge of all subjects across the university. The pilot demonstrated the importance of excellent communication between both parties, and the need for the librarian to have a good appreciation of the context of the research project.

Conclusion

We both really enjoyed working on this pilot. It gave us the opportunity to work together on a project that had the specific requirement of sourcing the literature Gillian needed, and also to interrogate the processes we developed. For me, it provided the challenge and opportunity of using my professional skills to pilot and implement a new service. It was a step into the unknown for me as the librarian, in going beyond the usual 'I'm giving you XX advice and encouragement, but I'm not going to source the literature for you', to applying my specialist literature searching skills for sourcing literature for a research project. For the researcher, it involved delegating responsibility for part of the research project, which she found helpful and also released time to focus on the data collection and analysis.

It has been an excellent example of partnership working, where two professionals have come together to use their respective knowledge and skills to help develop a new library service. How often are we brave enough to take the opportunity to provide a service to a customer where the outcome impacts on real research, not relying on tried and tested methods but being innovative? With the current challenges in higher education, should we move out of our comfort zone, away from established practices, and consider different ways of working?

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Promoting the Maynooth University (MU) Ken Saro-Wiwa Archive

Helen Fallon

Deputy Librarian
Maynooth University
Kildare
Ireland
helen.b.fallon@nuim.ie

Background

In November 2011, Sister Majella McCarron donated 28 letters and 27 poems written by Nigerian writer and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa to the library at Maynooth University (MU). The letters were written to Sister Majella in the two years leading up to his execution. Saro-Wiwa had been leading a peaceful protest against the environmental destruction of his homeland Ogoni in the Niger Delta, by the international petrochemical industry. Despite widespread international protest, including the intervention of President Bill Clinton, he was executed, along with eight others (the Ogoni Nine), by the then Nigerian military regime. The letters to Sister Majella were smuggled out of military detention in food baskets. She kept the collection among her personal belongings for sixteen years. In her mid-seventies she had concerns about the future of the collection, recognising their potential value to researchers and human rights activists. She approached MU, which has strong associations with missionary activity and a range of courses dealing with social justice issues, as a suitable home for it. Sister Majella also donated a collection of photographs, video recordings, flyers, articles and artefacts including a cap that had belonged to Ken Saro-Wiwa and a Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) flag.

Publishing the letters

The formal handover of the letters took place on the 10 November 2011: this marked the sixteenth anniversary of the execution of the Ogoni Nine. The level of international media coverage of the event instilled in us a desire to make it more widely available. Sister Majella was keen that Saro-Wiwa's ideals around non-violent protest would be available to social movements, particularly those concerned with environmental justice internationally. We discussed the idea of a book based on the letters. Three of the people who spoke at the handover (myself, the Deputy Librarian; Dr Idé Corley, a lecturer in post-colonial studies; and Dr Laurence Cox, a lecturer in sociology) set about editing the letters and putting them in context. One of our first tasks was to find a publisher. While Saro-Wiwa was quite a prolific author and the producer and writer of a very popular television series in Nigeria (Basi & Co), sixteen years had passed since his death. The international outcry and media coverage of the execution of the Ogoni Nine had largely been forgotten. We were fortunate to find a small publishing house – Daraja Press – based in Senegal, which has close links with the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), and an extensive distribution network in Africa. We received some funding from Trócaire, an Irish aid organisation, towards the publication and distribution of the book. With the support of Dr Owens Wiwa, brother of Ken Saro-Wiwa and a personal friend of Sister Majella, we published *Silence would be treason: last writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa* (Corley, Fallon, & Cox, 2013). The book contains the 28 letters and 27 poems by Saro-Wiwa and a poem written by Sister Majella. Three essays, by the editors, place the collection in the context of African literature, social movements and archival and special collections. The volume also includes photographs from the archive. The book was launched at Maynooth University by Dr Owens Wiwa, Ken's brother, in a moving ceremony which received extensive media coverage, including an interview with Dr Wiwa on national prime-time radio and a interview with me on *Global village*, an Irish national radio programme.

The Ken Saro-Wiwa Audio Archive

While working on the book, I explored other possible avenues to publicise the letters and the work of Saro-Wiwa. A local media producer, from a company that runs a range of courses in the university, had filmed the handover of the letters in November 2011, producing a short piece for national television. We discussed possible collaborations and decided to produce an audio archive with recordings of people connected with Ken Saro-Wiwa and the issues in the letters. Sister Majella was keen to participate. We recorded her in eight



Promoting the Maynooth University (MU) Ken Saro-Wiwa Archive

thirty-minute recordings covering her childhood in rural Ireland, her decision to enter religious life, thirty years on mission in Nigeria, meeting and working with Ken Saro-Wiwa to highlight the issue of environmental destruction in the Niger Delta, her efforts internationally to save his life and the lives of his eight colleagues (the Ogoni Nine) and her subsequent work on peace and justice issues in Ireland. The three editors were also interviewed. Dr Owens Wiwa was interviewed during his visit to Maynooth University to launch *Silence would be treason: Last writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa*. His interview gives an insight into growing up in an extended family in the Niger Delta, his growing awareness of the environmental destruction of his homeland, his efforts to support his brother in peaceful protest and to save his life, his going into hiding and escaping to Canada and subsequent efforts to retrieve and identify the remains of the Ogoni Nine. Dr Wiwa also read two poems written by his brother and one of these recordings was subsequently broadcast on Irish national radio. The University of Ibadan, where Ken Saro-Wiwa studied has also broadcast a number of the recordings.

The audio archive is hosted in Sound Cloud and is freely accessible via the internet from <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/library/collections/ken-saro-wiwa-audio-archive>

Plans are under way for the creation of the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI) and once created it will host the archive.

Archival Literacy and the The Ken Saro-Wiwa letters

Quite a number Maynooth University programmes, particularly in the social sciences, have modules relating to topics such as environmental issues, social justice, community development, minority rights and development theories. I worked with the Professor of Adult Education to integrate the archive into a module on Development Theories on the BA in Community Studies. This is documented in an article we subsequently published (Fallon & Ryan, 2014).

Preservation and Conservation

The collection has been catalogued and the letters digitised. Preservation work has been carried out on items requiring attention. In 2012 Maynooth University completed a major extension to the Library. The Ken Saro-Wiwa archive is housed in the new Special Collections area, which provides custom-made space for the accommodation, consultation and exhibition of collections, which conforms to best international standards. People can view the letters by appointment.

Making the letters Available

In addition to producing the book and audio archive a number of smaller local initiatives to create awareness of the collection, have taken place. This is in keeping with Sister Majella's wishes and Maynooth University's strong commitment to engage with community in the widest sense of the word. The letters have been exhibited to mark events such as International Human Rights Day, Africa Day, Development Studies Week, the anniversary of the execution of the Ogoni Nine (November 10th 1995) and to coincide with conferences/seminars which have a development studies/conflict resolution theme. I've presented and co-presented at a number of seminars, speaking about the letters and the audio archive and have also spoken to a local public library reading group, who selected *Silence Would be Treason: Last Writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa* as their reading club book in February 2014. Children from a local secondary school have visited the library, viewed the letters and discussed the issues surrounding the conflict in the Niger Delta in class.



Promoting the Maynooth University (MU) Ken Saro-Wiwa Archive

Proceeds from the sale of the book are going to a University-administered fund to create a bursary for a postgraduate student to carry out work which is in keeping with Ken Saro-Wiwa's work and ideals.

Reflection

This was a really wonderful opportunity to work on a project that had great personal meaning for me. I've lived and worked in a few different countries in Africa; prior to the handover of the letters I had met Sister Majella McCarron and I've also written a number of features on African women writers for national radio and magazines. It was a great opportunity to work with colleagues on editing the collection, each of the three editors bringing different areas of expertise to the project. Working on the audio archive gave me a real insight into what is involved in producing sound files and the power of the spoken word. I feel it was really important to do more than preserve the letters for researchers. Hopefully, we have gone some way to meeting Ken Saro-Wiwa's wishes when he wrote in a letter, dated 1 December 1993, to Sister Majella:

Keep putting your thoughts on paper. Who knows how we can use them in future. The Ogoni story will have to be told! Ken Saro-Wiwa Archive PP7/2

Corley, I., Fallon, H., Cox, L. (2013). *Silence Would be Treason: Last Writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa*. Dakar: Daraja Press.

Fallon, H. & Ryan, A. (2014) *Death Row Correspondence: Integrating the Ken Saro-Wiwa Archive into an Undergraduate Program*. *Journal of Library Innovation*, 5 (2), pp. 52-59

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An update on Knowledge Base+

Magaly Bascones
KB+ Data Manager
magaly.bascones@jisc.ac.uk

In the summer of 2015 it will be three years since Jisc launched Knowledge Base+ (KB+), its shared service that helps libraries to manage their e-resources, to store and manage licences and to record and track subscriptions.

Who's using KB+?

KB+ is funded by Jisc and is free to all UK universities. The service is managed by Jisc's Digital Resources directorate, with an advisory board including representatives of universities throughout the UK as well as representatives of SCONUL, who have been closely involved in the service from the very beginning, and of RLUK (Research Libraries UK).

In January 2015, 53 institutions used KB+, and their monthly usage had reached over 1,300 sessions.

KB+ use cases

Between December 2014 and January 2015, Jisc ran a project to prepare KB+ use cases and to identify barriers to the take-up of the service. Ten institutions were interviewed. Some of the findings are:

- Most of the institutions were using parts of KB+ rather than working to embed it fully in their systems, but most identified ways they might use the service in the future.
- The main benefits of using KB+ were identified as efficiency and streamlined processes, trust and access to accurate data, and consolidation of information.
- The main barriers were time constraints and uncertainty about overlap with LMS (library management systems).

More information about the use cases will be available on our website soon.

Link resolvers

KB+ has always made all its data openly available to all stakeholders in the e-resource supply chain, sharing lists of titles and information about licences to help improve accuracy and reduce effort. EBSCO, Ex Libris, OCLC and ProQuest all make use of KB+ data in their knowledge bases, and whilst there are still challenges with some of the processes involved, there is growing recognition that KB+ complements these commercial products and provides improved value to universities.

What next?

We are now planning development for Release 5, which will occur in stages over the next 18 months. In response to consultation with the KB+ Advisory Board, institutions, SCONUL and colleagues in Jisc, we have prioritised the following areas for development:

- e-books – last year we undertook some research in concert with SCONUL to identify whether and where KB+ could help universities manage their e-books. That research led to a range of recommendations, but the two of particular relevance to KB+ involved the tracking of e-books in vendor packages and providing information on e-books, their licences and platforms in order to support decision making.
- financial data – in the autumn of 2014 we ran a number of workshops with institutions to look at the inclusion of financial data in KB+. Based on the outcomes of that work we have identified some specific requirements that will be implemented in 2015.
- integration and interoperability – in order to provide the most efficient service to institutions, to maximise the value of the data in KB+ and to improve the overall quality of the service Jisc can offer to institutions, we want to make sure that we continue to build on the work that has already been done with JUSP and systems vendors to ensure that the



An update on Knowledge Base+

data is shared as dynamically as possible and with the minimum of user intervention.

- user experience – finally, but perhaps most importantly, we need to continue to improve the user interface and experience of using KB+. This will involve us working with users to improve the flow of data within KB+ and make the service more intuitive. This has always been a priority for us, but the scale of change and improvement in the KB+ system since its launch have meant that it hasn't always been the easiest part to get right. If our ambitions around e-books, financial data and interoperability are to be realised then it will need to be a renewed priority in the months ahead.

Further information

Further information on KB+ is available on the website (<http://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/KnowledgeBasePlus/>). Alternatively, you can contact us at knowledgebaseplus@jisc.ac.uk.

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Obituary

James Thompson 1932–2015



James Thompson, one of the foremost academic librarians of his generation, died in Birmingham on 30 January 2015, aged 83, after a period of illness. His funeral took place in Birmingham on 17 February – a moving occasion and celebratory of his Geordie roots. He is survived by his second wife, Susan (whom he married in 1988), and by his first wife, Mary, and their son and daughter.

Jim was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 11 January 1932, the eldest of four children of James and Mary Thompson. He grew up in Pine Street, off the Scotswood Road, then a deprived area. Jim, however, was determined to succeed. Armed with a strong intellect and a love of books (acquired when he was evacuated to Maryport during the Second World War), he won a place at St Cuthbert's Grammar School, Newcastle, leaving in 1948 with numerous prizes.

His career as librarian began, aged 16, in Newcastle public libraries, and, within three years, he had studied for and passed all relevant professional examinations. But this was not enough for Jim and in 1953, against the odds, he enrolled at what was then King's College, Newcastle, one division of the federal University of Durham. He graduated in 1957 with a first class BA honours degree in English and briefly (1957–59) returned to work at Newcastle city libraries.

In 1959 he entered academic librarianship at the University of Nottingham. He had become chief cataloguer there by 1960 but left for a Senior Assistant Librarian post at the University of East Anglia in 1963 before moving to the University of Glasgow as Deputy Librarian in 1965. His Glasgow tenure was short, for in 1967 Jim was appointed Librarian at the University of Reading, in succession to Don Richnell, at the incredibly young age of 35. He stayed for two decades.

Jim arrived within three years of the opening of the new university library in Whiteknights Park, but significant growth in the student population and the library's stock (by 140 per cent under Jim) necessitated a major extension in 1985. Collection development was not simply a matter of quantity but of quality, with some really impressive acquisitions in the special collections field, none more so than the archives of British publishing and modern literary papers. This made Reading the natural base for the Location Register of Twentieth Century English Literary Manuscripts and Letters, of which Jim was project head in 1982–87.

Complementing this concern for collection-building was a systematic enhancement of end-user services and an enthusiastic championing of library automation. Jim was among the first practitioners to recognise the many simultaneous opportunities and potential threats of automation, which he spelled out in his equivocally titled book *The end of libraries* (1982). Moreover, he practised what he preached, introducing automated issues at Reading as early as 1974, with cataloguing following in 1979.

When Jim was eventually persuaded to leave Reading in 1987 to become Librarian at the University of Birmingham, he was taking on an enormous task, for lack of investment in the library meant that it was by then no longer at the professional cutting edge, especially in matters of automation. The external environment for UK higher education and its libraries was likewise challenging, as was the Follett report would thoroughly investigate in 1993.

Supported by a new Vice-Chancellor and a new Registrar and Secretary, and taking full advantage of the devolved budget centre governance then being introduced across the university (which accorded him greater autonomy), Jim set about breathing new life into the library. He consciously sought to redefine and redirect its mission and work, as he explained in his penultimate book,

Redirection in academic library management (1991), which used Birmingham as a case study. His retrospective account of these years can be read in his *A centennial history of the library of the University of Birmingham* (2000), researched and written after his retirement in 1995.

In brief, during his Birmingham years, automation was extended to book issues, an OPAC service (preceded by large-scale retrospective catalogue conversion), and networking of CD-ROMs. Most remaining departmentally managed libraries were transferred to university library control, and their services upgraded. A phased programme of improvements to existing accommodation was implemented. Library funding was stabilised and remodelled, with a direct link to growth in student numbers. The staff structure was modernised and numerous key appointments made. Research collections were given a much higher profile, with many important acquisitions and projects, culminating in Birmingham's election into membership of the Consortium of University Research Libraries in 1994 and the award of almost £1 million from the post-Follett Research Support Libraries Programme.

In managing his libraries, Jim excelled at seeing and articulating the strategic picture, but he also paid close attention to operational detail. He cared deeply about the interests of students, his own staff and of other staff at the institutions where he worked. It was a mark of the respect which academics held him in that he was elected President of the Association of University Teachers at Reading (1981–83). Although he could present a serious exterior, he was in reality a warm-hearted individual with a good sense of humour and a passionate love of his family, films and gardening.

Besides the 'day job', Jim made a big contribution to the wider library profession. Nationally, he was active in both the Library Association and SCONUL, serving on the council of each for several years as well as on many of their committees. His Fellowship of the Library Association was awarded as early as 1963. Internationally, he was a veritable ambassador for British librarianship through his foreign visits as lecturer or consultant. Both at home and overseas, he was known for his authoritative writings on the principles and practice of librarianship, including eight books. Perhaps the most influential was *An introduction to university library administration*, which passed through four editions between 1970 and 1987.

A major new central library is currently under construction at the University of Birmingham. Sadly, Jim will not see it open, but he would surely have warmly welcomed this development as a further 'redirection' of the library and a tangible assertion of its ongoing relevance at the heart of academic life. The new building will doubtless offer an operational model for library collections and services which differs from what Jim experienced in his heyday, but hopefully it will be informed by the same vision, timeless principles, and professionalism that characterised his own long career as 'bonny lad' made good.

Clive Field

Deputy Librarian, 1990–95, and Librarian and Director of Information Services, 1995–2001, University of Birmingham; Director of Scholarship and Collections, The British Library, 2001–6

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DISCOVER

DURHAM COLLECTIONS

At the start of the 2014–15 academic year, Durham University Library and Heritage Collections launched Discover, a new way of searching Durham collections powered by Ex Libris' Primo interface.

We decided to distinguish the new resource discover system from the library catalogue through the use of an alternative name, URL and design. We settled on the name Discover <http://discover.durham.ac.uk>. We implemented changes to the standard Primo design to ensure that the system tied in with Durham University branding guidelines.

In Spring 2015, we shall begin to raise awareness of the new system, which currently sits alongside the library catalogue, through a targeted publicity campaign. We also plan to offer a number of training sessions to show our students and staff how to get the best results from Discover and run focus groups to gather their feedback.

New exhibitions at Palace Green Library

From 30 January until 26 April 2015, two new exhibitions were on display at Palace Green Library:

On seeing the author: portraits in libraries from antiquity to the present

The 'Living poets' research project in Durham University's Classics and Ancient History department explores how people have imagined ancient authors over time. It also considers how readers and listeners imagine authors look, as a way of thinking about their works.

Vietnam: a nation, not a war



This exhibition mixes historic and contemporary objects from Vietnam with contemporary works by British artist Anthony Key to explore national identity, migration, cultural diversity, faith and belonging in Vietnam.

News from member libraries

Recommend a book

Recommend a Book is a new scheme offered by the University Library, giving students the chance to request resources for purchase all year round. Similar to our annual More Books campaign, which has proven hugely popular in previous years, Recommend a Book gives students an easy and direct way to tell the library which resources they need.

Recommend a Book has been developed in order to allow students to suggest books they feel are needed throughout the year, rather than only during a designated time period. The process starts with students filling out an online form and submitting it. The form will then go through the relevant channels to be assessed. Students will be notified of the decision and can also ask to be notified when the book is available for borrowing from the library.

Engaging with students at Queen's Campus Library

Queen's Campus, Stockton, is Durham University's second campus. Queen's Campus Library provides resources for all subjects studied at Queen's, as well as study areas and IT facilities.

Queen's Campus Library has recently been working on developing new services and ways of engaging with students. During October 2014, we worked with Blackwell's to provide a bookshop for students to purchase key texts. We also attended the Queen's Freshers Fair, where we gave new students the opportunity to say hello to (a cardboard version of) the Queen, and take a #queenselfie.



More recently, we have developed a new study room, Room 205, by clearing one of the library's storage areas. We asked students, via a physical poll at the entrance to the library, how they would like the new space to be used; this enabled us to adapt this area to better meet student demand. Room 205 is available to all students during library opening hours as a relaxed group space, with mobile phone use permitted.

Stephanie Dawson

Communications (Media) Support Assistant
stephanie.dawson2@durham.ac.uk

Rachel Smith

Communications and Marketing Officer
r.l.smith@durham.ac.uk



University of West London

Much has happened at UWL Library Services in 2014 with significant changes to come in 2015, as we close our Brentford campus library and temporary main library above Ealing Broadway station and move back to our main campus site in St Mary's Road, Ealing.

Staff restructure

The organisational reporting line for Library Services changed in September 2013 with the arrival of a newly created Pro-Vice Chancellors (Academic & Student Experience). Once a new Director was recruited, much time and management effort was spent on planning and delivering a major staff restructure and the associated recruitment. As part of the consultation process with Human Resources and the unions, an annualised hours framework was introduced at the same time for all staff on non-management grades. We have also experimented with a large number of 0.57 FTE (full-time equivalent) Customer Experience Assistant posts, which designed to be attractive to students and help contribute to UWL's impressive 95% graduate employment rate.

The c. 30 FTE library staff are now organised into three teams headed by a new management team:

- Tim Wales, Director of Library Services
- Beatrice Jamnezhad, Head of Academic Support
- Louise Penn, Head of Resources & Technology
- Julian Roland, Head of Customer Experience

Creation of a nursing library at our Reading campus

The creation of a nursing library at our Reading campus was absolutely vital to address the justified negative NSS (National Student Survey) scores and comments about the lack of library provision from our College of Nursing, Midwifery and Healthcare students at our Berkshire Institute for Health campus in Reading town centre.

A large room was converted into a proper library space over the summer vacation, with 200m of new shelving and 3M RFID technology (including a new R series kiosk, 9100 series detection system and 3M Command Center software for remote management), which served as a pilot for full RFID implementation at the new main library (see below).

The space is open Monday to Friday at present with two late evenings. Four staff will be based there when we are at full capacity. A modest launch celebration was held on 7 November 2014 (see Fig. 1).

Book stock review

Back in the main library, a major stock review exercise was undertaken in light of:

- the high percentage of unissued items in five years
- the comparatively low issue figures against SCONUL norms, and our benchmark group
- the absence of a review in recent memory
- the need to ensure optimum space use in the new library and 'value engineer'.



News from member libraries



Figure 1: Nursing students celebrating their new UWL library in Reading

The Academic Support team reviewed the proposed withdrawal lists and a total of c. 73,000 items were removed from the library catalogue and offered to book resellers. This means that the number of stock items has halved since the temporary relocation of the main library in 2013, and there is now an opportunity in the next planning round for a major fundraising campaign to finance an up-to-date collection in future. Meanwhile, we have shamelessly copied other libraries' student book suggestion schemes with our own #LoveBooks campaign as a quick win for refreshing key student texts (see Fig. 2).

A promotional poster for the #LoveBooks campaign. It features a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a light blue jacket, sitting on a grassy field and reading a book. A large pink heart with the text '#LoveBooks' is positioned to her right. Below the image, the text reads: 'Tell us what books you would love to see in your Library.' To the right of this text is a smaller pink heart. Further down, there is a section titled 'Get involved #LoveBooks' with social media icons for email, Twitter, and Facebook, and the University of West London logo at the bottom right. A small disclaimer at the bottom left states: '*Campaign refers to non-fiction books only. There will be a maximum number of requests per student. If multiple copies of the same books are requested, the number of copies to order will be based on the decision of the relevant Academic Support Librarian.'

Figure 2 – UWL #LoveBooks campaign poster



News from member libraries

Library Management System upgrade

Another key project over the summer was to re-contract and outsource the hosting and management of our Capita Alto Library Management System (our core library system) with a simultaneous upgrade and addition of new functionality. The benefits include

- a much more stable system hosted in the Cloud with offsite backup and offline support
- a new tablet interface (Soprano) to enable roaming staff to offer support to students more quickly
- e-payments functionality for students (not yet implemented because of PCI compliance issues)
- new modules to streamline back office acquisition and cataloguing workflows and offer reporting information.

LibGuides and website improvements

The Academic Support Team took advantage of a new subscription to the web-based library support service LibGuides from Springshare, designed to replace old-fashioned printed/PDF helpsheets with more student-friendly web versions that are searchable and indexed via the Library's Summon search engine and linked to from our VLE (virtual learning environment, Blackboard). We also took the opportunity to fix the long-standing problem of there being two old library websites from our Thames Valley University days and one new UWL website indexed in Google, causing much confusion for students and staff alike!

New Library for 2015

The university's £50 million Future Campus project at the main site on St Mary's Road, Ealing, was well under way when the new Director of Library Services joined in January 2014: the main library had been decanted to a temporary location in August 2013 and a new Student Union and London College of Music Performance Centre had opened for the start of the academic year in October 2013. Plans and layouts for a refurbished / new library overlooking the atrium (Heart Space) at the centre of the redevelopment were in their final stages.

Working with the new Director of Property Services, the Nomad RDC consultancy was contracted to review the proposals and brief, including undertaking a rapid face-to-face and social media student consultation and engagement project on the new library in May before the students left for the summer 2014 vacation. This exercise produced some very detailed and interesting information both from a building design and service point of view (e.g. strong preference for a physical library desk even in these days of roaming and mobile support). As a result, Nomad were able to 'evolve the brief' further, their main design proposals being accepted at a steering group meeting in December.

We now await further scrutiny of cost implications for the changes required at this late stage before final sign-off and procurement begins in the spring. We are currently expecting to pack up and relocate from our Brentford and Ealing Broadway sites in July / August ready for 1 September, complete (we hope) with term-time 24/7 opening hours under the auspices of the university's new Total Facilities Management (TFM) contract with Bouygues.

Apart from the various enabling projects described above, we have just embarked on a major stock RFID retagging exercise prior to closing our sites in the summer in anticipation of the introduction of our first ever book sorter in the new library. This will free up our Customer Experience team's time to provide roving support in our new multi-level L-shaped space. Meanwhile the new Heart Space opened in January 2015 to rave reviews, taking us beyond



News from member libraries

the traditional look and feel of a former technical college.



Figure 3 – UWL's new Heart Space with new Library on the right

Tim Wales

Director of Library Services
The University of West London
tim.wales@uwl.ac.uk

Leeds Beckett University (formerly Leeds Metropolitan University)

Name changes

Leeds Metropolitan University became Leeds Beckett University on 22 September 2014 after the Privy Council gave permission for it to change its name in autumn 2013. In line with this, Libraries and Learning Innovation (LLI) took the opportunity to rename a number of systems, including the Blackboard VLE, now entitled MyBeckett.

New systems and services for 2014–15

A new resource list system (Rebus:list from PTFs Europe) was introduced for the start of the 2014–15 academic year, enabling students to access their recommended resources from their modules in the VLE. The library website (library.leedsbeckett.ac.uk) was also migrated from its in-house platform to LibGuides2 from Springshare, and LibAnswers was purchased to provide a new enquiry management and chat service.

Customer service excellence accreditation

Leeds Beckett University is the only university to have received joint Investors in People (Gold) / Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation. As holders of CSE and Charter Mark from 2001–2014, LLI continues to share our experiences with staff across the university; as a service we were identified as an area of strength and contributed to some of the fourteen areas of 'compliance plus' scored by the university.

Improvements at Sheila Silver Library

A major project to refurbish our Sheila Silver (formerly City Campus) Library has been approved; this will see services and study space over five floors improved as students' feedback is taken on board and we work with stakeholders across the university. The project involves one floor at a time being reconfigured during each summer vacation and began in summer 2014. The new floors will provide an improved flexible layout with space for both group and individual work; new study furniture and PCs, central hubs housing printers and water coolers; desktop plug sockets for laptops and other devices; increased wireless capacity; environmentally friendly lighting and a bold colour scheme.

Online access to archive and special collections

Libraries and Learning Innovation has worked in partnership with our university's alumni and marketing teams to create an online archive (<http://archives.leedsmet.ac.uk>), which is maintained by our Archive and Special Collections as the gateway to our university's past. The initial set of material added to the website was the Beckett Park Library Collection, selected because of its popularity in terms of number of consultations and because it has the most advanced cataloguing system, using international archival standards of description. Material from the archive also featured in a display in our Headingley Library to mark the centenary of the outbreak of World War One, when the buildings of our predecessor institution, City of Leeds Training College, were converted to a military hospital, which was operational until 1927.

Helen Loughran

Planning and Marketing Manager
h.loughran@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

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Guidance for authors

General information

SCONUL Focus is the journal of SCONUL, the Society of College, National and University Libraries. *SCONUL Focus* aims to bring together articles, reports and news stories from practitioners in order to generate debate and promote good practice in the national libraries and the university and higher education college sector.

Contributions are welcomed from colleagues in all fields and at all levels: we request that the items contributed are concise, informative, practical and (above all!) worth reading.

Although we do not make stipulations about length we do recommend authors consult a recent issue of *SCONUL Focus* to see if their approach seems in keeping with other published pieces.

SCONUL Focus is published in both paper and electronic versions. The electronic version is on open access via the SCONUL Web site. Any author who does not wish to have their article made available via the Web should let the Editor know.

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A copy of *SCONUL Focus* can be supplied on request from a member of the Editorial Board or from SCONUL's office (e-mail: sconul@sconul.ac.uk). An online version can be found here: <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/sconul-focus>

Items should be submitted via e-mail to your contact on the Editorial Board or steve.rose@solent.ac.uk

We are keen to publish images and would especially like to include author photos where possible. Please see advice below on submitting images.

Images

If submitting author photographs, please submit as a jpg file and use author surname as file name. Submit any other images as jpeg files and give filenames which can be easily associated with the article.

Submitting an article

- Submit articles as word files and to assist in the editing process, keep formatting to a minimum.
- Use author surname as the beginning of the file name.
- Complete the cover sheet for each article submitted.

House style

Please apply the following rules when submitting articles in order to adhere to the house style.

- Under the main title of the article, please include the following bylines: Author name, job title, department, organisation, e-mail address: (see



Guidance for authors

previous editions on-line for examples of layout)

- Spelling in ‘-ise’ etc. is preferred to ‘-ize’.
- Capitalisation is ruthlessly minimal. In individual libraries it is usual to refer to ‘the Library’, ‘the University’, ‘the College’ etc. Please resist this in our publication. Unless there is any ambiguity use ‘the library’ etc.
- Spell out acronyms at their first occurrence. Avoid ‘HE’ for ‘higher education’, which we prefer to write in full (the UK is the only country in the world to use the term, and our overseas readers are unfamiliar with the abbreviation HE).
- Use single quotation marks, not double.
- Web addresses should be written in full (including <http://>) and –where possible- be underlined for purposes of clarity. When including web addresses in either the body of the text or in a reference list, please include date accessed.

References

References should be listed using the Harvard format. For example:

Book

AUTHOR , A, N., (publication year).Title of book. Place. Publisher

Journal article

AUTHOR(S), Year of publication. Title of article. Title of journal, volume number (issue or part number), pages

Website

AUTHOR(S), Year of publication or last update. Title of page [online] [viewed date]. Available from: URL

The editorial process

Please note that the copy editor reserves the right to make modifications to articles received, without recourse to the author, if it is considered that edits made have not significantly changed the meaning or context of the article. Any proposals for significant change will be discussed with the author in the first instance.

We aim to publish each issue of *SCONUL Focus* within 8 weeks following the copy date deadline.

Anyone wishing to discuss possible articles or needing more information should contact:

Steve Rose Editor, *SCONUL Focus*
Head of Library and Learning Services,
Southampton Solent University

steve.rose@solent.ac.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.



Editorial information

Please send articles for publication to Steve Rose: steve.rose@solent.ac.uk

News items should be sent to sconul@sconul.ac.uk or to your usual contact person on the *SCONUL Focus* editorial team.

Editorial team

Steve Rose, Southampton Solent University (Chair): steve.rose@solent.ac.uk

Michelle Blake, University of York: michelle.blake@york.ac.uk

Cath Borwick, Cardiff University: borwickcf@cardiff.ac.uk

Angus Brown, Imperial College London: a.brown@imperial.ac.uk

Steve Bull, University of Birmingham: s.a.bull@bham.ac.uk

Helen Fallon, Maynooth University: Helen.B.Fallon@nuim.ie

Caroline Gale, University of Exeter: caroline.a.gale@exeter.ac.uk

Samantha Halford, City University: samantha.halford.1@city.ac.uk

Catriona McIsaac, Glasgow University: Catriona.McIsaac@glasgow.ac.uk

Carol Kay, University of Liverpool: c.kay@liverpool.ac.uk

Lee Snook, University of Exeter: l.m.snook@exeter.ac.uk

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Society of College, National
and University Libraries
94 Euston Street
London
NW1 2HA

Tel: 020 7387 0317

Fax: 020 7383 3197

Email: sconul@sconul.ac.uk

