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# 'No librarian is an island'

## Developing a shared and collaborative approach to service provision

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As SCONUL notes on its website, university and other academic libraries have been developing shared or collaborative services for many years, and have an excellent track record of delivering efficient and cost-effective services via this route.<sup>1</sup> Links to a range of initiatives and resources relating to SCONUL's strategy in this area can be accessed from the referenced link.

The articles included in this issue of *SCONUL Focus* explore this theme and demonstrate how opportunities for developing shared and collaborative services are wide ranging and diverse, and include regional initiatives whereby organisations come together to explore the potential of collaboration in a number of areas. In this context, the article by Michael Fake describes a range of initiatives from the White Rose Consortium, a partnership between the universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York. The role of collaboration within regional consortia is further evidenced by the article from Thomas Baldwin, which highlights the work that the M25 Consortium has been undertaking in developing a shared approach to disaster management planning.

No doubt many SCONUL members are already aware of the initiative amongst nine partner higher education institutions to develop and deliver a shared library management system for Wales. The article by Gareth Owen and John Dalling describes the context for the project, including drivers that have made collaboration successful, and some of the benefits already achieved and being planned.

Collaboration can also involve bringing together organisations from different sectors or from different professional groups from the same sector. With regard to the latter, the article by Andy Horton shows how collaboration between librarians and learning technologists at Regent's University in London brought success to an open online course. With reference to the former, the article by Stephanie Allen describes the Hive – an outcome of a collaboration between the University of Worcester and Worcestershire County Council – which has resulted in the sharing of collections, resources, knowledge and space for the benefit of both university members and the wider community, with a particular emphasis on support for business.

Sticking with initiatives that focus on the sharing of space and resources, the article by Dave Puplett describes how the Drill Hall Library is shared by students and staff from three universities – Greenwich, the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church.

The number of UK universities launching a London base has been growing as an emerging trend in recent years. The article from Ellen Christensen describes the growth of a networking group of library professionals who support the London satellite campuses; this group has come into being in order to help to avoid isolation in the workplace, and to exploit already existing synergies.

Regional consortia for the purchase of collections have existed for a long time. However, there are much wider issues to address in relation to collection management than those relating to procurement. With this in mind, the article by Ruth Elder focuses on an initiative to launch a community of good practice around collections management.

With regard to the partnership agenda, many universities are now looking at ways in which students can become active partners in our work. Sarah Pittaway describes how at the Hive in Worcester they have started to engage students in the recruitment process for professional library posts, involving them in a range of activities that test candidates.

The variety of articles in this issue demonstrates the value of developing shared and collaborative approaches. Whereas these might be quite time-consuming in terms of project planning and in ensuring that a number of different

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# 'No librarian is an island'

## Developing a shared and collaborative approach to service provision

requirements are catered for, they are surely evidence of the willingness of our profession to network, collaborate and share in order to develop services that meet the needs of our users.

### Reference

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- 1 <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/shared-and-collaborative-services> [accessed 8 December 2015]

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# Three is not a crowd

## Working collaboratively across institutions: the White Rose Libraries partnership at the universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York

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### Introduction

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The White Rose Libraries, consisting of the libraries of the universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York, have worked together since 2004 on a number of collaborative projects. In 2015 new permanent staff and a new service model meant that we have stepped up our commitment to collaboration. This article outlines how the partnership now operates and what it has been able to achieve. It considers both the challenges that such collaborations face, and the reasons for the White Rose Libraries' ongoing success.

### Historic development

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The universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York have a long-standing strategic partnership, based partly on their geographic proximity to one another in Yorkshire, and partly on their shared interests as large research-intensive universities. Since 1997 this partnership has been managed through the White Rose University Consortium, which supports collaborative activity in research, enterprise, innovation, and learning and teaching. In 2004 this partnership was extended, with the three university libraries coming together as the White Rose Libraries.

As a partnership, the White Rose Libraries' historic focus has been on the development and support of White Rose Research Online and White Rose eTheses Online – the two jointly-run institutional repositories that store open access full-text articles and electronic theses of Leeds, Sheffield and York academics and postgraduates. The two repositories are among the most heavily used in the UK, with combined full-text downloads of more than two million items per year. In addition, the partners have, in the past, managed a number of other joint projects and services, including RDMRose (a Jisc-funded project to produce learning materials in research data management, tailored for information professionals); the LIFE-SHARE project (exploring digitisation skills and strategies across the partnership); and the development of joint collections management approaches (including original development of the Copac Collections Management tools in partnership with the British Library).

### The new service model

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The success of the partnership in delivering – and maintaining – a range of key projects hinted at some of the broader potential behind the collaboration, and towards the end of 2013 the directors of the three libraries agreed on a new service model, designed to further leverage the individual specialisms and collective strength of the White Rose Libraries. This new model was designed to link White Rose activities more effectively with the strategic priorities of the three institutions, and ensure that resourcing was shared equally.

The greater focus on strategic coordination meant establishing a number of new coordinating groups, focusing on specific strategic themes and pulling in key specialists from across the libraries – each group being led by a senior manager from one of the partners. This was to ensure that responsibility for the strategic development of the partnership was fully embedded in and across partners, and to achieve a greater involvement of a wider group of staff across the whole of the White Rose.

Crucially, the new service model also included the appointment of permanent staff – an executive manager and an administrative assistant – tasked with focusing on collaborative activities, coordinating joint working, and developing and embedding joint services. The White Rose Libraries already had a technical officer, who supports the repository software, and in the past a repository manager had led on the implementation and advocacy for the systems; but the new posts were to be dedicated to a broader implementation of collaborative activity, with a service-wide approach that went beyond the existing focus on repository management and embraced all the potential areas for collaborative

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working across the three libraries.

I joined the White Rose Libraries as executive manager in December 2014, based at the York campus, and Tom Grady was appointed shortly afterwards as administrative assistant. With John Salter as our technical officer in Leeds, the White Rose Libraries Office is now a small team of three – and throughout 2015 we've been working hard to implement the new vision of partnership to deliver value to each of the three libraries.

### How it all works

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The starting point of the partnership is the White Rose Libraries Memorandum of Understanding – our founding document which, whilst not a legally binding constitution, gives the collaboration a formal underpinning. In a few short pages of plain English it describes our mission and outlines the broad principles of how we want to work together.

The memorandum establishes two principal groups: the first is the Directors' Group, which brings the three library directors together on a termly basis. This group provides a strategic steer for the partnership, makes major strategic decisions about the development of services, and keeps an eye on value for money. The relationships within this group are key – the White Rose Libraries consortium has no legal existence or independence, and therefore the partnership relies heavily on trust between the directors to ensure continued commitment to its aims.

The second group is the Service Development Group, comprising two senior managers from each library. This group meets more frequently – usually every five to six weeks – and provides operational oversight for White Rose Libraries activities, setting my priorities as executive manager, reviewing service proposals, and passing recommendations on development projects to the directors as appropriate. This is the key coordinating group in the day-to-day running of White Rose Libraries activities and so, like the directors, staff in the Service Development Group have to work closely together for the collaboration to be effective.

Reporting to the Service Development Group are the strategic subgroups, which investigate and coordinate planning around four key areas of collaboration: scholarly communication and research data; continuing professional development for library staff; collaborative collection management; and customer services and user experience. One further subgroup oversees repository development, managing and coordinating development activity on the repository software. The subgroups meet at different frequencies, according to need, but are an effective way of bringing together key stakeholders within a coordinated White Rose framework.

As executive manager I regularly participate in all of these groups, which means I spend a lot of time travelling between the three partners (we try to rotate meetings between sites in order to share the burden of travel, thus hosting equally across the partnership). My role is to facilitate collaborative activities that could benefit the three libraries, identifying potential new services and initiatives, and helping to drive them through. In that capacity my remit is to talk to a wide range of staff, meeting with colleagues in different parts of the libraries across the consortium, and in a variety of roles; encouraging collaborative activities, and working with staff to identify and deliver partnership working that benefits all three sites.

### What we've achieved

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This new phase of collaboration has already started to bear fruit. By bringing together different groups of staff through the subgroups and related activities, we've been able to take advantage of a wider range of perspectives on

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## Working collaboratively across institutions: the White Rose Libraries partnership at the universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York

common challenges; by sharing experiences at all levels of the organisations, we're able constantly to learn from each other, and to build on the successes (and failures) of our partners rather than reinventing wheels; by making a commitment to pool resources on particular projects, we've been able to kickstart new initiatives that would have been much harder for us to get going as individual institutions.

Some of the new projects we've begun to develop, across a range of different aspects of library services, include: building a set of shared training resources for bibliographic management; experimenting with a collaborative approach to providing research data management training for arts and humanities students; running joint research projects to evaluate our customer service provision, with a three-way 'mystery shopper' exercise; running a cross-institutional Erasmus scheme for visiting professionals; developing a mutual support agreement, committing the three libraries to supporting each other in the event of a major disaster; working together to develop effective methodologies for using the Copac collection management tools – and looking at other ways of managing our collections cooperatively; and setting up cross-institutional action learning sets for managers and team leaders, to support staff development.

Perhaps most excitingly, the White Rose Libraries have agreed on a major project to develop a new, jointly-run digital university press – intended to support new models of scholarly communication through publication of open access journals, monographs and textbooks. This will be the first example of a jointly run university press in the UK, and is an example of how the three libraries have been able to pool resources to enable them to do something that would have been significantly riskier to attempt on their own. White Rose staff are currently working hard putting together the infrastructure to support this exciting new venture.

Of course we haven't forgotten our original core service, supporting the White Rose repositories – in 2015 we've done a lot of work around refreshing and revising some of the governance structures to ensure that we can more effectively identify and prioritise long-term development requirements – as well as meeting the immediate pressures of ensuring the repositories are fit for purpose for the next REF exercise.

Alongside all of this, one of the key activities we've been focusing on has been building a sense of the White Rose Libraries as a community of practice – trying to facilitate cross-links between staff at all levels of the partnership, and to embed collaborative thinking into all aspects of library services, so that staff embarking on a project at one site will instinctively pick up the phone to their colleagues elsewhere in Yorkshire to pick their brains and share their ideas. We've been doing this through a number of facilitated knowledge exchange events, supporting meetings of staff working in a variety of different areas, from copyright and open access, to special collections and digital preservation, to marketing and communications. We continue to work with colleagues across the libraries to bring staff together in one-off meetings, cross-institutional visits and staff workshops.

### The challenges of working collaboratively

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Working as a consortium is not always easy, and when struggling to pull together the disparate aims of three independent institutions the benefits can sometimes be hard to discern. There are a number of challenges that we face when working as a partnership.

The first is that the libraries are all working to slightly different sets of priorities, and at slightly different paces. No matter how much the directors and the Service Development Group work to coordinate strategic activity, it is usually the case that, on any given issue, one institution will be further ahead down

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one particular route than the others, and this creates an inevitable tension between the partners. When they are directed towards a collaborative solution, staff at one institution may feel that they're pursuing an approach that works better for their partners than it does for their own library. It is no coincidence that our biggest historic success (the repositories) and our largest current project (the university press), are both focused around areas where all three institutions are more or less at the same development point.

Each library is also facing a different set of local challenges, including: integration with a different set of local IT systems; different organisational and political relationships with internal partners like registration and student services; and differing financial pressures. This all makes collaboration exponentially more complicated – we can assume very few universals when we get staff from all three libraries in the same room, and part of the work around community-building is about building an awareness amongst library staff of each other's circumstances and limitations.

On a very practical level, we also face organisational challenges, coordinating staff from three different partners: travel times make it hard to arrange face-to-face meetings as often as we would like, and accessing three different sets of calendar software can be tricky. With a large group of stakeholders we have to work harder to keep everyone informed about progress, and no matter how streamlined we want to be, big decisions can end up requiring multiple sign-offs, taking more time to ensure we have equal buy-in from all three institutions.

### Why it works

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Despite these challenges, however, the White Rose Libraries have been an exemplar of collaborative working for many years, and in our new phase of partnership – as outlined above – we're already beginning to deliver on a variety of new initiatives.

Part of the reason for our success is that the institutions have more similarities than they do differences. The libraries serve broadly similar demographics and a similar range of subject areas, and have a similar approach to how they balance the competing demands of supporting research, learning and teaching, and the student experience. That commonality of approach makes it easier for the libraries to find common ground to work on, and means that we have broadly similar strategic aims – ideal foundations for collaboration.

We also benefit from our relatively small size. The White Rose Libraries are just three institutions – tiny in comparison to many of the library consortia that operate in the rest of Europe, or in the USA – but that small size means there are fewer stakeholders to satisfy and relatively few decision-makers to be consulted. For all the difficulties of coordinating activities within the White Rose, we have it considerably easier than larger consortia that are working with many times the number of partners. Larger groups may be able to tap into a wider pool of resources, but as a small partnership we can be relatively nimble in our decision-making, and it is feasible for us to develop cross-institutional relationships in a way that becomes impossible for bigger collaborations.

That leads on to the third reason for our continued success, which is the trust that exists at many different levels within the White Rose Libraries partnership. At its very highest levels we can rely on support from the Vice Chancellors of the three universities, and the framework that already exists for institutional collaboration through the broader White Rose Consortium. At the library level the core groups meet regularly, meaning that members know each other very well and have been able to develop close and effective working relationships. As executive manager I meet regularly with all of the key stakeholders, including in monthly one-to-ones with the deputy directors at each of the

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institutions, as well as reporting to directors and Service Development Group. That makes it easier to keep everyone involved in and aware of partnership activities. That trust is particularly important at library director level; however, the partnership structures and relationships already in place make it relatively easy for personnel to change without jeopardising the collaboration. In 2015 two of the three White Rose Library directors retired; their successors have been able to rely on both the formal group structures and the informal relationships at all levels of staff to ensure that their speedy integration into the partnership approach.

Finally I believe a key ingredient in this new phase of collaboration has been the appointment of permanent staff, and the establishment of our small White Rose Libraries team. With dedicated staff we're able to spend time and energy on keeping collaborative activities going, in a way that is much harder for other library staff, burdened as they are with the competing pressures of their day jobs. We can facilitate partnership activities; coax, cajole and lead staff towards potential collaborative solutions; and, by managing new projects, ensure that time and effort are shared equally across the partnership. The White Rose Libraries team in that sense is the focal point for joint initiatives, and acts as a visible and tangible sign of the institutional commitment to this long-standing partnership between Leeds, Sheffield and York.

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# A friend in need is a friend indeed

## The M25 Consortium's preparations for disaster management

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Collaboration has existed in one form or another in the library sector for decades, but as ongoing (and increasing) austerity measures tighten the budgets every year, libraries look to established consortia to provide a vehicle for cost-saving shared services.

There are various consortia in the UK and beyond that provide these types of service, and their membership can be defined by a range of parameters, such as geography, library type or specialism. The M25 Consortium is the regional group for academic libraries in London and the south east of the UK and currently has 55 members. Of these, 45 are university libraries, and ten are from outside the higher education sector: museum, special and national libraries. The M25 Consortium has existed since 1993, with slight variations to the name and a growing membership.

Because of the small geographic area that the M25 libraries cover, the Consortium is an ideal vehicle for schemes that involve physical travel and contact between libraries, such as service continuation in the immediate aftermath of disaster.

The M25 Consortium's interest in shared approaches to disaster planning was established when the M25 Disaster Management working group was set up in the late 1990s. This was one of a number of working groups that have existed over the years to promote awareness and best practice for shared services in various areas. Part of the group's brief in looking at disaster control management was to cover disasters affecting IT-based services. As the working group comprised ten library staff from across the M25 membership, it was able to build its work on 'real' experiences of disasters and disaster planning in the sector, as well as being of benefit to the diverse range of M25 members. The working group produced three main resources for the M25 member libraries' use: a Mutual Support agreement, an IT Preparedness template and a Disaster Control Plan template.

The Mutual Support agreement takes real advantage of the physical proximity of many libraries in the M25 Consortium. As part of members' rights and responsibilities, in the event of disaster at an M25 library, the agreement can be invoked to arrange for temporary physical study space at another M25 member library. Access to resources can usually also be expected at the host library according to the normal arrangements of their participation in the SCONUL Access and / or M25 Access and Borrowing schemes.

The agreement, approved by the M25 Consortium in 2004 and last reviewed and updated in 2014, can be invoked for one month and is designed to allow staff at affected libraries to prioritise disaster recovery by providing their students with access to space and resources elsewhere. Affected institutions with multiple sites and libraries are expected to use their own (unaffected) libraries first.

The initial period of one month can be extended. In all arrangements, the agreement recommends a formal exchange of letters. It is founded on goodwill rather than legally enforceable obligations, but all M25 libraries are expected to participate in it by virtue of their membership of the Consortium. It has been encouraging to see the spirit of goodwill pervading on the rare occasions when physical disaster has struck in the last decade.

The M25 Consortium members will be aided in their use of this agreement by Search25 ([www.search25.ac.uk](http://www.search25.ac.uk)) – the Consortium's service for searching the catalogues of member libraries and providing information about access to those collections for visitors. In addition to this (and with the Mutual Support agreement in mind) libraries register their subject strengths on their individual library information pages on the Search25 site. This helps disaster managers to identify Consortium libraries that will best suit the resource needs of their

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# A friend in need is a friend indeed

## The M25 Consortium's preparations for disaster management

library users. Users can of course use the main search function to locate specific resources that may no longer be accessible in their home library where disaster has struck. The access information, including nearest public transport options, is also helpful to users planning to make a visit to another library.

Since all discussions stemming from the agreement are intended to take place at director level, the Consortium's email discussion list of all M25 directors is an additional tool that we would expect to be used at this time, particularly when making the initial appeal for help.

The Disaster Management working group also created, for exclusive use by M25 members, an IT Preparedness template and Disaster Control Plan template. These resources are available to members to help them in preparing institutional disaster plans, making them aware of the complete range of issues to consider and stakeholders to include.

The IT Preparedness template advises that several key staff members be identified and recorded centrally: disaster manager, systems librarian, IT department representative, network representative and server administrator. All such staff should be authorised to shut down library IT systems when advised to by the relevant authorities. The template advises recording practical information such as the location of library servers and other IT equipment that may need action in the event of disaster, and their proximity fire exits and air conditioning systems etc. Recording the location of fuse boxes, stop cocks and isolation valves will also help to allow speedy action to shut down vulnerable systems during a disaster.

This template also considers external stakeholders in the library IT systems, such as insurance providers and contractors for maintenance and data recovery. It allows for a priority list to be created for service continuity, including identified alternative IT access for staff and any mutual support agreements available, such as M25's own one.

The Disaster Control Plan template is a much lengthier document, covering all aspects of disaster prevention, preparedness, reaction and recovery. The Prevention section advises a risk assessment be carried out covering several areas, including building maintenance, security measures and fire hazards amongst many others.

The Preparedness section gives a model for a written disaster plan, setting out a chain of command at the institution and designating disaster reaction teams. Advice is given for their training, for insurance and for setting both salvage and IT priorities. Detailed consideration is also given to the external operators who may need to become involved during a library disaster. Suggestions (explicitly not endorsements or recommendations) are given for firms offering specialist disaster recovery services, general archival stationery and supplies, removals firms, specialist equipment suppliers, drying facilities, photographic conservation, film treatment, microform services and shelving.

As with other sections in this template, the aim is to be comprehensive in coverage, and thus not all topics will necessarily be of relevance to all libraries, particularly considering the diversity of the M25 membership.

The Reaction section of the template deals with courses of action after disaster has struck. It contains possible procedures for initial action on discovering the disaster, and advises recording contact details for disaster managers and other members of the disaster reaction teams. A disaster should have an initial (and immediate, insofar as circumstances allow) assessment, and detailed questions are provided for this purpose, in addition to a disaster report form. We then come to the procedures for salvaging library and archive materials. Several different types of materials are considered, and the recommended procedures

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# A friend in need is a friend indeed

## The M25 Consortium's preparations for disaster management

after water damage, fire damage and for air-drying are given for each. In addition to advising about books, the template considers a variety of formats including, amongst several others, archives, maps, microform, photographic material, paintings on canvas and computer hardware. Other more cumulative types of calamity are also considered, including mould and pest infestation and advice is given.

Considerable provision is made in the template for dealing with bomb threats in library buildings, including providing a standard form for reacting to bomb threats made via telephone, and for dealing with suspicious objects and packages, including those arriving in the post.

The fourth and final section of this template concerns recovery after disaster. It outlines the disaster recovery manager's function and provides advice on giving opportunities for counselling, and for making revisions to the library's disaster control plan in the light of lessons learnt from a particular event.

The templates were produced several years ago, and it will be interesting at the next planning day of the M25 Consortium to see whether the directors on the Steering Group feel that these resources for disaster planning should be revisited and updated. At the very least the templates could be modified to reflect current trends such as the merging of library and other service departments etc. throughout the Consortium.

All these resources are available for the use and benefit of M25 libraries, and are marketed as one of the benefits of membership to potential new members. It is pleasing that, although produced a few years ago now, they are still of benefit to the current M25 membership. Some M25 libraries have incorporated the agreement and the templates into their institutional disaster plans, and indeed the documents have been referred to as an example of best practice by trainers in this field. So far as the Mutual Support agreement is concerned, we of course hope that it need never be invoked. However, when London Metropolitan University was struck by fire in 2008, the library was glad of the proactive offers of help received from fellow M25 member libraries. This enabled them to help their students at that difficult time and allow some business continuity. Such a spirit of communal support is one of the driving forces that keeps the M25 Consortium going, and gives foundation to that old proverb that a friend in need is a friend indeed.

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# WHELF Shared LMS

## Delivering a shared library management system for Wales

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### Introduction

By August 2016 all nine universities in Wales, together with the National Library of Wales and all National Health Service libraries in Wales, will be using the same cloud-hosted library management system and discovery layer, Ex Libris Alma and Primo.

This article will outline:

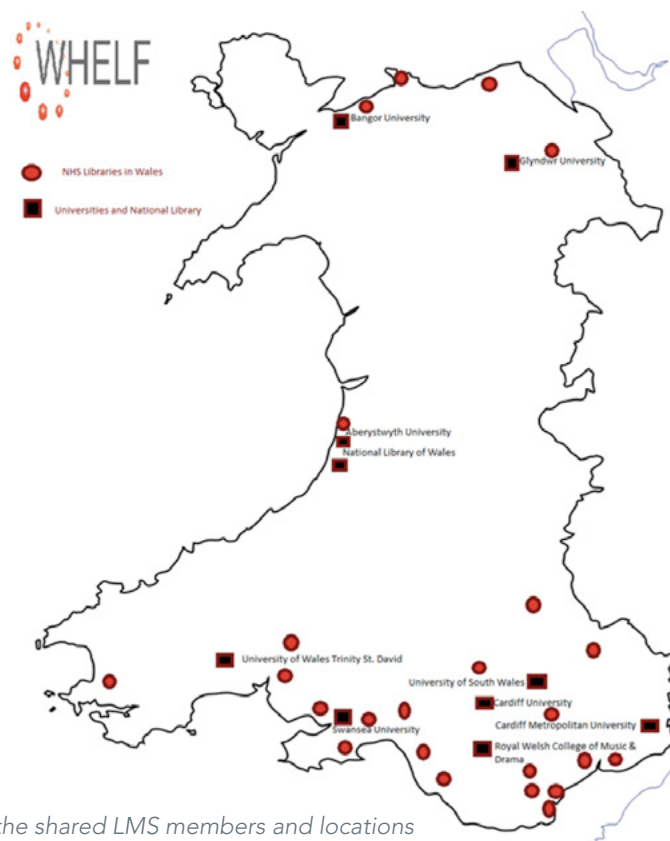
- the context for this project, including the drivers that have made collaboration successful;
- the benefits already achieved and work currently under way in order to realise further benefits.

### WHELF: the Shared LMS project partners

The WHELF (Wales Higher Education Forum) Shared LMS project consists of eleven members:

- Aberystwyth University
- Bangor University
- Cardiff Metropolitan University
- Cardiff University, including Welsh NHS Libraries
- Glyndwr University
- National Library of Wales
- Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama
- Swansea University
- University of South Wales
- University of Wales Trinity Saint David

These eleven institutions, spread across nearly ninety library locations, have around 600 library staff, 170,000 customers and approximately ten million bibliographic records.



WHELF: the shared LMS members and locations

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# WHELF Shared LMS

## Delivering a shared library management system for Wales

### Enabling collaboration

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The project to procure and implement a shared LMS across eleven institutions in Wales builds on a solid record of achievement in collaboration and partnership in the library sector in Wales, much of it facilitated by WHELF. This is a network of the chief librarians of all higher education institutions in Wales, and the National Library of Wales. Cardiff University also brings in the libraries of the National Health Service in Wales as it hosts their library management system and discovery layer.

WHELF was established as a forum for networking across university libraries in Wales in 1993 with a mission 'to promote library and information services co-operation, to encourage the exchange of ideas, to provide a forum for mutual support and to help facilitate new initiatives in library and information service provision'.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1993 WHELF has developed a range of partnership initiatives to make real its mission. These include the Welsh Repository Network, an Information Literacy Framework for Wales and more recently the Wales Higher Education Electronic Library.

The shared LMS project builds on these achievements, and is a high water mark in realising WHELF's mission as well as opening up further opportunities for collaboration.

WHELF's procurement of a shared LMS was enabled by a range of factors and discussions within WHELF, pre-dating the establishment of a formal project to drive forward the work.

A 2008 report on library systems, part-sponsored by Jisc, observed that the convergence of technological advances was an opportunity to explore consortial arrangements between academic libraries in order to 'increase critical mass and network effect, whilst potentially reducing system and service costs'.<sup>2</sup> However, the same report also noted that the LMS market in the UK was stagnant and dominated by a small number of vendors offering limited product differentiation.

By 2013, however, Jisc had recognised changes in the LMS landscape, with rapid growth in system developments and offerings centred around user experience and usability, as well as greater integration and interoperability, all providing a stimulus for system change in the academic library sector.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time there was strong support in Wales from the Welsh Government and government-funded bodies for partnership working and collaboration. This resulted in structural changes in the higher education landscape in Wales, with the merger of academic institutions, and specific projects across institutional boundaries.

The Welsh Government's 2012–16 strategy for the library sector in Wales, *Libraries inspire: the strategic development framework for Welsh Libraries 2012–16*<sup>4</sup> includes objectives to 'innovative models of delivery' and developing 'partnership working in procuring and improving access to resources'; the shared LMS project is closely aligned to these priorities and is included in the Welsh Government's Libraries inspire delivery plan 2014–15.<sup>5</sup>

WHELF incorporated the shared LMS as a key milestone in its forward planning, and subsequently secured funding from Jisc to undertake a feasibility study in 2012, which set out to 'provide a practical vision and road-map for a shared model; exploring opportunities for integration and collaboration across the WHELF community'.<sup>6</sup>

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# WHELF Shared LMS

## Delivering a shared library management system for Wales

This led to the development of a business case and agreement to move to a joint procurement for a cloud-hosted next-generation shared LMS, in an All-Wales consortium with formal governance. All members of WHELF signed a 'firm commitment to this initiative, and... to proceeding with a joint tender exercise for procurement of a shared system'.

This provided the authority for Cardiff University to manage the tender process on behalf of all members of WHELF.

The tender process comprised the following stages:

- issue of EU Notice and Pre-Qualification Questionnaire;
- issue of invitation to tender (ITT);
- visits to reference sites and presentations from suppliers.

At the end of the tender process, the top-ranking supplier, Ex Libris, was awarded the contract and all participating WHELF institutions opted for implementation of both Alma and Primo.

The tender and implementation process has been driven by a committed and knowledgeable project board, which includes representatives from each member institution, overseen by a steering group of chief librarians, who give strategic direction and leadership. A programme manager was appointed to lead the work, providing a voice and perspective independent of individual participating institutions, an important 'corrective measure' to allay potential fears that one or two institutions could wield undue authority and influence over the outcomes of the project.<sup>7</sup>

### Achieving benefits

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No large-scale programme of change is undertaken unless participants are convinced that the change will bring benefits.

Aled Gruffydd Jones, then Chief Executive of the National Library of Wales and Chair of WHELF, stated that 'all WHELF members expect to realise transformational benefits from our collaboration on a shared library system, including the provision of a single bilingual search interface for Wales higher education and research, plus the potential for deeper collaboration around collection development and management'.<sup>8</sup>

The project has been driven from the start by the aim of adding value to operational services and achieving benefits for library staff and users, home institutions and government. The feasibility study identified high-level benefits from a shared LMS, including driving down costs, increasing efficiencies and improving services and user experiences.

The proposed benefits were described in detail when participating institutions submitted business cases for approval to proceed to tender. At Cardiff University, for example, the business case cited the benefits of improved user experience and cost savings, while at University of Wales Trinity Saint David, key drivers for change included consolidation following recent mergers and the implementation of new functionality to manage electronic resources more effectively.

Procuring as a consortium had the potential to achieve cost savings. Some of the anticipated savings identified at the feasibility stage have already been realised. The Cardiff University business case anticipated that the shared LMS would deliver savings through:

- sharing the cost of the EU procurement;
- supplier discount for buying a system as part of a consortium;

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- reduced hardware costs through operating a cloud-hosted system, plus additional savings on data centre costs.

The savings achieved by employing a programme manager to work across WHELF are difficult to quantify fully, as the level and type of resource that participating institutions would have devoted to separate tender exercises varies. However, there is evidence of savings to each participating institution.

For the programme manager post, Welsh Government funded half the cost, the remainder being shared between WHELF institutions. For Cardiff University the cost savings here for financial year 2014–15 are around £75,000 (including on-costs). These savings will also be achieved for financial year 2015–16.

In addition, since Cardiff University led the procurement (as the tendering authority, providing advice, liaising with suppliers and managing the online tender process), each participating institution will have achieved a saving by not engaging their equivalent procurement staff in the tender exercise. The procurement cost relating to the shared LMS for Cardiff University for the financial year 2014–15 was £25,000, and there will be an equivalent saving for each participating institution.

The major cost saving anticipated, of course, was for the actual procurement of the LMS and discovery layer. At tender stage, the project indicated (based on a scoping exercise of suppliers carried out at the feasibility stage) that consortium discounts would be expected and suppliers were asked to indicate the discount that would be applied.

The contract was valued at around £8 million at the outset of the tender process, and suppliers who participated in the process offered a range of significant discounts.

Further cost savings are anticipated, but have not yet been realised. Some will relate to changes in operational practice as a result of adopting the new system. Other savings, relating to hardware costs, have not been achieved yet but can be estimated.

Cardiff University can be used to illustrate the likely hardware savings.

Cardiff University will go live with the shared LMS in August 2016, and the move from a locally hosted to a cloud-hosted environment is estimated to produce savings of around £40,000 between 2016 and 2020. Again, other WHELF members should anticipate equivalent savings.

Although cost savings were identified as benefits, the real driver for the project was the potential to deliver improved user experience through collaboration.

By the end of 2015 Aberystwyth University, the National Library of Wales, Swansea University and the University of South Wales will be live with the new system. They will also gain a key user benefit – a fully bilingual LMS at both the front- and the back-end.

All WHELF members are required to provide the LMS public interface (discovery or equivalent) in both Welsh and English, reflecting the official status of both languages in Wales and ensuring legislative compliance. However, WHELF has also secured a fully bilingual back-end interface available across all participating institutions, which will give Welsh-speaking staff across all institutions the opportunity to use either or both official languages in their work.

Other predicted opportunities and benefits include:

- single search across library collections across Wales (including

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maintaining and enhancing existing arrangements in place for NHS Libraries in Wales), with the National Library of Wales catalogue and digital collections providing significant benefits to researchers;

- fewer system outages as a result of using a more resilient cloud-hosted system;
- improved workflows leading to service improvements;
- enabling opportunities for further collaboration through use of the common system, which could include:
  - reciprocal arrangements for borrowing and licence management;
  - shared management information and real-time analytics leading to improved service delivery.

Although improved user experience cannot be properly evaluated and reported on until the system has been implemented across all institutions and embedded in library operations, the project is acutely aware that it is not too soon to map and manage benefits realisation.

WHELF is working to develop a rigorous and long-term benefits realisation framework, which will focus on identifying, defining, managing, monitoring and reporting on benefits.

A benefits realisation working group has been established under the project board to:

- develop a framework for managing benefits realisation across WHELF shared LMS institutions in order to secure the continued benefits of the consortium and continued stakeholder buy-in;
- manage and report on benefits realisation across WHELF institutions;
- ensure that benefits realisation is aligned with activities of other working groups (e.g. system development, business change);
- identify, monitor and manage any associated risks and issues.

This remit recognises that benefits realisation is central to the project and that all other activity should be aligned with it.

Alongside this, a joint WHELF and Ex Libris collaboration working group is scoping and planning for the delivery of improved user experience.

### Conclusion

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The WHELF shared LMS builds on a culture of collaboration and also provides a mechanism for broader and deeper collaboration in order to deliver a range of benefits to users and participating institutions in Wales.

In awarding Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELF) as the winner in the outstanding library team category, the Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards recognised the 'scale, ambition and achievements' of the project.<sup>9</sup>

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# The Twelve Apps of Christmas

## How collaboration between librarians and learning technologists brought success to an open online course



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'Andy, I've got an idea for just a little small course I'd like your help with...'

This was how my colleague Chris Rowell approached me in September 2014 and invited me to work with him on what was to become the Twelve Apps of Christmas open online course. The course that we developed and delivered together grew from an internally-focused offering with an anticipated take-up of thirty learners to an international success with over five hundred people taking part from institutions worldwide. It has won awards, other institutions have run their own versions of it, and it has since been used as a case study by the CILIP Information Literacy Group. This is a look at how we developed this open educational resource (OER), and some of the reasons for its success.

Chris and I both work for Regent's University London – Chris as Deputy Learning Technology Manager and me as Deputy Library Manager. Both our teams are part of the Learning Resources department, and we had collaborated before. I had presented workshops to academics on copyright issues in higher education as part of a 'Tricks of the trade' series of lunchtime events which Chris organised; these were then recorded and used to create videos which we streamed on the university's video server under the banner of the 'copyright trilogy'. These proved popular with Regent's academics, with the first of them becoming the most watched video on the server. Chris and I also worked together on an 'introduction to Twitter' workshop for the 2014 staff conference, followed by running the Ten Days of Twitter open course (initially developed by Helen Webster at Newcastle University) to engage our colleagues in using social media.

This shared interest in social media and past record of successful collaboration was why Chris wanted me to be part of his team for the Twelve Apps of Christmas course. From his brief initial outline, I could see the appeal of what he wanted to do with it and how it would be delivered. I also appreciated the opportunity it would give to collaborate with a group of colleagues outside the library team with whom I usually work. The timing was fortunate in that I was able to agree with my manager that it should be an objective for that year's appraisal document. This was important in a cross-department project like this, as it confirmed that I could give it the time and attention needed to make it a success.

The course itself appealed to me because of its content, practicality and packaging. There are a huge number of free-to-use applications ('apps') for mobile devices – Apple estimated over one and a half million apps in their App Store at June 2015, many of which are free-to-use. Many of them have potential practical uses for those working in higher education. Chris intended to showcase a range of relevant mobile apps, with participants in the course both trying them out and beginning a discussion on them. This would highlight the potential benefits of these particular apps in teaching, and also open up a wider discussion on the subject.

The intended audience for the course would be academics, as well as learning technologists and librarians supporting teaching in higher education. As a group, these are people who are often very busy, with limited time for continuous professional development. An issue which has been identified with open online courses is that the time commitment required sometimes proves too heavy for people working full time, leading to students not completing courses. For this reason, our course was designed to have a light time commitment. Each day's content would require no more than ten minutes of work, though there would be additional optional content for anyone wishing to explore the day's topic in more depth. The course would also be modular, allowing any student to skip a day or to work out of order. Our goal was to make the course accessible to busy academics and information professionals by minimising the time needed to follow it and structuring it so that it could be followed flexibly.

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In addition to the structure of the course, its timing was also considered. The later part of the autumn term was chosen, as many institutions will have completed teaching by December but staff will still be present overseeing exams and coursework hand-ins. This is certainly the case at Regent's, and – initially at least – our focus was on our own institution.

This combination of short daily modules and a delivery date throughout December led to the distinctive title, theme and branding we developed for the course. The course became Christmas themed, with the Twelve Apps of Christmas title supported by a visual theme deliberately inspired by an Advent calendar. This Advent calendar concept tied in with the daily reveal of each day's app and related activities. The activities themselves sometimes included a seasonal theme, such as a Padlet Wall in which participants posted their Christmas wish lists. There was also a gratuitous Christmas cracker joke each day, at the end of the daily tasks and activities. Corny as these were, they proved surprisingly popular and were useful in community-building as the course went on.

The project group consisted of Chris, three of his learning technologist colleagues and myself. I was keen to involve the library in projects like this, in areas where our knowledge and skill sets cross over with teams in other departments. I found that my management experience, knowledge of social media and ability to write promotional material were relevant, as was my interest in technology for teaching and learning – several of the applications were ones I had already used in my work as a librarian. My hope was that this project would be successful, opening the door to more collaboration in future.

As an open course, it was created under a Creative Commons licence – specifically, CC BY NC SA – so it would be free for other institutions to take, use and adapt for non-commercial purposes if they acknowledged the source and were willing to share their own versions under the same licence. The first to do so was Dublin Institute of Technology, who ran their own Twelve Apps in parallel with ours and received an International E-Learning Award (Mobile Learning Division) for their efforts.

The team decided which apps to include and drew up a template to ensure a consistent format for each day's content and activities. Each app was introduced, with examples of how it might be used. It would be downloaded by students to carry out the day's activity. Where possible the links to additional materials included an alternative or related app, and each day had its own discussion forum. This approach fed into the three strands Chris was keen to embed in the course: it should include situated learning, whereby students became familiar with the apps on their own devices, and it should be discursive; the discussion generated around the apps – their effectiveness and their limitations, whether there were alternatives people had tried – was in many ways the most important element of the course; the third element was authenticity: ideally we would be showcasing a range of apps which had either been specifically developed for higher education use, such as Turnitin and Blackboard, or were of practical use in that environment.

Much consideration went into the choice of apps for the course. The platform for delivery of the course was to be Blackboard Open Education, the open version of the Blackboard virtual learning environment (VLE), which is supported at Regent's. Therefore, the first app was the mobile version of this. This was for the practical purpose of familiarising users with the platform on which the course was delivered, but also promoted the mobile app to participants, particularly to those working at Regent's. Other apps, which were chosen in part for their relevance to Regent's staff, include Dragon Dictation and Turnitin for iPad. Perhaps the most utilitarian of the apps chosen was a QR reader. Most were selected for their potential use in the classroom or benefit to teachers in higher education. Padlet and Poll Everywhere were chosen as

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apps, which allow classroom interaction (through posting to shared 'Wall' online in real time, and creating polls). Prezi for iPad showcased an alternative to PowerPoint for presentations of all kinds. Wunderlist is an app for creating, managing and sharing 'to do' lists. Instapaper saves the text from web pages or online articles and enables them to be read later. Simplemind+ provides mind-mapping, and Myscript Memo converts handwritten text into a shareable digital format. The final day's app was a whimsical choice, as a surprise reward for completing the course – NORAD Tracks Santa.

While preparing the course, we began to publicise it both internally and externally. We used social media (the library Twitter feed and our own Twitter accounts and professional blogs) as well as networking at conferences, to spread the word. Chris's colleague James Leahy produced a promotional video, which we embedded in publicity material where possible.

As the start date drew near, we were pleased to see that we had drawn interest internationally. Around thirty people had signed up, mostly from within our own institution, and we anticipated a few more in the last week or two. As the start date of the course approached, though, numbers of students enrolled began to rise. It soon became apparent that most people had waited until the last few days to enroll. The numbers rose rapidly, going from fewer than a hundred three days before the course started to almost five hundred and fifty on the first day.

While this was gratifying, suggesting that our subject and the structuring of the course had wide appeal, it also gave us a larger task in building and managing the community. This part of managing the course came to consume more time than we had anticipated, and required flexibility among the members of the team. The first app was Blackboard Open education, with the task for the day being for the students to download it and introduce themselves on the forum. This proved a good choice as it was quite a social task, and it began to generate dialogue and a sense of community from the start. Although not every student participated, many did. We quickly developed a policy to reply with a welcoming message to each person's first post. As further people enrolled late, we found ourselves monitoring the first day's forum throughout the duration of the course to greet any of these late joiners.

The second day's app was Padlet, chosen as a classroom-relevant resource and again with a social activity – posting to a shared 'Wall' – to further encourage participants on the course to interact in the early stages. The large numbers of participants meant that we needed to create additional walls to give more people a chance to post. One of these, on favoured apps and websites for the classroom, already saw a serious discussion growing up around the central theme of the course.

As the course progressed, the forums hosted many discussions on particular apps. Participants were willing to identify any issues they encountered – incompatibility with particular devices or operating systems, limitations in the free version of an app – and suggest alternatives they had discovered themselves. There was also much positive discussion about the uses to which the apps could be put in the classroom. In this respect, the discursive element of the course was successful. The discussion was held partly through the forums and partly through social media, particularly Twitter, through the hashtag #RUL12AOC. Social media monitoring and interaction became another necessary part of managing the course.



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The wide international range of participants included several from Australia and New Zealand. This created an issue we had not foreseen – students in different time zones, who were working when it was night in the United Kingdom and Europe. We adapted to this by ensuring that one of the team would monitor the forums and social media at the start of the day in order to catch up on overnight activity and support this group of students. We found that our students in different time zones accepted that they were out of sync with most of their peers, but appreciated this contact with the course facilitators.

We had timed the course to finish on Friday 19 December, the last day of term for us and for many of the participants. We had noticed less input was appearing on the forums as the course continued. To maintain interest, we ran a contest inviting students to contribute their own Christmas cracker jokes. We ended with a less serious app on the final day, knowing that many participants would be finishing work for the year and wanting to minimise any conflict between the course and their other commitments. We did, however, use the final day's forum to gather responses and qualitative feedback about the course. This proved useful, with comments confirming the success of the course and its format. From Chris Boon:

I've signed up to other similar activities before but they've taken far too much time to do, and unfortunately I just don't have an hour a day to devote to something else as well as 'the day job', but this MOOC has been just right – something small each day, with a short activity, or if you don't have time to actually try the app, some discussion about it from those who have had a go. And it's been a really good way to see the Open Education system in action. A great experience – many thanks to the team at Regents for putting this together!

And from Belinda Green:

I've tried all sorts of new Apps, and enjoyed the daily joke! I think you got everything spot on – a ten-minute activity every day is just right, and I love the 12 Apps of Christmas theme.

Jill LeBihan's comments indicated that we had developed a successful and transferrable model:

I think I have learned from you about how to run a set of day-by-day learning activities on Blackboard and how to keep student engagement up. One of our difficulties with our own undergraduate cohorts is to keep them thinking about their studies between taught sessions, and a little ten-minute activity for each day works well. The support via discussion threads, and particularly via Twitter, has supported the activities. I'm going to experiment next term with my own students and see what I can do to keep them motivated between sessions.

When we returned from Christmas vacation, we reviewed the course based on feedback from participants and our own experiences running it. As it had been successful, we decided we would run it again, and we began planning changes we would make. It was decided to start the course a little earlier, on 1 December 2015. It would include a 'Day Zero' on 30 November in which to introduce the Blackboard Open Education platform, allowing a full twelve days of relevant apps to be introduced. We are also planned on gathering and analysing feedback in a more systematic way. Although we received much useful feedback in 2014, we were aware that this was an area in which we could have done more.

We presented a paper on the course to the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals (CILIP) conference 2015 in Liverpool, and entered the course for the Credo Digital Information Literacy award. We were delighted

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to be informed we had won, and we collected the award at the Librarians Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC) 2015 in Newcastle. We were particularly pleased that the judges for this prestigious award recognised the elements that we were ourselves proud of. Jade Kelsall noted that 'the underlying model of the course could be applied in any context. It took a number of different elements of good practice from across the sector and brought them together into something new and fresh'.

Michelle Schneider commented on 'how easy you made it for people to engage with the course' and on how it was a fun course to participate in.

The success of the Twelve Apps of Christmas, both as a course and as an example of cross-department collaboration, was a factor in Learning Resources being awarded the prize for most innovative team at the Regent's University London staff conference. The internal and external recognition for the course gave us support in planning for the future. In addition to this year's Twelve Apps, we are developing plans for other open online courses using what is now a proven format – a manageable, modular structure with an engaging theme. We have ideas for courses on academic blogging, and for a more ambitious course to support the digital researcher. Several members of our library team have already been approached to lend their knowledge and skills to these, and I would recommend cross-department projects like this to anyone who is looking to develop their skills and experience. The course is open, and the format is free to adapt. If anyone is interested in running a similar course at their own institution, Chris Rowell and I are happy to be contacted.



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# The Hive: the joint University of Worcester/ Worcester public library that's open for business

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## Introduction



*The Hive*

In Worcester we are, not surprisingly, very proud of our gold-clad landmark building, The Hive. Opened in July 2012 by Her Majesty The Queen, The Hive is unique in that it offers a range of services all under one roof. It is primarily a joint university / public library, the first of its kind in Europe. The iconic building, located in the heart of the city, combines excellent facilities for academic study and research, alongside spaces, resources and learning opportunities for adults, young people and children. The Hive also houses twelve miles of county archives and is home to the Worcestershire County Council Archive and Archaeology Service, which combine commercial, community and research services. In addition, the Worcestershire Hub based in The Hive provides essential services and advice – drawing people into the building who may have never before associated with a library or university (Elliott, 2013). The Hive is a busy place with an average of 2,500 visits daily and overall visits of approximately 2.9 million to date (The Hive, 2015a). The past three years have also seen The Hive gradually develop into a valuable centre for businesses, as a provider of specialist resources and as a meeting and training venue. Pre-opening plans to include a business centre have developed into an inviting networking space with comfy furniture, business books, databases, access to information and meeting rooms. With the introduction of advisers, training agencies and a dedicated member of staff, it has now grown into a dedicated business centre with a programme of events and information to point those needing business help in the right direction (The Hive, 2015b).



*HM The Queen opening The Hive*

The core values of The Hive – inspiration, connection, aspiration, learning, integration, inclusivity, enduring values, wellbeing, sustainability, visibility (The Hive, 2012) – underpin the ethos of services provided in The Hive: the partnership between the University of Worcester and Worcestershire County Council has benefited our diverse users in many ways. This includes the sharing

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# The Hive: the joint University of Worcester/Worcester public library that's open for business

of collections, resources, knowledge and space, thus creating a high-quality, engaging environment; connecting the business community, council services and the university; creating one hub for all – helping students see themselves more as part of the wider community; and helping employability through its student placements, volunteers, library jobs and our graduate Business Development intern post.

## Planning The Hive business offer

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The university and the county council have many shared values, and are committed to having a positive impact on society and the economy. The University of Worcester Strategic Plan (2013, p. 3) includes an aim 'to make a truly transformative contribution to the lives of our students, staff and the people of our region, and to make a very positive impact in society more broadly'. An economic strategy from Worcestershire County Council (2010, p. 31) described The Hive as an economic opportunity in which 'The library will be able to serve the local population whilst providing a very modern facility to fulfil the research needs of local businesses'. As part of these aspirations, one of the key plans for The Hive from the beginning, was to develop a business network and to provide support and training.

When we started thinking about what the business offer in The Hive might look like, one of the factors first considered was our user-base, which potentially is huge. The estimated population of Worcestershire is approximately 569,000 (Worcestershire County Council, 2013), and the university is one of the fastest-growing universities in Britain in terms of student and staff numbers. It has seen its applications rise three times faster than the national average over the last five years – 20% compared to the national figure of 6.65 % (The Guardian, 2015) – and now has more than 10,396 students, with 13% in our Business School (University of Worcester, 2014). This has been accompanied by extensive new building – by 2012 the university had contributed more than £250 million to the region's economy, employing more than 1000 staff (University of Worcester, 2013). More generally, the university works proactively with local businesses to create opportunities for students through voluntary roles, placements and job opportunities. Economic growth figures released by the Office of National Statistics show that Worcestershire has a growing economy – it grew by 16.82% between 2008 and 2013 (Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, 2015a). As well as numerous growing businesses and entrepreneurial enterprises, particular strengths are in manufacturing, cyber security and defence, and agri foods – including Worcester Bosch, Yamazaki Mazak, Brinton's Carpets, GKN, Morgan Motor Cars, QinetiQ, Joy Mining and Halfords. The county is also the destination for thousands of tourists every year (Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, 2015b).

As a unique service with a wide range of potential users, finding comparable examples prior to opening our business centre was a challenge. We did, however, find services that we could learn from, and had valuable visits to both the British Library Business Information Centre and Birmingham Central Library Business Service. The well-designed, informal business networking space in the British Library where people can sit, meet and study inspired the design and content of our resource. We also gathered valuable information about what may be popular resources for business development and learnt from our visits that COBRA (the Complete Business Reference Adviser) was one of their databases most used by those wanting to start a business.

Four months before the opening in March 2012, staff from the county council and university libraries held a seminar – 'Business at The Hive' – and invited representatives from local companies, the university, the county council and the local chamber of commerce. The event explored how the business community and The Hive might work together to contribute to the economic prosperity of Worcester; it inspired positive feedback and confirmed our belief that a

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# The Hive: the joint University of Worcester/Worcester public library that's open for business

dedicated space for businesses to research and network and the development of a regular programme of business-related events were desirable.



*The Hive business event*

A key aspiration prior to opening was to obtain permission for public access within The Hive to some of our university subscribed databases. University library staff spoke to various providers regarding licences and, although some databases remain restricted to university users, we do provide the wider public with access on a walk-in basis to some databases, including Business Source Complete.

## The beginnings of The Hive Business Centre

When The Hive opened in July 2012, the business centre on level 2 was in place and consisted of a stylish lounge area for informal networking, meeting rooms and resources – books, newspapers, databases. In terms of staffing, I was the Academic Liaison Librarian for the Worcester Business School (with my main remit being working and supporting students and staff); the Business Development Manager for The Hive had recently been recruited (responsible for the PFI [Private Finance Initiative] contract management and managing the building); we had front-of-house staff (dealing with enquiries from a vast range of users split across five floors of the building); and a Business Support Team (who managed room bookings and other administrative tasks).



*The Hive meeting room*

Crucially though, what we did not have at the time was someone to develop and coordinate the business offer on a day-to-day basis. We had no planned programme of business-related events, and had not yet developed the partnerships, connections and networks to deliver the quality of service we wanted to have. Although the previous public library service had many strengths, it had not focused on being a community hub for business support; and the university library had mainly concentrated its business information

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# The Hive: the joint University of Worcester/ Worcester public library that's open for business

support on academic teaching and research needs. This was clearly an area that we needed to work to change.

Our first step was to launch the business centre formally in order to generate interest. Within three months of opening we were very busy welcoming our new and returning students to a totally new library – as well as working hard to support our public users and associated services. Time was certainly at a premium! Through determined effort during that busy time, we organised an official launch of the business centre in November 2012 centred on 'Global Entrepreneurship Week'. This brought together a programme including: a lecture on entrepreneurship from one of our business school experts; demonstrations of business-related databases such as COBRA; advice drop-ins and workshops organised by the council's Worcestershire Business Central; and a display using the university's excellent Kays catalogue archive. Slowly, in partnership with others, we felt we were making a start.

The aim in the long term was to create a sustainable service and offering to the business community. One route was the Enterprising Libraries programme (a partnership between Arts Council England, the British Library and the Department for Communities and Local Government – DCLG). They were looking to fund a number of projects in which libraries will use their role as community hubs to spark local economic growth and improve social mobility in communities across the country (Arts Council England, 2015).

Although The Hive was sadly unsuccessful in our application, the process enabled us to plan and set out our aims:

- to enhance and develop the business offer throughout the county using The Hive as a 'flagship' resource;
- to expand the skills and expertise of staff, users of The Hive and the business community to become a centre of excellence for business support;
- to promote, develop and support the business sector through a dedicated programme of events, surgeries, workshops, activities and resources, using the partnership and other external links.

However, we needed capacity to develop our service, identify crucial partnership relationships and create a programme of events within the limits of the staffing and resources we had.

## Developing the business offer

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In 2014 an opportunity came along. As part of the university Momentum Project, which partners with local employers to support the progression of first-degree graduates into postgraduate education, The Hive was able to recruit a business development intern. The remit of this post is to work with the university and The Hive teams to improve the business services offered by The Hive and to raise awareness of the facilities on The Hive site. Vitally, it would provide a point of contact for business development, someone to work with local businesses, the county council's Worcestershire Business Central and other agencies to organise events and coordinate activity.

In the past year, our business development intern has been very successful in growing partnerships and organising events with the business community. At the same time, The Hive Marketing Officer has proved invaluable in supporting and publicising these events and services. In June 2014 a successful re-launch of the Business Centre was held, with new signage and an extended networking area. Since then there has been an expansion in business events held at The Hive, with approximately 300–400 individuals attending business-related events in the past year.

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# The Hive: the joint University of Worcester/Worcester public library that's open for business

Events have included six business breakfast and business support seminars organised with a local firm of chartered accountants, Haines Watts (<http://www.hwca.com/>). The Hive has also been a base for a number of further business events offered by Enterprising Worcestershire (<https://www.gov.uk/enterprising-worcestershire>), the County Council's Worcestershire Business Central (<http://www.business-central.co.uk/>), Worcester Business Improvement District (BID) (<http://www.worcesterbid.com/>) and local expert Stuart Allen of #Worcestershirehour (<http://www.worcestershirehour.co.uk/>). Workshop and seminar events have covered topics including social media, taxation, auto-enrolment, cyber security, profitability, marketing, selling, business support and accounting. A mailing list of over 200 business contacts has now been built up and some of the local business community regularly attend events hosted at The Hive.

The university is of course a key partner and provides invaluable support through the knowledge and expertise of the Worcester Business School. The Hive has hosted many free university events, which are open to all, and have included business school research seminars, including 'Managing customer relationships in the service sector' and 'Workplace heroes and villains'. Professorial lectures, again open to all, are also a regular event and cover some fascinating research topics such as this recent lecture: 'Why austerity Britain gorged on magazines: the making of a monopoly in the UK magazine industry'.

The Hive itself has been used within the business school as a case study for an undergraduate operations management module where students have the excellent opportunity to learn direct from The Hive Business Manager the complex nature of running such a unique building and service, and the opportunities and challenges involved. The Hive is one of a handful of PFI libraries in the UK and as such is a complex model, but one that enables Worcester to have a first-rate facility for everyone.

## Developments for the future

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This article has outlined a few of the key developments that have occurred since The Hive opened to help create services and events for the business community. There are now many examples of good practice, and through its partnership working, The Hive has created new opportunities and ways of working that make it good for the business community and for the university.

Of course further development and growth is crucial if we are to remain at the forefront. We need to take into account changes in agencies and governance – for example, the management of the county council's Worcestershire Business Central is moving to the local chamber of commerce and we need to explore future collaboration with them. The Business Development intern role will come to an end in summer 2016 and we will have to decide how best to manage this.

Developments to help grow services and our events and training programme will definitely involve our partners – The Hive is always looking to increase links with local businesses and agencies. We plan to make more of showcasing local successful companies in the business centre. It would also be beneficial to increase student involvement in our services to business and create further employment, placement and volunteering opportunities. The future of libraries is in debate but one thing is certain, The Hive is open for business and is a step ahead already in terms of its approach to partnership working and to creating a 'one-stop shop' under one shiny gold roof.

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# More than the sum of our parts

## How three universities share the Drill Hall Library

**Dave Puplett**  
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*Drill Hall Library exterior – the library is reputedly the longest in Western Europe*

The question I get asked most often about the Drill Hall Library is: 'Doesn't it get really complicated with three universities involved?' and the answer is honestly and simply: 'Yes'.

...But I always follow up by suggesting that because every library is an economy of scale, and because every librarian is trained to find a way to put people in touch with information, the library staff at the Drill Hall just rise to the challenge. Perhaps we're now taking it for granted; ten years ago, when the library opened, it was a bold step into uncharted waters, but now it's an integral part of three universities' worlds.

At the Medway towns in North Kent there is a university campus for around 7,000 students who belong to the University of Greenwich, the University of Kent or Canterbury Christ Church University. The three universities share the overall location, but carefully arrange they to avoid undue academic overlap or competition. They mostly use their own offices, teaching spaces, labs, car parks, ID cards and systems. There are, however, some areas of deeper integration and the jewel in the partnership crown is undoubtedly the Drill Hall Library.

Students and staff from all three universities share the Drill Hall, in the same way that students at the University of London share Senate House Library. All physical resources are accessible to all students, from the books through to the PCs and even the library staff. Anyone can borrow any item, sit at any desk or use any laptop or PC. All students feel at home here, and the library retains an independent branding that ensures the Drill Hall is uniquely identifiable as common ground for all Medway students, but still part of all three universities' infrastructure.



*Students from all three universities share the same services and study spaces, and can be seen here with a member of staff using the iPad catalogues*

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# More than the sum of our parts

## How three universities share the Drill Hall Library

So what makes this arrangement work? Let's look at the factors at play:

### Robust governance

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The partnership came about through intensive negotiations, and you can imagine how complicated were the Joint-Venture Agreement and subsequent conversations about budgets, reporting lines and decision-making bodies. That these were achieved, and that to this day they underpin the helicopter-view of governance whenever issues arise, is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the Drill Hall Library works. The closer our helicopter gets to the ground, however, the more difficult things look. Pro-VCs being on the same page gets us a long way, but we need more than that to explain how things don't grind to a halt every time one of the partners has a new idea.

### Willingness to be flexible

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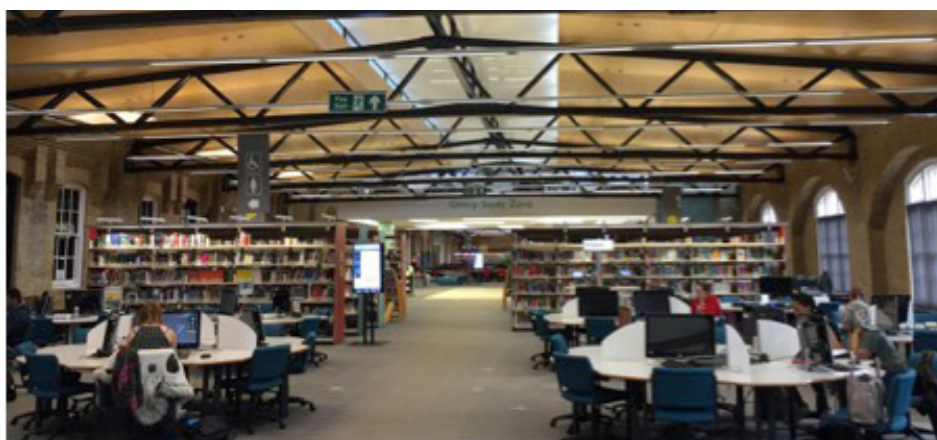
The word 'flexible' appears in all our job descriptions in the Drill Hall, but that they should probably also include 'patient', 'unflappable' and 'able to smile on the surface whilst grinding teeth invisibly' wouldn't be a mile off. What we're blessed with, though, are three partners who recognise how we fit into their services. We love it when we get invited to partner meetings (even though it means going to three lots). Our hearts sing when we hear 'we would like to change this thing but we wanted to talk to the Drill Hall about it first'. We've proven to ourselves that we can solve thorny problems and that if we work together in partnership, and if we're all prepared to seek solutions rather than point out our differences, we can maintain the quality service we strive for.

Having flexible staff and flexible partners means it's possible to pull this operation off. But it doesn't quite explain why we should even be trying. Gladly, we never find ourselves asking: 'what's the point?'

### Technology made this possible

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From day one, the Drill Hall has had its own IT team, finding technical solutions and supporting them for shared, mutual benefit. Early on there were several critical issues that needed a technical solution. In each case, a solution was found that ensured the end-user experience would be consistent and of comparable quality to the service a student would get at the main campus of each individual partner. Innovations such as Eduroam made wifi access straightforward for our users, as did the development of a shared desktop. I firmly believe that if the Drill Hall had Kent-only PCs or Greenwich-only laptops, then the spirit of sharing the space would have been fatally undermined. We've even found ways to run the circulation, fines, inter-library loans and the like in ways that are straightforward for all those accessing the services.



*Drill Hall Library interior – the library has three zones: silent, quiet and group, with over 400 PCs spread across them*

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# More than the sum of our parts

## How three universities share the Drill Hall Library

There is a hidden impact behind the scenes though – whilst most higher education librarians would recognise the services we offer, I think many would be surprised by how we do things behind the scenes. For example, because we're in the overlapping bit of the universities at Medway Venn-diagram, we're the only library in our network of eight where you can return any book. It takes a lot of different vans with different coloured boxes and labels to make it work, but it's worth it.

Another quirk is that because of our complex systems set up, the University of Kent provides us with our own versions of two systems – Talis Aspire for reading lists and Primo for discovery. Both are set up to deliver a quality service to Medway students without any compromise on account of our unusual technical set-up. Because we share our LMS with Greenwich, their Primo works well for us already. It's a great example of how we'll improvise to maintain the quality of service.

### Economy of scale

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If each university ran their own smaller libraries, perhaps in separate buildings within yards of each other, each could deploy their own staff, policies and procedures in comfortable isolation, but would the managers of those libraries be able to run services comparable to those in the Drill Hall? It would be almost impossible, and the business case for running 24/7 services, for example, would be much harder to make. When it comes to getting attention, buy-in, funding or even recognition, size does seem to matter, and the Drill Hall punches above its weight on behalf of each institution because it's really operating on behalf of all three together.

That's the real trick to the Drill Hall – each university gets a high-quality library and information service that meet the needs of their student body whilst at the same time investing less than they would if they wanted to run anything like the same service themselves.

### Unique identity

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This partnership makes the Drill Hall a unique place to work. Perhaps a topic for another article should be about the Drill Hall's other unique features – it is a Grade 2 listed building, part of a former naval barracks that holds over 100,000 volumes and 600 study spaces in one enormous room, about ten times longer than it is wide and over 200m from one end to the other.

The Drill Hall Library also remains a unique example of a three-way collaboration in higher education librarianship and information technology provision, but it's a model that many could learn from.

### Not just a library

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Though most of the campus is identifiably a part of one of the three partners' offerings, there are also some other notable examples of collaboration. A shared teaching block, known as the Pilkington Building, houses lecture theatres and seminar rooms for use by Kent and Greenwich students. The Drill Hall team manages the audio-visual resources and network used in those rooms, as well as the shared teaching rooms that are within the library building.

The Greenwich and Kent Student Unions also share a presence here, represented as GK Unions. It means that Medway can put together far more societies and sports teams than if each university went it alone.

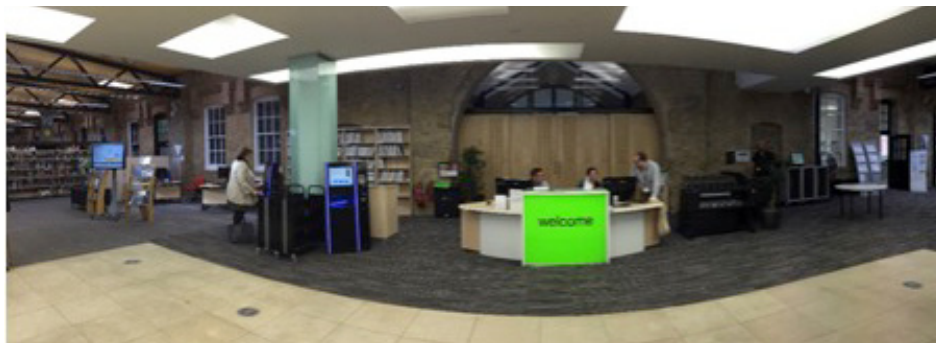
<insert image: PuplettDrill Hall Library Welcome Desk.jpg>

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# More than the sum of our parts

## How three universities share the Drill Hall Library



*Drill Hall Library Welcome Desk – all library and IT enquiries can be handled here*

### The future

Sharing a physical space, co-funding the services and finding ways to work together have been the themes of the last ten years. The next ten will be identified by the way we share digital services, and the three universities are exploring another ground-breaking arrangement – sharing services through a unified Library Management System. The potential of such an arrangement is huge, and the potential for positive disruption to many of our sewn-together solutions is both exciting and intimidating. We can only consider this bold step because of the success of the last ten years.

The Drill Hall was opened by David Miliband on 13 Feb 2006. In February 2016 we're going to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the opening with a party. In the summer of 2016 we'll then see the biggest development at Medway for students since our inception, with the opening of the new Student Hub. This is being created from the shell of the former naval barracks swimming pool, in a similar way to how the library was fashioned out of a Drill Hall Shed ten years ago.

The Hub will be for all Medway students – another accessible, shared space designed to answer student needs, and right for this unique campus. The values that the hub will rely on to succeed are the values of the Drill Hall Library, and that is why it will thrive as we have.

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# A networking group for London satellite campuses



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## Background

Although London has long been the home to campuses of universities based elsewhere, the past six years has seen a huge uptake of UK universities launching a London base. This growth was first discussed in an article in *Times Higher Education* in May 2014.<sup>1</sup> In December 2014, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) published its thematic review of thirteen London Campuses of UK universities<sup>2</sup> and hosted an event in February 2015 to discuss development of higher education policy in relation to London based campuses, findings from the review, good practice and lessons learned. Recognising both that this is a new phenomenon and that there is rapid expansion of satellite campuses opening in London, it seemed an ideal time to create a forum for library professionals working in this environment to connect and share best practice.

## Formation

The *Times Higher Education* article identified thirteen new London campuses, and these details were used as a starting point for contact.

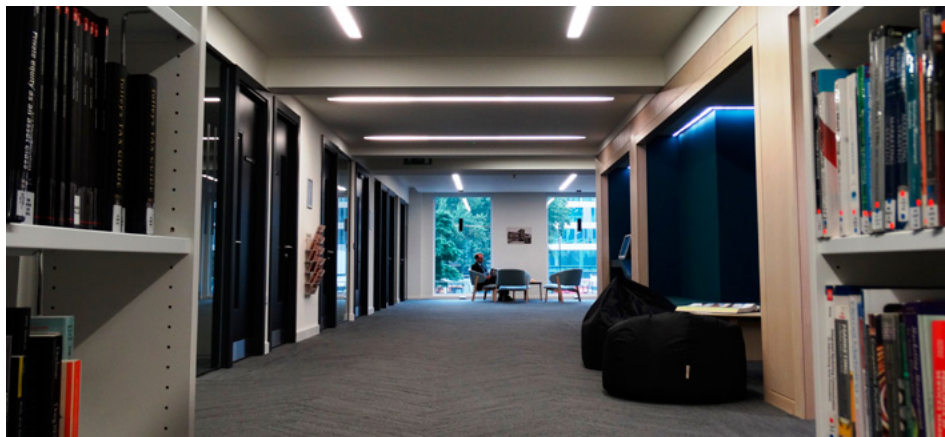
A search of the websites of all these new campuses revealed that only three listed dedicated library contact details. For the rest there was a generic email address – with fingers crossed the email would make it to the appropriate person. The response rate from the outreach email was about 50%; six named contacts were identified, and the forum began to take shape. We created a Jisc mailing list ([Londondonsatellite@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:Londondonsatellite@jiscmail.ac.uk)) for on-going discussions and to plan opportunities for collaboration. Members of the group were happy to find a platform for networking that we could promote as inclusive, cost-free and meeting a unique need. As we learn of new London satellite campuses opening, we continue to reach out to potential library professionals and would encourage library staff at these new campuses to sign up to the Jisc mailing list.

At the beginning of March 2015, a group of library professionals attended an inaugural meeting at the Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU London) campus. Nine librarians representing six London satellite campuses of UK universities were present – Coventry University, Glasgow Caledonian University, University of Liverpool, University of South Wales St Trinity, University of Sunderland and University of Ulster. Within the group we identified three different models of operation: a smaller branch of a larger UK institution, private sector and a subsidiary organisation providing the library services. From those represented at the meeting of London campuses the length of time they had been established varied from around six months to six years. All had similar portfolios, were heavily business focused, and some offered more specialised programmes.



GCU London library – networking group

# A networking group for London satellite campuses



London Liverpool library – networking group

## Unique challenges

At the initial meeting each campus shared an overview of their history, and a growing list of our unique needs became apparent:

- building an adequate collection quickly
- determining and advocating for appropriate budgets
- staffing and line management arrangements
- managing academic liaison duties
- developing library space, opening hours, self-issue and security systems.

The theme for our second meeting, at the University of Liverpool London campus, was 'facing challenges', where each participant shared a unique challenge, followed by discussion and suggestions from the group. Broader themes arose from the challenges presented, ranging from:

- developing working relationships with the larger institution
- support from management outside the library sector for continuing professional development
- engaging student and staff participation in information literacy
- staffing resources

While many of these challenges might seem familiar to most working professionals, a distinct perspective is shared amongst library professionals working in London satellite campuses. Therefore, input from colleagues who may have encountered similar challenges and have experience to share is especially valuable.

We were fortunate to be joined by Lori Bailey from SCONUL, who shared the challenges experienced by London libraries in the SCONUL Access scheme, as there was concern about inconsistencies in library provision at satellite campuses and private higher education providers' campuses, and the implications for long-established and popular university libraries in London. This was a good opportunity to discuss further how the London satellite campuses could improve in their contributions to the SCONUL Access scheme. Consequently, SCONUL updated its Access membership criteria to embrace the question of different campuses: university satellite campuses and other higher education institutions must have libraries open to other SCONUL members in order for their students and staff to be eligible for SCONUL Access.

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# A networking group for London satellite campuses

We plan to continue seeking other professionals in the field to invite as guests to our meetings, both to raise awareness of our campuses and to ensure that we stay connected to the larger professional context.

## Collaboration

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Many of members of this group are the sole librarian or part of a very small team on their campus, so it is vital to have this network of colleagues to connect with. We often manage a wide range of library services covering academic liaison, library operations and acquisitions. This means that we are likely to find ourselves working in areas outside our comfort zone. Pooling our knowledge and experience through the group allows for discussion and potential solutions. An obvious benefit is the opportunity to visit the library space of other London satellite campuses as we take turns to host our meetings.

One example of collaboration is the creation of a survey of library facilities for London satellite campuses by one of our group members that we can all use for benchmarking purposes.

Another institution has also generously extended an invitation to their library staff development day to the rest of the London satellite campuses group.

One group member, Ihar Ivanou, says about the group, 'As the structure and nature of the higher education sector has started changing rapidly, some librarians found themselves in uncharted waters – with very loose or even non-existent links with the professional support organisations and Jisc. All satellite campuses are small, often employing only one or two professional librarians. In this situation, I have already benefited from a dedicated support group: I quickly built a better understanding of the SCONUL scheme, got helpful ideas for facilities development and staff provision in small settings, and for professional development away from big library teams.'

A suggested future meeting theme is to each share our approach to organising and delivering information literacy.

## Outcomes

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The following outcomes of our discussions have helped to deliver services and resources to our users:

- a plan to share information by maintaining a list of temporary staffing cover options
- suggested methods for increasing academic uptake of embedded information literacy
- a solution for hosting a special collections exhibition from the main campus at the satellite site
- using the Jisc email list and the survey of satellite campuses to help plan variations in opening hours

Many of these outcomes came from practices that have been successfully used by colleagues in a similar environment. These outcomes help to promote the ability to use limited resources effectively and to work creatively to find solutions – an essential skill for those working in satellite campuses.

## Future

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Our group plans to meet several times a year in order to discuss ideas for collaborative working and address our unique challenges. We continue to contact library colleagues at newly opening London locations and have advertised the details of our Jisc mailing list through various avenues for

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# A networking group for London satellite campuses

interested parties to join.

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# Collections management: share the experience @ York

University of York  
library 7 July 2015

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## Context

Recent discussions suggested that there was a strong desire from collections management (CM) practitioners to establish a dedicated forum in which to network, share experience and exchange good practice. The University of York library tested this concept by posting an enquiry to the Jisc Lis-Link email list to determine the level of interest in attending a CM-focused event in York. An immediate and enthusiastic response from over seventy individuals from 40 institutions verified that there was indeed such an interest. As a result, plans were confirmed for a practitioner-based CM event to be held at the Ron Cooke Hub at the University of York on 7 July 2015, with the support of Jisc, RLUK and Sconul.



Credit: paul.shields@york.ac.uk

Ron Cooke Hub at the University of York  
'Great venue @UoYLibrary 4 our #CM4Lib event today' (Delegate)

## Aims and objectives

The primary aim of the day was to encourage the development of a community based around collections management. Main objectives were to facilitate the sharing of experience and good practice and to enable discussion and network-building between participants. The day was also designed to discuss the potential for aligning activities within the community and to explore potential for collaborative working. And not least, to assess the appetite for any future CM-focused events.

Eighty delegates booked to attend (with a waiting list of an additional 25), which endorsed the interest in first steps towards building a CM community.

## The day

Delegates had been asked in the initial contact email which specific collections management areas they would be most interested in discussing, and this input shaped the main content of the event.

The day opened with a wry exploration by Jo Aitkins (University of Leicester) on 'The dark art of managing an external store'. This was followed by a presentation from Laura Shanahan (University of Edinburgh) on 'Developing and implementing a library collections policy to deliver and support "more"'. ('More' referring to the forty-four uses of the word 'increase' that she had counted in the University of Edinburgh's current strategic plan.) Following each set of presentations there was the opportunity to move into breakout groups to discuss the themes and to share personal experiences and challenges.

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The presentations continued with Helen Faulds (University of St Andrews) speaking on collections analysis collections at St Andrews. Rachel Kirkwood then gave a fascinating presentation on 'Collection development or data driven content curation?' at the University of Manchester, which gave plenty of opportunity for debate. Feedback from all the discussion groups was recorded on flip charts, and displayed for the rest of the day in the main meeting room, where delegates had the opportunity to consider comments and add their own thoughts.

The focus then turned to the potential opportunities offered through consortia working, with a short presentation on 'Collaborative collection management: SCURLS's experience' from Jill Evans (National Library of Scotland) and Richard Parsons (University of Dundee.)

This was followed by Mark Hughes (University of Swansea) discussing collections management collaboration in Wales through WHELF (the Wales Higher Education Library Forum).

The day concluded with a group discussion led by Neil Grindley (Head of Resource Discovery, Jisc) exploring what a collections management community might look like.

## Feedback

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The response from the delegates both on the day and in the formal feedback was overwhelmingly positive. There was enthusiastic support that the event should be the first of many, and that opportunities should be grasped to build a community focused on collection management practices.

*'Great to be amongst a group of peers, all sharing the same challenges. Thank you very much for organising this event'*

*'This was the first conference that appears to focus on Collection Development and hopefully this will be the first of many'*

*'Very enjoyable day and nice to see so many others interested in Collections Management'*

*'Enjoyed #cm4lib. Hitherto untapped area of interest for knowledge exchange judging today's turnout, and interesting things shared for all'*

*'Excellent event – thank you'*

Areas of common interest for future discussion, such as the management of gifts, the role of national agreements, support in analysing data and statistics, and use of the Copac Collections Management Tools were highlighted, suggesting that future events will not be short of material to focus on.

An initial review of the feedback immediately following the event highlighted some quick wins, which were implemented to take advantage of the level of interest and enthusiasm. This included setting up a dedicated Jisc collections management group email list (LIS-COLLECTION-MGMT), with over two hundred subscribers. Presentations from the day are available via the Copac Collections Management website. Plans are already in hand for a second practitioner event to be held in early 2016.

## Conclusion

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This was an overwhelmingly positive day, with an enthusiastic audience who were engaged, knowledgeable and experienced in the area of CM. In particular it reached the CM practitioners who plan, organise and undertake CM work on a daily basis. It was very clear that there is significant interest in discussing CM issues at a practitioner level and in building a collections management community. This new level of engagement supplements, informs and gives

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greater context to the strategic level collections management discussions between Jisc, RLUK and Sconul.

The challenge is to continue to support and build upon the community of CM practitioners identified at this event and through the Jisc CM mailing list. There is now an opportunity to facilitate discussions between the organisational bodies and the practitioners, regarding the priorities and pressures CM managers face, and how the most effective support can be provided to support CM activities at a local, regional and national level.

Presentations from the day are available through the community page on the Copac Collections Management Tools website: <http://blog.ccm.copac.ac.uk/community/> (Accessed 24 September 2015)

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# Students as partners in recruitment

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## Introduction: interviews, collaboration and innovation at Worcester

During 2015, Library Services at The Hive, Europe's first integrated public and university library, have started to include students in the recruitment process for professional library posts, involving them in a range of activities that test the candidates. This was initiated as a response to recruiting to a new Student Engagement Co-ordinator post within the team. As the successful candidate was required to work closely with students in their day-to-day role, we were keen to bring them into the selection process.

Both The Hive and the wider university already have a strong culture of working with students, from the volunteers who work in The Hive<sup>1</sup> to the Students as Academic Partners projects<sup>2</sup> that are run collaboratively with staff and students. Giving students a greater sense of involvement and ownership is key to both of these initiatives and we hoped that the same benefits could accrue from student involvement in recruitment.

Another key driver was that we routinely look for qualities of innovation, creativity and commitment to collaboration in prospective employees and wanted to espouse these values more clearly in our interview processes. Interviews have long been collaborative affairs and, depending on the nature of the post, members of academic staff, ICT colleagues or Student Union officials may be invited to join the interview panel. Work-related exercises that accompany the interview are overseen by or undertaken with colleagues other than those who sit on the interview panel, thus allowing a wider range of people to feed into the selection process and for candidates to meet more of their prospective colleagues.

In short, we aimed to:

- include students, increasing their sense of ownership of library services;
- showcase our innovation to prospective employees and embed the values we seek in them into the interview process;
- see how candidates interact with students;
- learn something about the candidate that a more traditional approach, such as a presentation, might not tell us.

To achieve this, we needed:

- an activity that would allow students to interact with candidates and feedback their thoughts;
- an activity that could be overseen by a member of staff with experience of recruitment and selection, who could ensure that students' feedback was appropriate and not discriminatory;
- a group of willing and capable students.

## Testing the idea: Student Engagement Co-ordinator interviews

The work-related exercise designed for these interviews saw candidates working in pairs with a group of students. In their invitation to interview, candidates were told that they would be taking part in a group exercise, but had no further details. They were given the following brief on the day shortly before they were due to begin the exercise:

*Your first task as Student Engagement Co-ordinator is to scope out a library innovation competition, whereby students can suggest ideas to enhance service delivery. Successful ideas are put into practice with the winning students being involved in implementation. You have thirty minutes to work with the students in front of you to brainstorm ideas,*

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## Students as partners in recruitment

*scope feasibility, and come up with some recommendations for this event. You may use the flipchart paper to write down bullet points, draw a mind-map or otherwise record your ideas.*

A small group of students were offered the chance to join this exercise. Five were casually employed by Academic Services at the time, whilst a sixth had recently completed a work placement project module with the team. Four accepted the offer, although only two turned up on the day. All four were given the brief in advance, alongside an outline of their role in the exercise.

Two academic liaison librarians supervised and observed the task, marking the candidates on the following criteria:

- ability to engage others;
- understanding importance of, and responsiveness to, student feedback;
- creative approach to problem-solving;
- innovation and openness to change;
- ability to communicate ideas.

Useful information came from the students' subconscious responses to candidates; in some cases, candidates' body language showed very clear engagement (leaning forward, nodding, expressive hand movements) and in others very clear disengagement (physically moving away from candidates, folding arms, etc). The students were also asked for their feedback at the end of each exercise, both on the candidates and the exercise itself (see below).

Both the students' verbal feedback and their observed responses confirmed the liaison librarians' opinions of the strongest candidate, who went on to perform well in the interview panel. As a token of appreciation, students were sent a £10 Amazon voucher afterwards.

### Building on success: academic liaison librarian interviews

Feeling positive about these experiences, we decided to involve students again in interviews for an academic liaison librarian post. Given the 50% attrition rate in our volunteers in the previous round, and because these interviews were to be held at the student-unfriendly time of 09:00 on a Monday, we were significantly more active in ensuring that students who signed up were committed to attending. Amazon vouchers were promised in advance as an incentive, and students were reminded of the value of the activity for their CVs and for use in their Worcester Award log books – Worcester's employability award for use in their Higher Education Achievement Record. Only two students were needed, but eight or nine were signed up, with the extra students taking part in a focus group. A number of confirmation emails ensured that nearly all students turned up on the day.

As part of their invitation to interview, candidates were given the following brief:

*Imagine you are in post and you find that your only allocated contact with students for teaching library and information skills in a particular subject area is a single lecture very early in their first year. You are given the opportunity to change this. What sort of session(s) do you propose to run instead? What technology might you use (if any)?*

*Your presentation will take place in the form of a 'speed dating' type of exercise, where you move from one table to the next to repeat the conversation while meeting the needs of your new audience. You will have no more than 7 minutes with each of the following:*

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# Students as partners in recruitment

- Table 1 – 2 students
- Table 2 – 1 academic liaison librarian
- Table 3 – 1 member of academic staff

Please note:

- You may wish to do this as a 'sales pitch' or initiate a dialogue. However you choose to deliver your idea, you should allow time for questions and discussion.
- There will be a member of staff keeping you to time, ensuring you speak to all three tables. Each table will be making notes to feedback to the interview panel.
- You will not have any technology available to you on the day.

The resulting activity was hectic, but highly productive and enjoyable, with a variety of discussions taking place at each table.

## Benefits and feedback

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From the perspective of those recruiting, the involvement of students was a resounding success. We felt that adding the student perspective tended to confirm the views of others in the recruitment process and, in some cases, helped elucidate elements that we had a feeling about but could not quite pin down, e.g. a candidate we felt might be slightly intimidating caused students to physically shrink back.

Speaking to candidates at interview and after they had started their employment with us revealed that they were a little daunted by the exercises we set, but fully understood the point of the exercises and their value. However, it did overshadow the interview itself for some candidates, who spent more time preparing for the exercise than for the interview itself.

Students, meanwhile, valued the opportunity to be consulted on library roles that would affect them. After one round of interviews, we were contacted quite swiftly by one student who expressed considerable interest in knowing who had been appointed. They also valued both the opportunity to add this experience to their CVs and real-world experience of being involved in recruitment.

## Lessons for the future?

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Despite its successes, this approach is not without challenges. The first is a concern about student reliability, particularly when interviews start early in the morning. Financially incentivising the process helps students understand the morning as a valuable use of their time. Similarly, running a second, concurrent activity (e.g. a focus group) was helpful as this meant that if students failed to arrive or dropped out at the last minute, we could use the second group as a back-up.

The second, possibly greater, challenge is in clearly outlining to the students their role in the selection process and making clear that their voice is one of many. For example, one student showed a clear preference for a candidate who, although appointable, was agreed to be the least experienced by all other members of both the work related exercise and interview panel. When the student choice does not tally with the rest of the selection team, this needs to be fed back carefully to students to ensure that they understand the full picture.

Our personnel department have also raised concerns around recruitment and selection training. Unlike other staff involved, students have not completed this

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## Students as partners in recruitment

training and may be unwittingly prone to indirect discrimination. However, their feedback in both exercises has always been mediated by staff who have been trained, ensuring we are not leaving ourselves open to claims of discrimination. In future iterations, we will set expectations even more explicitly, ensuring that they know their feedback is part of the process, and give them feedback afterwards on who was chosen, particularly where it has not coincided with their own thoughts. We may ask students to sign a set of terms and conditions that make explicit the expectations on both sides. We are also considering making recruitment and selection training a facet of the new Hive Student Ambassadors scheme that we are developing under the student engagement banner.

Challenges aside, there is no doubt that we will continue experimenting with this approach. Our next set of interviews is looming and we have set ourselves some high standards in thinking up innovative, inclusive and illuminating new work-related activities to help recruit excellent candidates.

### References

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- 1 The Hive, 2015. Jobs and volunteering. Available from: <http://www.thehiveworcester.org/jobs.html> [accessed 1 September 2015]
- 2 University of Worcester, 2015. Student as academic partners. Available from: <http://www.worc.ac.uk/edu/1188.htm> [accessed 1 September 2015]

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# Using action plans to build partnerships at the University of York

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In January 2014 the Relationship Management Team (RMT) in the Information Directorate was reorganised at the University of York. New teams were created to develop services focusing on liaison, research and teaching and learning. The aim of the new RMT was to strengthen relationships with staff and students across the university by understanding and engaging in the new research and teaching environment at the University of York, and providing appropriate and targeted services and support.

Many institutions have started to move away from a traditional model of academic liaison and subject librarianship. Whether or not we are aware of it, relationship management has become a key part of what we do. The changing information landscape and new challenges higher education libraries face mean we need to think differently about how we can meet these challenges. Reports from RIN and RLUK have attempted to help institutions think about what services and skills are needed to operate in this new environment.

Our academic liaison team at York considered these reports and felt that it was too much to expect liaison librarians to develop these new skills on top of all they were already doing. The information landscape around us was changing and we felt that a new model was needed in order for us to address the inevitable challenges. About the same time we organised a White Rose visit – staff from Leeds, Sheffield and York universities visited the University of Manchester in order to understand more about the new model they were implementing. This model included a focus on engagement with the business of 'selling' the services of the library to academic departments.

We had a fairly traditional liaison model at York, with three subject clusters (which were like faculties). Each cluster had a team leader, and although there was some sharing within cluster groups, the model had resulted in duplication of work, inconsistent service delivery to departments and liaison librarians feeling they had to be experts in everything but without the means to do so. The move to a functional approach, which has been implemented at many UK higher education institutions, was adopted at York, and allows staff to specialise and develop expertise in one specific area.

Liaison is one of our key functions, and our structure gives our liaison librarians the time to focus on building meaningful relationships with academic departments, notably through the academic staff themselves, with an aim of reaching and influencing students through them. Simultaneously with the introduction of this model we developed annual library action plans. These are partnership documents with each academic department, outlining the work that we shall be undertaking with the department over the forthcoming year. These plans are formulated using data from our surveys (LibQual, National Student Survey [NSS], Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey), knowledge from the liaison librarian (for example, from attending departmental meetings, meeting with staff), module feedback, department medium- and long-term plans and a range of library data (e.g. budget and how it has been spent, usage data). Liaison librarians use all this information to develop a draft set of actions, which are then discussed in meetings with the academic Head of Department, the academic library representative and the Head of Relationship Management or the Academic Liaison Team Manager. These discussions have proved invaluable and allow us either to confirm that the suggested actions are the right focus for the coming year or to change or add new actions based on department priorities which may have been previously unknown (sometimes based on the department's NSS results).

Each action plan is tailored to an individual department, using a common template. Initially they were essentially a Word document. However, they have been substantially developed to give more detailed data analysis to departments about the library, the investment we make in the department and

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# Using action plans to build partnerships at the University of York

their use of the library (by staff and students). Details include the amount of money spent on resources for the department, use of library resources (both print and electronic), number of reading lists submitted to the library, use of electronic texts, statistics on teaching sessions and use of our online subject guides.

In addition, we ensure that we provide a report on the progress of the previous year's actions, which allows us to highlight the work we've done and to raise any issues that have arisen.

In 2016 we shall be developing further, in order to contextualise the departmental data over time as well as against comparable departments; this may (or may not) be at the faculty level. We use a PowerPoint template that provides an easy-to-use tool that looks attractive (something that was commented on by many departments). Departments can (and do) use these documents at their medium- and long-term planning reviews to demonstrate engagement with the library.

We have been fortunate in getting all departments on board. In the first year of action plan meetings, all but one department met with us. The following year we met with all departments. The value of the meeting is recognised by departments, as we develop shared priorities for partnership working. We have honest and open conversations about the issues in each department, and most departments are realistic about the limit of what we can achieve. This approach has resulted in even closer working relationships and a more detailed understanding of how departments work (and the sometimes subtle differences between them). Our engagement is becoming more meaningful; we are viewed as a trusted partner and are therefore able to tailor our communications to individual departments. For example, our subscriptions review process (never a popular exercise when we are not able to increase the amount we spend on journals) had the highest level of engagement for years in 2015, and enabled us to cancel 52 titles (up from ten the year before), thus allowing us to subscribe to 57 new titles (up from twenty the year before). This means that our current titles are now more aligned with the university's current teaching and research priorities.

After all action plan meetings have happened, we identify the key themes, identify which departments we need to work with in these areas and where there is commonality to work across a group of departments. The key themes over the last two years have been teaching and learning (integrating digital literacy skills and providing support), collections management (creating a collection profile to gain better understanding of usage of the collection or undertaking a gap analysis – e.g. where we need to support a new teaching / research area), research support (open access publishing, increasing awareness in the department), and the physical environment (how space is being used).

The Head of Relationship Management and the Academic Liaison Team Manager collate this information to establish the volume of work and priorities. We are realistic about how many initiatives we can take on with any one department and ensure that no one liaison librarian (they are each responsible for 3-4 departments) is involved in too many initiatives. Priorities are then discussed with other senior managers as part of our wider planning discussions to establish what work will be done and likely timescales

Finally, in order to ensure both that liaison librarians can keep track of their actions and that everyone else across the wider library service knows what is happening, we have developed a centralised spreadsheet of actions to which updates can be added. In addition, we have developed our own customer relationship management (CRM) database where all our interactions with departments are captured, so we have a holistic picture of what is happening across all departments. Further information on our CRM will be reported at the

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# Using action plans to build partnerships at the University of York

First Relationship Management Conference in higher education in November at Stirling and an article will be published as part of the Northumbria Conference Proceedings.

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# Using a blog to showcase the library

## The Maynooth University Library Quality Review



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### Introduction

This article recounts Maynooth University (MU) Library's experience of using a blog to showcase library activity as part of a library quality review. Such reviews, established under the 1997 Irish Universities Act, are now an integral part of the Irish Higher Education system. Maynooth University Library undertook quality reviews in 2004, 2010 and 2015. As part of the 2015 review, the two authors of this article produced a blog, which formed part of the submission to the peer reviewers.

### Elements of the quality review process

The library quality review involved the preparation of an internal self-assessment report (SAR), a site visit by two external reviewers, the production of a peer review report by two internal and two external reviewers and the preparation of a quality improvement plan (QIP).

The library agreed to be the first university department to undergo a review under the third cycle university reviews, which commenced in 2015. This allowed us to have significant input into the structure of the SAR and to suggest ways to best present evidence of our wide range of activities, outside the standard written report. To achieve this, we produced the **Maynooth University Library Quality Review 2015 blog** (<https://libraryqualreview2015.wordpress.com/>), which serves to complement the SAR.



*MU Library atrium*

### Blogs and blogging

We had some experience of blogging, having been awarded first and joint second prize in the Academic and National Library Training Co-operative (ANLTC) (<http://anltc.conul.ie/>) 2014 Blog Competition for our blogs on staff development and library information services at MU Library. We were able to build on our knowledge and experience in developing the blog, and it was an opportunity to acquire new skills. The process of developing the blog was a useful professional and personal development opportunity.

### Planning

The main aim of the blog was to be a visual aid to enhance the quality review process. The timeline for preparing the SAR and the blog – approximately two months – was short. We kick-started the process with a brainstorming session with a colleague who lectures on blogs and blogging on the postgraduate course in librarianship at University College Dublin. This was a chance to discuss what we wanted to convey via the blog. An accurate and balanced representation of the work undertaken by the library within the university and the wider community was essential.

# Using a blog to showcase the library

## The Maynooth University Library Quality Review

### Blog software

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WordPress (<https://wordpress.com/>), an online publishing platform for creating websites, blogs and apps, was chosen as the platform, and a basic design template selected. There is a wide variety of free themes (looks) to choose from, with several more available in their premium range at a cost. You can link the blog site to Facebook, Twitter and other social networks. WordPress software is user friendly and lends itself well to learning as you go.

### Blog design and content

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We were aware that the external reviewers – both from the UK – would not be familiar with the library or indeed the university, which helped us decide how best to design the blog. It needed to be succinct, user friendly and visually attractive. However, it was important to not short-change on this opportunity to showcase achievements. As there was a vast amount of potential material, it was necessary to be selective. The period covered in the SAR was 2010–15, and the blog had to mirror this. Information had to be concise and chronological where desirable, for example in showcasing the various exhibitions and events held in the library. Most importantly it had to be easy to navigate and understand. In order to achieve this, in traditional library style we decided to break each area to be highlighted into different subject categories or headings. The categories / headings chosen were: collections, community engagement, events, exhibitions, staff development and student experience. We were able to use existing material from the blogs that won the 2014 competition as both display library activity in different ways. Information was also harvested from the library's Flickr and Facebook accounts.

With the structure and content of the blog decided, the next step was to choose a design theme. The basic WordPress template originally selected was subsequently changed to a different theme, one that allowed uploading the university logo alongside the title of the blog. Keeping in mind some of the basic elements of good design such as composition, type-faces and colour pallet, we chose the free design template 'Big Brother'. This allowed the use of images instead of solid colour for the backdrop, which afforded opportunities for creativity. The use of the images would, we hoped, captivate the audience immediately. A variety of images was chosen, some modern, several others with an old-world feel. Maynooth University Library has a bank of images gathered over the years, which proved to be very useful. The images chosen were not always the obvious ones: some had an artistic or unique perspective. Rather than using an image of the façade of the library building, the image of the library atrium was chosen for the home screen as it has a modern, welcoming and rather exotic look. The backdrop is a map, selected because it symbolises a journey of development of library activities going from local, regional and national to international.

The blog afforded the opportunity to showcase a sample range of items from our vast array of collections. It captured a glimpse of some of the wonderful treasures that may otherwise have been overlooked during the two-day site visit due to time constraints; and it provided an insight into how the library collection has evolved over the period of the review. Included in this captured vision is the new special collections reading room (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdWM6oJSKv0>) and the flexible learning spaces available in the new library extension (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSdrjaGHLu4>). The library has been acknowledged as the hub of the university and it was important to reflect this through the material selected. One challenge was not to overwhelm the reviewers, who received a lot of documentation and met many people over a short period. We also wanted to include the fun elements, showing how the library is used as a social space as well as a learning environment. To achieve this we included some of the wonderful videos captured at such events such as Exploring African and Caribbean Culture (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wq7IFqxx0pg>) and the Robot Soccer

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# Using a blog to showcase the library

## The Maynooth University Library Quality Review

match capturing our community engagement during Science Week 2014 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-oWawX5qno>).



*Some of the images chosen and adapted to customise the randomised header in the blog*

Finding innovative ways to showcase library staff activity and student engagement was interesting. Using internet resources such as Animoto (<https://animoto.com/>), Movie Maker (<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-ie/windows-live/movie-maker>), YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/>) and Picasa (<https://picasa.google.com/>), an online photo editor helped to vary the forms while also increasing our skill set in these areas. The importance of recording library activities, whether presenting prizes to students or capturing students using the library in creative ways, became very clear during the process. Creating the blog further emphasised the importance of keeping chronological records of library activities. Encouraging staff to keep their own photographic evidence of their extra-curricular work helps to raise the status of such activities which could otherwise be absorbed and overlooked, while taking ownership is essential for career enhancement.

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# Using a blog to showcase the library

## The Maynooth University Library Quality Review

### Outcomes

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Measuring the outcome of this journey was important. Assessing whether the objectives discussed at the start of the project had been achieved was essential to instil confidence in the work undertaken. Throughout the process of creating the blog the feedback was very positive. At the peer review group meeting on 29 April 2015, Durham University Librarian, Jon Purcell, explained how the blog, of which the reviewers had received details two weeks before the visit, helped them from the outset. Professor Jim Walsh, Vice-President for Strategy and Quality at MU, commented on the innovative aspect and anticipated that other departments in the university might consider using a blog to enhance their quality review process. Manchester University Librarian and Director of the John Rylands Library, Jan Wilkinson, had the following comments to make on her experience of using the blog as an external reviewer for the quality review:

As a reviewer entering a new organisation for the first time, knowing almost nothing, your blog performed the wonderful job of showcasing all the wonderful things that are going on at Maynooth and without the leg-work! You helped us to hit the ground running last Tuesday, by focusing our attention on the things that you, the staff, wanted us to know about and to see. Without it, it would be impossible to gain so many insights into the breadth and depth of your impressive library in just the two days we had. We could see at a glance, all the things you are rightly proud of. What followed next was the combination of the blog with many, many fruitful conversations with the full range of library stakeholders. This meant that by the time we left, we had as full a picture as it is possible to achieve in such a short period.

Professor Mark Boyle of the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) / Geography Department at MU explained his experience of the blog in the following way.

Fluent communication is central to effective team building and collective action towards an end goal. The MU Library's blog is an excellent and pioneering example of how a complex organisational unit can harness social media to further awareness at all levels of ongoing events and activities. It also played a key role in helping the library prepare so thoroughly for the review process. It is a simple but most impressive initiative and is to be commended to other units in Maynooth.

### Reflection

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There is no doubt the blog contributed to the library's very positive peer review report, and praise for the blog was abundant and warm. Following such praise, appreciation and approval it is not too surprising to be able to say, with a measure of gratitude and relief, that the vision and objectives set at the outset were achieved. The experience of working on the project was rewarding; it enhanced opportunities for skills development and promoted the library in a creative and exciting way. The journey is not over, as the two authors have subsequently been asked to present at conferences, which is helping us develop our skill sets. We hope that this article will stimulate interest in innovative ways of presenting the library for peer reviews and other quality initiatives. It seeks to highlight how to enhance opportunities to promote the library in creative and exciting ways while providing an opportunity for new skills development.

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<https://libraryqualreview2015.wordpress.com/>

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# Cunard 175 – a voyage through history with the Cunard Archive

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In 1839 Samuel Cunard (1787–1865) a ship-owner from Nova Scotia, founded the *British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company*. Its purpose was to provide a scheduled steamship service to carry mail across the Atlantic – the first of its kind. On 4 July 1840 the *Britannia* left Liverpool for Halifax and Boston, marking the company's beginnings in transatlantic travel. Cunard went on to change the face of ocean travel forever.

Now in its 175th year, Cunard is one of the longest-serving names in shipping history. Its story is one of success, although it is also an eventful and complex one. Recognised throughout the world, the name Cunard is associated with luxury and an exemplary safety record.

This anniversary presented a fantastic opportunity for the University of Liverpool Library, Special Collections & Archives (SCA), to showcase the Cunard Archive. Occupying over four hundred linear metres, the archive contains most of the surviving business records produced by Cunard since it became a limited company in 1878. As a dynamic corporate memory the archive gives rich insight into the company's history and is a unique resource for researching Cunard's growth and development as a business.



Throughout its history, Cunard has held a particularly strong affinity with the people of Great Britain – but nowhere more so than in its spiritual home of Liverpool, 'where everyone knew somebody who worked for Cunard'. Cunard's long and proud association with Liverpool continues to this day, as the city became a focal point for the company's 175th anniversary celebrations.



In view of this, SCA worked closely with Culture Liverpool (Liverpool City Council's cultural service) on the 'One Magnificent City' (OMC) seven-week programme of events. These events were built around the arrival of Cunard's Three Queens (*Queen Mary 2*, *Queen Elizabeth* and *Queen Victoria*) on 25 May 2015. Such was the public's enthusiasm that over one million people lined the River Mersey to witness this historic event.

Culture Liverpool acted as an umbrella organisation that enabled a network of institutions across Liverpool to work in partnership. The work focused on celebrating Cunard's 175th anniversary by engaging with the public and

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# Cunard 175 – a voyage through history with the Cunard Archive

opening up new opportunities and experiences to a wide audience.

Some examples of the collaborative events and resources that used the Cunard Archive included:

- *Light Night* – Liverpool’s one-night arts and culture festival which takes place annually in May
- Culture Liverpool’s OMC *Learning Links* – an online learning resource for school children, produced in partnership with Liverpool School Improvement Services
- *The Crossing* installation within the Liverpool ONE shopping complex, which used 3D sound techniques and images to explore the relationship between Liverpool and New York
- Community writing workshops
- Cunard poster exhibition and public lecture at the University of Liverpool’s Victoria Gallery & Museum.

These partnerships allowed SCA to present the Cunard Archive imaginatively in different institutions across Liverpool. These partnerships have been crucial in providing an innovative network that has facilitated the promotion of the Cunard Archive at large and prestigious events.



A new exhibition was also launched by SCA to coincide with Cunard’s anniversary celebrations. The exhibition, *Cunard 175 – a voyage through history*, was the first to occupy the full extent of SCA’s newly-expanded exhibition area. It attracted many visitors, particularly those from outside the university. Its aim was to represent Cunard’s rich heritage through the presentation and interpretation of original documents and photographs.

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## Cunard 175 – a voyage through history with the Cunard Archive

Visitors were introduced to the history of the Cunard Company through themes such as 'Life on Board' and 'Serving the Country'. Some of the highlights included the passenger list which records Charles Dickens travelling on board the Britannia in 1842, and photographs depicting Cunard's service during the Second World War.

There has been a great media interest in Cunard's anniversary celebrations. Articles featuring the Cunard Archive have been published in both local and national newspapers. TV coverage has included news reports and a BBC Inside Out Cunard special. The media interest has helped to raise the profile of SCA and the University Library and enabled the Cunard Archive to reach a large popular audience. Feedback from members of the public and university staff has also been very positive.

Cunard's anniversary year has been an enthralling and exciting one for SCA. Both the exhibition and the partnership work have allowed SCA to create stronger links within the university – particularly with the Victoria Gallery & Museum and the University's Corporate Communications department. Externally SCA has improved networking with other academic institutions and cultural organisations more widely across the city. It is anticipated that this dynamic and forward-looking network will be highly beneficial to future projects.

Further information about the Cunard Archive can be found on the SC&A website:

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/library/sca/colldescs/cunard.html>

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# Innovation in libraries

## Report from the Business Librarians Association annual conference

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### Introduction

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In June 2015, seventy delegates from 58 member institutions gathered in Liverpool for the annual conference of the Business Librarians Association. The theme was Innovation in Libraries. There was an international flavour this year, with one keynote speaker coming from New York and the other from Utrecht. In addition to the keynote addresses there were short papers from members, talks from staff based at both the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University and the all-important networking. In this article I hope to give you a flavour of the conference by reviewing the two keynote speeches while also celebrating some of the innovative ideas being generated around the country as highlighted by our other speakers.

### Library Innovation

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Utrecht University Library has an innovation and development division whose manager, Jan Molendijk, opened the conference with the first keynote address. Some may say 'Do not reinvent the wheel', but even something as simple as a wheel can be re-engineered and improved. Innovation in libraries can be as simple as perfecting that wheel!

There are three key reasons why libraries should innovate. First, we need to adapt to a changing environment. Jan mentioned two areas of change directly affecting libraries: the move to digital, which is now almost complete for journals but still has some way to go for books; and the changing way our users search for information meaning that the traditional OPAC and even local discovery systems are becoming less relevant. Secondly we need to improve existing products and services. Examples might include harnessing the power of RFID further, improvements to study spaces, further developments of an app. Thirdly we need to make use of new opportunities. For example at Utrecht by facilitating open access publishing the library has become involved in research data management; this has led to opening up new services, such as giving advice on where to find other people's research data.

One way to test whether a new idea will work is to use what Jan called 'the incubator model'. Having identified a need, find or build a quick solution and see what makes it a success; this can then be built into an existing process. At Utrecht they support the creation of open access journals. Those that prove successful can become a fully-fledged, independently funded journal; the others can be closed, thus building efficiencies into the model.

Jan mentioned the concept of lean startup, as advocated by Eric Ries (2011). In any service you can continually innovate by building quick iterations and then observing and learning. It is vital to talk to the end users to see how they use the service and to allow your own assumptions to be challenged. That way you can quickly find out whether what you are building is actually useful without spending lots of money on it.

Stopping services is also innovative! We should continue to ask ourselves whether services we have been running are still useful, and if they are not, we should stop doing them. At Utrecht they have already stopped the local discovery service as users were finding the same material on the internet. They are looking to see whether they still need their OPAC.

### Indirect Innovation

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Robert Farrell is based in the library of Lehman College, part of City University New York, in the Bronx. CUNY is not a rich university, so they have to seek funding to get projects off the ground.

He talked about taking an entrepreneurial approach to start new projects. Entrepreneurs exploit other people's ideas with other people's money. Using

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# Innovation in libraries

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this capital you can use your own resources to invest in riskier projects; to find time to reflect, assess and improve; to maintain services if budgets are cut.

So where do you get this capital? You should look at new or developing disciplines, as there may be seed money attached that you can tap into. Look at grant proposals – maybe there is an element you can help with and thus get some of the funding. Capital doesn't just have to be money but can be labour, so for example use a group of architecture students if you are considering creating a new space.

In order to get something, you need to be persuasive and flexible. You need to illustrate the purpose of projects by means of stories. Identify change makers who can act as advocates. Acknowledge that it can be a long slow process. You may have an idea for which the political will or the capital is not to hand straight away, but if you keep chipping away, things change and suddenly everything falls into place and you can get that long-dreamed of project off the ground.

### Practical examples

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#### University of Liverpool – Emma Thompson

Situation: Business students doing the market research module were working with local businesses for their assignment. There had been large growth in student numbers, making it difficult to run a practical project. Students found that businesses did not understand that the purpose was to give the students experience of market research, not to provide cheap labour.

Opportunity: Emma Thompson had done a postgraduate diploma in learning and teaching in higher education, and this led to a conversation with the relevant academics. She suggested that they use the library as the client.

Innovation: The students did market research for the library. Different groups were given different areas to research. They came up with great ideas, some of which could be implemented. The students learned about the service and understood better how the library operated. An additional benefit was that the students' satisfaction with the library improved.

#### City University – Samantha Halford & Suzanne Griffiths

This is an example of continuous innovation as mentioned by Jan Molendijk.

Situation: The speakers took ownership of a previously created course in Moodle that was visible to all students in all modules, so was easily findable. 65% of students have used the module. The highest views were for posts from the library, database passwords, and the list of databases by topic. It is always a challenge designing a non-curriculum module that does not attract a credit.

Opportunity: New features have been added over the last couple of years, including lecture capture of student led-training and weekly posting on the news forum, which have proved very popular. Other features that were not so popular included a library FAQ and a revamped Cass Library Certification.

Innovation: The changes have been piecemeal and reflect changes in the library service. The speakers want to take a step back and start afresh. Areas of low use have been identified, feedback has been gathered from students, library staff and EdTech. They looked at best practice, including an MBA module and a law course, and will be developing over the next year.

#### York University – Ned Potter

Situation: At York, they are looking for a way to strengthen relationships between the library and departments and plan for the year ahead.

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# Innovation in libraries

## Report from the Business Librarians Association annual conference

**Opportunity:** Having done a LibQual survey, the academic librarians each produced an analysis but this was internal only. They produced an action plan but this was not discussed with the relevant departments.

**Innovation:** Having collated all these data, the librarians wanted to share them with the academics and discuss the action plan to ensure it was consistent with the direction of the department. An annual report was produced which included headline statistics. It also included feedback from students. Actions undertaken in the last year were included and an action plan for the year ahead was written. A draft version was sent to the academics. It was followed by an hour-long meeting to discuss the report, which was very productive and meant that the library could tell its story as it wanted.

### Dublin City University – Jack Hyland

**Situation:** Library training for first-year undergraduate students was built into a Skills for Success module; it was fragmented, and not all students did this module. There was a 30-minute lecture followed by staggered 20-minute workshops. An online quiz gave 5% towards the module mark. Changes to the module led to even fewer students taking it

**Opportunity:** The training could be moved online. There was strong support from the associate dean.

**Innovation:** The training was embedded into the Introduction to Marketing module studied by students in both Dublin and Riyadh. It consisted of a two-hour asynchronous tutorial and a summative quiz. Students had two weeks to complete the quiz; the mark remained at 5%. There was a problem with enrolment due to the timing but there was lots of positive feedback; more students did it than in the previous, blended approach; the completion rate was over 90%; the average mark went up. Following studies observing how students interacted with the online course, further innovations were implemented, including more quizzes. The training has now been embedded into a module followed by all business students.

### Imperial College – Paula Evans

**Situation:** Library staff are required to deliver training to students and ensure that they understand.

**Opportunity:** All students at Imperial College are now given an iPad and staff have been encouraged to find innovative ways to get students to use them.

**Innovation:** The speaker introduced sli.do into lectures. Students can post questions during the session and can vote for their favourite questions. This enables the session to be re-focused if it becomes apparent that students don't understand something. Questions can be answered in the class or answers can be exported afterwards and sent to the students. New functionality from sli.do includes the creation of infographics and sharing of slides.

### Liverpool John Moores University – Val Stevenson

**Situation:** Research is becoming increasingly important at LJMU and the library needs to support this activity.

**Opportunity:** New posts have been created in the last 2–3 years to increase research support. Academic liaison librarians also support researchers and are the named contact with the library. There is increased training for researchers. There is promotion of open access via the research repository.

**Innovation:** Research cafés were introduced. These are based on the concept of Café Philosophique. Informal seminars are held with coffee and cake. Short talks are aimed at the lay person. This promotes the range of research at LJMU. There are normally 2–4 speakers with 10–20 minutes each. As an outreach the

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# Innovation in libraries

## Report from the Business Librarians Association annual conference

Christmas seminar was held outside the university at Liverpool Central Library.

### Liverpool University – Andrew Barker

**Situation:** Libraries and publishers do not always have the best relationship. The library view is that subscription prices are too high, and there is a lack of availability for e-textbooks; the publishers' view is that libraries have too high expectations and want everything open access.

**Opportunity:** Build collaboration between the University of Liverpool and Liverpool University Press to enhance scholarly communication. Following the successful launch of an open access journal, *Modern Languages Open*, the university and the press are now looking to see what other needs could be met through their collaboration.

**Innovation:** Liverpool University and Liverpool University Press are trialling the co-creation of material. At the outset the library was clear that the outcome of this collaboration would be a new book, but was unsure whether it should be a research monograph or a textbook. The clear expectation from students, though, was that there should be more textbooks in the library. However, for the library, buying more textbooks has implications of both space and cost; thus, creating something electronic would be an advantage. For the first book on financial management, much of the material for the e-textbook already existed in the lecturer's own notes and course material. A second, on using primary sources, is in production and provides an opportunity to promote archive material. (Barker, A. 2015).

### Student-generated inductions – Nicholas Bowskill from Shared Thinking

**Situation:** Students know about services offered by the university but don't use them if they think their peers won't. It can be the most wonderful service in the world, but if the psychological reality is that students won't use it, then it is no good.

**Opportunity:** Redesign induction based on social norms and influencing behaviours.

**Innovation:** Move induction away from being a presentation by tutors and support professionals to being more about talking to peers. The agenda is then owned and co-authored by the participants. Shared Thinking found that the sessions were more focused on the concerns students had about coming to university and the solutions that were in place.

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# Innovation and Evolution: Challenges and Opportunities for 21st Century Academic and Research Libraries.

## Report on the Consortium of National and University Libraries (CONUL) Conference, 3-4 June 2015, Ireland

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The inaugural CONUL conference attracted 136 delegates from Irish academic and research libraries. There was a very full and exciting programme with well-known library technologist Marshall Breeding and Dr. Sarah Moore, a leading figure in developing teaching and learning in Ireland and beyond, as the keynote speakers. With both speakers obviously well versed in their particular areas, there was plenty of interesting information for delegates to digest from Breeding's depiction of technological innovation in Libraries (and the scale of the industries which assist in this through to Dr. Moore's clarion call for librarians to 'crash the party' and enhance our visibility.

The remainder of the conference was split between parallel sessions, posters and lightning talks. The parallel sessions had four themes: 'Library space', 'Unique and distinctive collections', 'The digital library and resource discovery' and 'Emerging roles and services'. While there was no obvious focus on areas of research support or teaching and learning, the areas proved sufficiently broad to accommodate an interesting variety of talks and (as is always the case with parallel sessions) leaving the delegate wishing s/he could be in two places at once. Although quality was universally very high, particular highlights for this delegate included talks by Crónán O Doibhlin (University College Cork) who ably demonstrated why the idea of Unique and Distinctive Collections equating to 'rare books' is a thing of the past and John Cox (National University of Ireland, Galway) who painting a fascinating insight into the often hidden and occasionally Byzantine systems and networks a University Librarian has to navigate in order to bring projects to fruition.

Complementing the parallel sessions were the lightning talks, each allocated ten minutes. The great benefit of this format is that it allows for attendees to be exposed to a variety of ideas and practices (many of which may not be that familiar) in a brisk and engaging manner. These sessions worked very well and, from the conversations later, it was obvious that the sessions sparked a cascade of ideas. Again, particular personal highlights were Brian Gillespie (Dublin Institute of Technology) who spoke with wit and no small insight on digital literacy and Michael Ladisch (University College Dublin) who, with his colleague Joseph Greene was very informative on the increasingly prominent issue of altmetrics. Bernadette Gardiner and Emma Boyce's presentation on "Using a blog as part of the Maynooth University Quality Review" generated lots of interest, as a number of Irish universities are now in the third cycle of quality reviews. Unlike the parallel sessions, the lightning talks took place in front of the whole delegation and it is to the credit of speakers, many whom were doing this for the first time that they did so well in front of an impressive, though welcoming crowd.

The posters on display testified to the creative and visual skills of so many in our profession. What was particularly striking was how prominently the idea of innovation figured in each one – be it innovation in something tangible, such as 3D printing, or via new services or collaborations. The use of posters in a conference is always welcome, offering an interesting alternative way to present information.

The absence of a truly national inclusive conference for all library staff has been deeply felt in the community in recent years, despite the range of very useful training events and seminars provided by the Academic and National Library Training Cooperative (ANLTC) and other groups.

This was an ambitious and wide range conference. It is to the credit of the CONUL Conference Committee that they succeeded. Every delegate I spoke to found it stimulating and the only regret seemed to be that it could not have gone on longer, than one and half days. High praise indeed and next years' can't come too soon.

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Consortium  
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June 2015, Ireland

PowerPoint Presentations from the CONUL Conference are available at <http://www.slideshare.net/conulconference>

Youtube video of a number of the presentations are available at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeiGMTSgBVZ92wzoU2uuzPw/videos>

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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.

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

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- Use author surname as the beginning of the file name.
- Complete the cover sheet for each article submitted.

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- 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

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

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

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

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