Unique and Distinctive Collections: Opportunities for Research Libraries

RESEARCH LIBRARIES UK 2014

A Report by RLUK, based on fieldwork carried out by Alison Cullingford, and edited by Caroline Peach and Mike Mertens

RLUK Research Libraries UK

UDC HUB

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Preface

Research libraries in the UK hold collections containing the most remarkable material; spanning medieval manuscripts, modern archives, printed books, pamphlets, periodicals, and maps. They increasingly also include non-print formats such as audio, film and digital files as well as print collections which are remarkable as a result of their breadth and comprehensiveness. In recognition of the opportunities and challenges presented by these collections, Research Libraries UK (RLUK), the leading representative body for research libraries in the UK and Ireland, dedicated a strand of its 2011–14 strategic plan to exploring the ways in which libraries can maximise the potential and impact of these unique and distinctive collections.

Naturally, such collections have never been a static part of what has constituted any library – they have evolved and developed over time. However, the past 5–10 years has seen the coming together of fundamental changes within the environment: large-scale digitisation; the explosion in Internet access beyond the academy; fundamental changes to UK Higher Education (HE) funding; the emergence of the Digital Humanities; massively increasing amounts of Born Digital materials; the paradigm of student as researcher, and the emergence of 'impact' in the research agenda and the increased focus on institutional fundraising and the contribution that items unique to the institution can make to those efforts. This 'perfect storm' has led to a major difference in institutional expectations that such collections have the opportunity to make a clear and compelling case for themselves, especially in a period of unprecedented economic pressure.

In this continually evolving information age the opportunities for maximising potential and impact come not only from sharing the innovative ways that libraries of all types are finding to exploit unique and distinctive collections, but also from thinking afresh about what is 'special'.

This report looks at issues associated with the promotion, accessibility and curation of unique and distinctive collections (UDCs) and considers where investment and innovation have the potential to enhance the role that UDCs play in research libraries. It highlights the many excellent initiatives undertaken by libraries across the UK and Ireland and shows how these can be taken forward and expanded as a community enterprise through the new online RLUK UDC Hub

In adopting the term unique and distinctive collections, this report acknowledges the effects on special collections of the changes described above. In an age when information is an almost ubiquitous commodity, the particular collections within our institutions make the institutions themselves unique and distinctive. We hope that the term will be taken to indicate the breadth and profundity of the response to this wholesale change in intent, direction and purpose in defining and developing such collections, expressed in the case studies below. Adopting the strategies described in this report will, we hope, enable any institution with such collections to distinguish itself in the eyes of its patrons and its peers.

This report represents the culmination of the work RLUK has carried out in order to understand more closely and effectively how the definition, scope and rationale for what have been traditionally been termed 'special collections' are changing, and what the drivers and consequences of these changes are likely to be. The work was produced and overseen by RLUK's Unique and Distinctive Collections Working Group. We hope the essence of the report will continue to flow from the same sustaining and impelling spirit that has marked the Group's own work as unique and distinctive: the involvement of the community both within and beyond RLUK. This has encompassed significant and rewarding national and international partnerships with The London Library, The National Archives (TNA) and OCLC Research. Of particular pleasure has been the opportunity to engage with a huge range of collection holders that sit beyond HE, whose collections enrich the lifeblood of research and knowledge creation. It is for the entirety of the community and the improvement of our practices and effectiveness in this realm that this report has been produced. It is the community that will underpin the ongoing debate, exchange of expertise, and sharing of example present throughout the report onwards towards the next stage in our collaboration, the UDC Hub.

Chris Banks
On behalf of the RLUK UDC Strategic Working Group

Executive summary

The unique and distinctive print and non-print heritage collections held by research libraries in the UK and Ireland are valuable resources with the potential to contribute to institutional goals for research, learning and public engagement. In recognition of this, Research Libraries UK (RLUK), the leading representative body for research libraries in the UK and Ireland, dedicated a strand of its 2011–14 strategic plan to exploring the ways in which libraries can maximise the potential and impact of unique and distinctive collections (UDCs).

This report, an output of the UDC strategic strand, aims to inform a debate about UDCs and provide a roadmap towards achieving greater awareness of the potential of UDCs to support the objectives of research libraries and their parent organisations by:
• Proposing a definition and means of identifying UDCs
• Examining the ways in which UDCs can contribute to institutional mission
• Exploring the challenges of developing and managing UDCs at a strategic level
• Highlighting existing good practice and examples of innovative use of UDCs for re-use throughout the UDC community

This report brings together the work of the UDC strand to appraise the opportunities available to maximise the potential and impact of unique and distinctive collections. It includes findings from the OCLC/RLUK survey on special collections and archives in the UK and Ireland and the Hidden Collections (HC) reports[1], alongside a wider body of evidence from published literature, and the contributions of members of the UDC community.

The report and its recommendations are intended to be of use to library directors in research libraries, to UDC managers, and to RLUK as indications of directions for collaborative action. It is hoped that many of the recommendations will inspire members of the UDC community to contribute information and case studies to the forthcoming web resource, the UDC Hub, as part of a collective approach to maximising the potential of UDCs.

1. Survey of Special Collections and Archives in the UK and Ireland. Jackie M. Dooley, Rachel Beckett, Alison Cullingford, Katie Sambrook, Chris Shepard, and Sue Worrall, OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc, Dublin, Ohio, 2013. http://oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2013/2013-01.pdf. Accessed 13.10.2014.

Hidden Collections: Report of the findings of the RLUK Retrospective Cataloguing Survey in association with The London Library. Contributors, Mike Mertens, Dunia García-Ontiveros, Alison Cullingford, Lisa Jeskins, RLUK, London, 2012. www.rluk.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/RLUK-Hidden-Collections.pdf. Accessed 13.10.2014.

Key points

1. The report proposes a definition of a 'unique and distinctive collection' (UDC) as *'a collection that, regardless of format or location within an institution, derives significance from its interest to research, teaching or society through its association with a person, place or topic, such as to distinguish the constituent items from similar items which may exist elsewhere'*. UDCs encompass, but are broader than traditional special collections, potentially covering collections in all formats and at all locations.

2. The unique and distinctive properties of collections can be used to articulate the significance of collections to institutional mission, and to appreciate the value of often overlooked collections such as 20th century print collections. The practice of assessing library collections in terms of significance is not widespread, though there are examples that could be shared with the wider community to enable the identification of UDCs across library holdings. Tools such as those developed through the Copac Collections Management project or by OCLC to analyse WorldCat offer the potential to ease such assessments.

3. Significance assessments have greater currency in the cultural heritage sector where they have been used to understand the relationships between collections and their holding institutions, collections and communities, and to unite distributed collections in terms of common values or levels of significance. The Designation Scheme in England offers a means of gaining wider recognition of significant collections; its current review by Arts Council England represents an opportunity for exploring new funding streams for Designated Collections, to include those of libraries and archives.

4. Differentiation has emerged as a key strategy in an increasingly competitive HE environment. However, RLUK member organisations often show common strategic goals, including: to improve research ranking; to improve student experience; to attract the best staff and the best students; to achieve internationalisation and/or globalisation; social responsibility and institutional sustainability. These common themes are beneficial when thinking about opportunities for collaboration between RLUK members to address strategic issues relating to the accessibility, development and management of UDCs.

5 UDCs can enhance an organisation's distinctiveness and reputation, but must be visible to researchers, students and the wider public to do so. The value placed on the unique and the distinctive, and advocacy by users for the widespread (digital) availability of such materials, is a considerable opportunity that UDCs present for research libraries to exploit. However, exploiting this opportunity requires a significant increase in the scale of digitisation of UDCs. Digitisation activity is currently fragmented, often at an institutional level as well as at a national level. This fragmentation is reflected in concerns about the limited discoverability of digitised content. A coordinated approach to digitisation activity could minimise duplication in the creation of content, achieve economies of scale in terms of process, and enhance the discoverability of UDCs.

6. Technology not only brings opportunities for expanding the ways of interacting with UDCs: by students, researchers and the wider public (for example, through incorporation into VLEs, through crowd-sourcing activities, or as a focus for local community engagement), but also for innovation in research based on UDCs (for example through digital humanities programmes). The growing use of resources such as datasets for research prompts questions about the UDCs of the future and the status of resources such as electronic theses, datasets and the UDCs of the 21st century.

7. There are many existing good examples of the imaginative use of UDCs for research, learning and public engagement. The UDC Hub will offer the potential for UDC managers to share resources and experiences from research libraries of all type and size, to draw on expertise and practice from beyond the research library community (particularly from museums and archives), and to develop a peer-to-peer support network. Fundraising, public engagement, and digital curation/digital preservation are cited as areas for skills and knowledge development.

8. UDC managers have demonstrated their ability to develop successful learning and engagement programmes and to integrate technology into their working practices to enhance the use of UDCs. Opportunities to develop strategic partnerships with staff with complementary skill sets, (for example in research, marketing, careers offices and IT departments) offer the potential to increase the capacity to deliver against the recommendations in this report and increase awareness of UDCs and the contribution they make to the institutional mission throughout an organisation.

9. Opportunities for using UDCs as a stimulus for business and the economy seem to be less well developed than for research, learning and public engagement. Where enterprise or business development departments exist, UDC managers could explore the opportunities for developing activities or building partnerships based on UDCs. Research libraries with experience of such activities, could usefully contribute case studies to the UDC Hub as a resource to inspire others.

10. The lack of standardised information about the use of UDCs hampers efforts to gauge the impact of their use. This gap in knowledge in turn limits the ability to provide evidence of the benefits gained by future investment in UDCs. A common framework for measuring use and impact would allow for comparison between organisations as well as the ability to 'speak as one voice' about UDCs. However the benefits of embarking on a programme of standardised data collection would need to be clear (for example, its potential to leverage funding) to engage research libraries with the process.

11. Research libraries vary in their capacity to manage born-digital material. Many of the larger, university-based, libraries have well-developed processes and facilities but the smaller organisations tend to have much less advanced plans for dealing with born-digital materials. The research library community would benefit from sharing its skills and knowledge in this area, particularly so that organisations without a strategy for managing born-digital material are able to develop one in the near future.

12. The Hidden Collections report revealed that there are significant quantities of uncatalogued collections and improvable metadata. These issues must be addressed to increase the visibility of UDCs, enable connections between collections, and increase access to digitised content. The more systematic use of national and international metadata standards will help discoverability. There is widespread interest in a national online register of 'hidden collections'.

13. Collaborative collections management activities are increasingly possible, in part as a result of the development of tools such as those of the Copac Collections Management Project and OCLC WorldCat which help to analyse holdings with respect to other collections. The successful example of the UK Research Reserve (UKRR) has inspired investigation into a national monographs roadmap (led and published by Jisc[2]) which may result in further opportunities to free up storage space; lack of space was the second most frequently cited 'challenging issue' by respondents to the OCLC survey of special collections and archives.

14. There are opportunities for RLUK to enhance collaborative working, through its continued engagement in initiatives such as the Copac Collections Management Project, the Jisc's National Monograph Strategy and TNA's National Collections Strategy, but also in the area of digitisation where collaboration could bring economies of scale in procurement, achieve greater impact by up-scaling activity, and prevent duplication in the creation of content.

A common theme amongst the recommendations of this report is the benefit of collaboration. Whilst RLUK members are large holders of UDCs, the OCLC report and the Hidden Collections report both show the variety and differences in scale of UDC-holding organisations. Collaboration therefore needs to extend beyond RLUK members to maximise the potential of UDCs, particularly those in smaller organisations which may be most limited by lack of resources. In this context, the national initiatives in which RLUK is already playing a role and the establishment of the UDC Hub will both be critical to ensuring research libraries' collective ability to maximise the opportunities that UDCs present for the benefit of researchers, students and the wider public.

2. A National Monograph Strategy Roadmap, Ben Showers, Jisc, 2014. www.jisc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/a-national-monograph-strategy-roadmap.pdf. Accessed 13.10.2014.

Summary of recommendations

The recommendations made throughout this report are summarised here. Some of the recommendations are most appropriately applied at institutional level whilst others benefit from a collaborative approach. In some cases this collaboration can be achieved by sharing resources and expertise through the UDC Hub; RLUK may wish to consider the other activities as part of its on-going support for unique and distinctive collections.

1. RLUK has a valuable role to play in engaging librarians and archivists with the proposed definition of UDCs to achieve consensus on a definition that can be used to support a programme of activity to further raise the profile, use and development of UDCs. This could be achieved as part of the launch of the UDC Hub.

2. Significance assessments offer the potential to appraise collections of all types in terms of value to the holding institution, and their unique and distinctive properties. The process of assessment has been made easier by analytical tools such as those developed for application to Copac and WorldCat. RLUK could work with the UDC community to encourage widespread application of significance assessments to library collections. RLUK could engage with Arts Council England to explore the potential for developing new funding streams to support designated library and archive collections, and to encourage libraries to apply for Designated Status for their UDCs to raise their profile beyond the research library community.

BACHELOR OF ARTS.

3. Large organisations such as universities would benefit from enhancing strategic partnerships between UDC managers, academics and other departments, (for example research offices, marketing departments, careers services, public engagement teams, fundraising departments and business development teams) to increase awareness of UDCs and achieve a collaborative approach to developing their use. Similarly, collaborations between UDC managers, IT staff, e-learning staff, digital humanities colleagues and other academics should be nurtured to build an understanding of the opportunities for applying technology to learning based on primary sources, for incorporating UDCs into material for VLEs and MOOCs, and for sharing knowledge of UDCs and their use in innovative technology-based applications.

4. As recommended by the OCLC report, RLUK could investigate the use of metrics by research libraries to record online and physical engagement with UDCs, and investigate the benefits of producing a set of standardised metrics which could be used by libraries to benchmark engagement and evaluate the impact of the use of UDCs. Based on the outcomes of these investigations RLUK could work with research libraries to develop a set of arguments to assist organisations with the development of external funding to support UDCs.

5. If they have not already done so, research libraries should consider the implications of managing data sets and other born-digital materials as the UDCs of the future and examine the policies, staffing and infrastructure which enable them to manage born-digital UDCs alongside traditional special collections materials. Where libraries have policies and strategies in place, they should consider sharing them via the UDC Hub to help other organisations develop the procedures they need over the short-term.

6. Digitisation of UDCs at scale would facilitate a step-change in opportunities for their use, and is increasingly expected by users. A strategic approach to digitisation at institutional level should be encouraged and resources which help organisations to achieve this should be shared by the community through the UDC Hub. Developments such as collections analysis tools and Jisc's research into a National Monograph Strategy offer real potential for the operation of large-scale collaborative digitisation activity. RLUK is well placed to review these opportunities and engage with its members with regard to the appetite for a coordinated approach to large-scale digitisation.

7. The next steps of the Hidden Collections report should be appraised for possible action by RLUK. In particular, it would be useful to consider the value of targeting non-traditional UDC formats (audiovisual, born-digital) for cataloguing in order to maximise the potential of UDCs and enable researchers to recognise, and benefit from, the breadth of collections held by research libraries. Research libraries should be encouraged to make optimal use of national and international metadata standards as part of cataloguing (and digitisation) initiatives as this will ease future collaborative activity.

8. The Museums Association's Effective Collections programme offers a model which has been successful at reducing cataloguing backlogs, easing deaccessioning and transfer between institutions to find the most appropriate home for collections, opening up stored collections to new audiences, and attracting significant funding. RLUK may wish to review this programme alongside the other collaborative collections management initiatives with which it is involved to establish whether there is the potential for similar coordinated activity amongst research libraries.

9. The recommendations of the Preservation Learning Programme report (Annexe C) should be revisited for possible action by RLUK as part of the UDC work strand or otherwise. The scale of the brittle paper challenge could usefully be mapped as part of wider mapping work (for example, to identify UDCs or to identify collaborative digitisation priorities). It would then be timely to establish whether there is the desire and potential for collective action, coordinated by RLUK, to address the physical condition of brittle paper.

10. Explore the potential amongst the research library community to establish a task and finish group to investigate space issues relevant to UDCs including: exploring the demand for materials-specific and off-site collaborative stores (to address the challenges of lack of space, and the lack of appropriate space); investigating the rate at which space may be released as a result of a reduction, and then decline, in the growth of general print collections; considering the management of UDCs dispersed across general and special collections locations.

11. Use the UDC Hub to establish a community of UDC managers who can network and share experience, as well as contribute resources to the UDC Hub for wider benefit. Investigate the potential of setting up skills sharing programmes in partnership with other bodies with an interest in skills for the management of UDCs (for example, Library schools, CILIP Rare Books and Special Collections Group, the Museums Association, The Archives and Records Association (ARA), Rare Books in Scotland and CyMAL).

Introduction and aims

This report, commissioned and supported by RLUK, aims to stimulate the discussion about unique and distinctive collections (UDCs): their definition, identification, use and future development. It proposes that by framing thinking in terms of UDCs, which go beyond traditional definitions of 'special collections', research libraries have the opportunity to reappraise and exploit their collections more fully and potentially achieve greater benefits in support of institutional missions.

The report sets out to provide a roadmap towards achieving greater awareness of this potential and impact through:
• Proposing a definition and means of identifying UDCs.
• Examining ways in which UDCs can contribute to institutional missions, including research, student learning, public engagement, fundraising and enterprise.
• Exploring the challenges of developing and managing UDCs at a strategic level, including surfacing hidden collections, addressing born-digital materials, and nurturing staff skills.
• Highlighting existing good practice and examples of innovative use of UDCs for re-use throughout the UDC community.
• Indicating new directions for collaborative action by RLUK.

The report has two primary audiences:
Library directors in research libraries
It aims to provide library directors and senior managers in higher education institutions with evidence of how UDCs contribute to institutional mission, and in doing so encourage a reappraisal of plans for special collections so that the wider potential of UDCs can be realised within individual organisations and through collaborative initiatives.

Librarians, archivists and other practitioners involved with the care and management of UDCs
It aims to provide those involved with the care and management of UDCs with examples of good practice which will help them to maximise the impact of UDCs. It seeks greater peer-to-peer collaboration across and between organisations and makes links to the UDC Hub, an online resource due to be launched by RLUK by the end of 2014.

Scope

The report focuses on collections held by research libraries in the UK and Ireland; as such, much of the evidence and most of the case studies are drawn from this community. However, the report's observations and recommendations are intended to support UDCs whether held in RLUK member libraries, the broader HE sector or in specialist and independent libraries and, whilst the focus is on library and archive materials, it is hoped that many points will also be relevant to museum, art and other heritage collections.

Although this report concentrates on the UK and Ireland, many issues are common to UDC libraries worldwide. The literature review ranged more widely than the UK and Ireland to add context and to take advantage of international research. This report and the other activities of the UDC strand[3] will be of particular interest to North American librarians, as they will enable comparison with recent work by OCLC and ARL.

The original project plan for this report excluded detailed analysis of preservation, which had recently been the subject of RLUK's Preservation Learning Programme, a joint project with the British Library Preservation Advisory Centre that ran from 2009–12. However, the findings of that programme (summarised in Emly and Mertens, 2012), alongside evidence from other sources uncovered during this project, led to the conclusion that preservation issues must be referred to as part of the strategic discussion around managing and developing UDCs.

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3. The other activities of the RLUK UDC strategic strand are:
    (i) the OCLC/RLUK Survey of Special Collections and Archives in the UK and Ireland, available at: http://oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2013/2013-01.pdf. Accessed 17.10.14.
    (ii) the Hidden Collections survey and report, available at: www.rluk.ac.uk/work/hiddencollectionsreportwork. Accessed 06.03.14.
    (iii) the forthcoming UDC Hub, to be available at: www.rluk.ac.uk. Accessed 17.10.14.

Approach

The report combines quantitative and qualitative data drawn from surveys, interviews and case studies including:

Survey of Special Collections and Archives in the UK and Ireland (Dooley *et al*, 2013, cited in this document as OCLC report)
In 2011 OCLC Research carried out a survey of 82 libraries holding major special collections in the UK and Ireland, based on the methodology of their 2009 survey of libraries in the US and Canada (Dooley and Luce, 2010). The survey included all RLUK members and was published as part of the UDC strategic strand. The results provide much of the statistical evidence base for this report and the actions suggested in the OCLC report (see Annexe A) helped shape this report's recommendations. RLUK are most grateful to OCLC for their hard work and commitment.

The RLUK and London Library survey of hidden collections (Mertens and García-Ontiveros, 2012).
This survey, carried out in 2010, was published in interim form as part of the UDC work strand. It reveals the extent and nature of uncatalogued collections and presents evidence about the ongoing need for retrospective cataloguing of UK collections (see Annexe B for the report's suggested next steps).

Other contributing surveys
• The Scottish Council on Archives survey of the cataloguing of archives in Scotland (Williams, 2011).
• RIN and RLUK (2011) report on the value of libraries for research and researchers.
• RLUK/British Library (2011) survey of RLUK libraries' preservation policies (Appendix in Emly and Mertens, 2012).

Literature review
The project reviewed recent literature on UDCs, covering published and unpublished sources, including social media. The most significant publications appear in the Bibliography.

Qualitative input
Ideas, insights and comments were gathered from many people involved with UDCs, including RLUK library directors, deputies and UDC curators, at meetings in London (November 2011) and Aberdeen (March 2012). The report also draws on comments from curators, academics and users received via email, telephone conversations, social media and at other community events. The UDC Project Board and Project Advisory Group have provided invaluable input throughout the project, which is gratefully acknowledged.

Unique and distinctive collections

Why use 'unique and distinctive collections'?

It is increasingly recognised that special collections have a powerful contribution to make to research libraries as those libraries seek to differentiate themselves from their competitors[4].

This report uses the term 'unique and distinctive' to broaden the focus from material defined by age, financial value, or location within an organisation, to a potentially more meaningful consideration of the intrinsic values of a much wider range of collections, and the significance of their contribution to research, learning, engagement and the overall institutional mission[5].

Importantly, use of the more expansive term 'UDC' includes two groups of material which are not often part of special collections and yet are of increasing importance to researchers.

Post–1850 publications in general collections
One of the strengths of research libraries is their depth of collecting over centuries, gathering materials by legal deposit or other means, some of which, although originally produced in large quantities with the aim of being cheap but not necessarily durable, have become unique or rare. Many research libraries have large collections of late 19th or 20th century books which may be considered unique and distinctive. There is also something about the breadth, depth and comprehensiveness of any collection on a particular theme or topic that distinguishes it as unique, even though some of its constituent items will also be held elsewhere.

New kinds of digital assets
Examples include born-digital archives and electronic copies of rare or unique print items, but could potentially extend to theses and journal articles added to institutional repositories, and research data.

What are the characteristics of unique and distinctive collections?

Unique: Items are 'one of a kind'. Manuscripts, archives and artworks are likely to be unique. But printed items such as books, journals, or ephemera can also be unique as they may be the only surviving copy of a particular edition or have unique features such as binding, illustrations, provenance, context or annotations.

Distinctive: Material may or may not be unique. Something may be defined as 'distinctive' if it is 'characteristic of one person or thing, and so serving to distinguish it from others'[6]. In the context of library collections, distinctive material is that which derives significance from its particular setting: for example, the history or cultural heritage of the institution or its region, a language or dialect, or an important subject strength.

Therefore, while some UDCs may consist of entirely unique or distinctive items, sometimes it is the collection itself, not its component parts, which constitutes what is special. For example, a copy of a popular novel plentiful on the second-hand market, such as J.B Priestley's best-seller *The Good Companions*, acquires new qualities and value as part of a collection of an author's works, housed along with their archive (for example, in the J.B. Priestley Archive at the University of Bradford[7]). The collection has extra resonance through its location in the author's hometown where it is surrounded by the landscapes, buildings and associations of J.B. Priestley.

This report offers a definition of a UDC as:
> *'A collection that, regardless of format or location within an institution, derives significance from its interest to research, teaching or society through its association with a person, place or topic, such as to distinguish the constituent items from similar items which may exist elsewhere'.*

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4. The work of American Association of Research Libraries (ARL) has been influential here, for instance the 2009 discussion report *'Special Collections in ARL Libraries'* which identified key issues in the management and exposure of special collections material in the 21st century (particularly 19th and 20th century materials), the subsequent conference An Age of Discovery: Distinctive Collections in the Digital Age, and related issue of Research Library Issues focusing on Distinctive Collections. http://publications.arl.org/rli267. Accessed 17.10.14.

5. In contrast, for instance, to the OCLC (2013) report definition of special collections as 'library and archive materials in any format (for example, rare books, manuscripts, photographs, institutional archives) that are generally characterised by their artifactual or monetary value, physical format, uniqueness or rarity, and/or an institutional commitment to long-term preservation and access'.

6. Pearsall, J. (ed.), 2001. New Oxford Dictionary of English, OUP.

7. http://100objectsbradford.wordpress.com/2011/10/19/34-a-long-happy-daydream-j-b-priestleys-the-good-companions. Accessed 17.10.14.

It is intended that this definition be applicable to collections of the 21st century with just as much validity as to those of the 18th century. Used as part of a collections management strategy, such a definition should allow for decisions about which collections to develop and invest in for the long-term and take into account the future nature of research collections as well as allow for the identification of UDCs amongst existing collections, the significance of which may currently be under-recognised.

A framework for identifying UDCs

Assessment of collections in terms of their significance is well established in the heritage sector[8]. The process commonly includes a review of how a collection reflects or serves the mission and purpose of the holding institution, and a comparison of the collection with similar collections elsewhere to identify its particular strengths or characteristics. The assessment generates a 'statement of significance' for the item or collection assessed. Such a statement can then be readily used to communicate why the collection is important; a powerful tool for both internal and external advocacy[9].

Although the research library community has a strong tradition of collaborative collection management projects, many of which have focused on mapping collection strengths[10], significance assessments do not appear to be common practice, nor integrated into the development of collections management strategies. It is suggested that an appraisal of collections which incorporates significance criteria would provide a means of identifying UDCs and could be used to inform collections management at an institutional level, and also potentially in a national context. An example of the former is provided in Clifford (2010), which describes a strategic framework for appraising collections devised for Leeds University, which accounts for their unique and distinctive properties. The framework is based on significance and is applied to all library collections, offering a more nuanced approach to identifying what is of long-term value to the organisation than the traditional split between special collections and general collections. The Library's collection strategy defines four categories into which all collections, digital and analogue, are classified[11].

Heritage: Collections of internationally or nationally significant depth and breadth which the Library will continue to develop.

Legacy: Collections which have historic strength. These may, in reflecting the output of a particular period or person, be of international or national significance, but they do not reflect current research and teaching needs. These will not usually be added to using Library funds.

Self-renewing: Collections which do not have sufficient depth or breadth to be of national significance, but which are required to meet the needs of current research and teaching. Material will only be retained within these collections for as long as it is required for teaching or research.

Finite: These are collections which have neither historic strength, nor relevance to current teaching and research. These collections will be considered for withdrawal.

Collections Strategy for Leeds University Library, 2013

The categories have been developed to support Leeds University's research and teaching whilst also taking into account national or international significance. They are used to target collections management in the areas of collection building, digitisation and preservation, enabling the effective prioritisation of space, time and budget towards those areas of the collection that have been identified as of long-term importance to the university.

Comparing the Leeds categories to the proposed definition of UDCs as 'collections which, regardless of format or location within an institution, derive significance from their interest to research, teaching or society through their association with a person, place or topic, such as to distinguish the constituent items from similar items which may exist elsewhere', collections in the Heritage and Legacy categories could be described as the UDCs of Leeds University Library.

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8. Many of the current significance assessment methods have evolved from the Burra Charter which was first adopted in 1979 as a method of understanding and assessing the cultural significance of historic places as a precursor to developing conservation policies and strategies for their management: http://australia. icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf. Accessed 17.10.14.

9. In Australia, *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections* (Russell and Winkworth, 2009) was produced to help collecting organisations in three areas: access and community engagement, advocacy, and making good collection management decisions. The framework has successfully been used to understand and raise awareness of Australia's Distributed National Collection, across collection boundaries, collection domains and management and ownership regimes. http://arts.gov.au/resources-publications/industry-reports/significance-20. Accessed 17.10.14.

10. For example, the relevant strand of RSLP funding supported 16 such projects, with a subject or regional flavour, while the Wellcome Library's Mapping Medicine covered eight biomedical libraries in London.

11. Collections Strategy for Leeds University Library, 2013. http://library.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/file/212/collection_strategy. Accessed 17.10.14.

Two recent projects illustrate how technological developments have the potential to transform the success of projects seeking to identify collection strengths, through the ability to analyse metadata to give information about collections and their significance relevant to collections held elsewhere.

The Copac Collections Management Project: Is sponsored by the White Rose Consortium and RLUK, facilitated by Mimas, and financed by Jisc as part of the RLUK-Jisc Discovery programme. Its goal is to use the information available in Copac to help collection managers make decisions about the retention, conservation and disposal of materials. The project has developed tools to identify the locations of items and batches of items across the UK. The tools also enable the profiling of collection strengths against other participating institutions' holdings[12]. Results are presented visually, mapped geographically, and available as exportable data in a number of formats, some of which can be used directly by library management systems.

An example of one of the ways in which the tool can benefit libraries, and of particular relevance to the identification of UDCs, is its use to assess the strength of a library collection by seeing how its collections fit into the national picture. The Copac website includes a case study of how this works in practice[13].

OCLC WorldCat Collection Evaluation Service: Replaces WorldCat Collection Analysis and is a decision support tool that uses cooperative data to provide access to information about local library collections, including comparisons to other library groupings. The service is tailored to specific workflows and collection management activities. Suggested uses are advertised as facilitating deselection decisions, providing information to support purchase recommendations and comparing holdings and their use to other similar institutions.

A significance-based approach for appraising collections that includes, but extends beyond age, rarity, format and location would give libraries the ability to focus resources on the promotion and exploitation of those collections of greatest value to them and their users for the long-term, whilst also providing a framework for managing collections of less relevance. Where this represents a change in approach, that change could prove to be timely as both the operating context for research libraries, and the nature of publishing have changed profoundly over the last decade resulting in a wider range of collection material to be managed with fewer resources.

Recognition of the significance of collections can also leverage funding. In England, the Designation Scheme exists to identify the pre-eminent collections of national and international importance held in England's non-national museums, libraries and archives, based on their quality and significance[14]. In 2013 there were 23 designated collections in libraries, including 10 RLUK libraries[15].

Designated museum collections have benefitted significantly from the Designation Development Fund which has distributed in the region of £32.5 million since it began in 1997[16]. Designated library collections have not been eligible for this funding as it was linked to the 'Renaissance in the Regions' programme which was set up to benefit museums. The current review of the Designation Scheme and proposal for its future operation acknowledges that the lack of access for funding for designated collections in archives and libraries is a concern. Arts Council England, which administers the scheme, is seeking a dialogue with other bodies to address this. RLUK could engage in these discussions with the aim of securing funding open to designated collections in libraries and encourage libraries to apply for designated status for their UDCs. Significance also exists in Scotland but only for museums. It is possible therefore that in that context, RLUK could work towards extending it to library collections. Wales on the other hand already has a significance toolkit to help '[M]useums, archives and libraries assess the importance of their collections' [17].

12. Copac brings together over 80 UK and Irish academic, national and specialist library catalogues, http://copac.ac.uk. Accessed 17.10.14.

13. http://copac.ac.uk/innovations/collections-management/use-case-2-identifying-collection-strengths. Accessed 17.10.14.

14. The Designation Scheme was established for museums in 1997 and extended to libraries and archives in 2005. The scheme is now operated by Arts Council England and is currently under review. Information about the scheme is available at: www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/designation-scheme. Accessed 17.10.14.

15. In September 2013 there were 140 designated collections held in 105 different museums, libraries and archives. Doeser, J., 2013. The Designation Review – Results from a Survey of Stakeholders. Sara Selwood Associates. www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Designation_Review-Results_from_a_Survey_of_Stakeholders.pdf. Accessed 17.10.14.

16. Total distributed funds provided by the Designation Manager, Arts Council England, personal communication 30.04.14.

17. http://wales.gov.uk/topics/cultureandsport/museumsarchiveslibraries/cymal/collections/significance-template/?lang=en. Accessed 13.10.2014.

UDCs and institutional mission

An understanding of institutional mission i.e. an organisation's purpose and objectives provides the essential context for any appraisal of value or significance. This section looks at recent changes in the external operating environment, at the institutional missions of RLUK member organisations[18], and at common themes in the strategies employed to deliver those institutional missions. It provides the context for understanding the opportunities that UDCs present to research libraries and their parent organisations.

The external environment

> *'[The HE and FE sectors] are now dealing with a rate and scale of political, financial, technological and competitive change that is unprecedented'*
>
> *Jisc Transition Group, 2012*

The following list summarises recent changes that have had a major impact on research libraries and their parent organisations.

Changes in higher education funding: The introduction of, and increase in, student fees results in a greater emphasis on the student as consumer and competition between institutions. Tuition fees replace teaching grants for arts and humanities with the potential for increased competition between subject areas.

Changes to research funding: Reduced research budgets available to research councils lead to reduced grant funds and increased competition between institutions for research grants. The introduction of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment places greater emphasis on the demonstration of impact of research beyond academia. Assessment results impact on future research funding and institutional reputation.

Changes to wider funding landscape: Lower returns on funders' investments lead to smaller funding pots. Cuts to institutional funding lead to increased demand (competition) for externally raised funds. Government emphasis on growing philanthropy.

New audiences: Increased interest in personal research, especially in local and family history results in growth in non-traditional audiences. Changes to teaching methods and curricula place greater emphasis on primary source work. Emphasis on public engagement with research.

Technology: User expectations for widespread availability of digital content. Increased possibilities for connecting to and discovering content online.

Growth of born digital content: Profound changes in the nature of publishing. The Legal Deposit Libraries (Non-Print Works) Regulations 2013.

Open access publishing: Increased emphasis on open access to research publications producing the possibility of a significant expansion of the audience for scholarly outputs. 'Finch Report'[19] recommendation that research funding covers publication costs could result in smaller proportion of funding available for research. Increased role for university as publisher.

Environment for collaboration: Abolition of Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in 2012 results in the strategic lead for public libraries and museums in England transferring to Arts Council England and strategic lead for archives in England transfers to TNA. Cross-domain collaboration potentially more difficult[20]. The absence of a strategic lead for the library sector limits advocacy and sector-wide collaboration on issues such as funding.

Pressure to realise financial value of assets: Pressure on finances may lead to organisations or depositors selling collections or parts of collections to raise funds.

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18. In order to keep the scope manageable, this section concentrates on RLUK member organisations though it is hoped that readers from other sectors will find the content transferable.

19. www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Finch-Group-report-FINAL-VERSION.pdf. Accessed 17.10.14.

20. This concerns many librarians, one RLUK respondent to the OCLC survey remarking: 'I wish we could break down some more of the barriers between museums and special collections. The MLA, particularly in its regional office format did this very successfully in several regions but that has all broken down again...book collections are left stranded'.

Impact on institutional mission

Of the 34 RLUK members, 29 (85%) of the parent organisations are universities. A review of the institutional missions of these parent organisations[21] reveals, as one might expect, a strong focus on research and education but also, consistent references to 'distinctiveness'.

Examination of the strategies of these organisations shows how they are adapting, or in some cases embarking on transformational change, in order to deliver their missions in a very different operating context to that of a decade ago. The strategic goals have common themes:
• To improve research ranking (and therefore attract greater research funding)
• To improve the student experience
• To attract the best staff and the best students
• Internationalisation and/or globalisation
• Demonstrable social responsibility and/or contribution to society
• Sustainability and robust finances

In an increasingly competitive environment, differentiation has emerged as a strategy employed to achieve many of these goals. Research libraries are in a strong position to enhance the distinctiveness of their host institutions if they can effectively communicate the unique and distinctive nature of their collections and how these support institutional objectives.

The value placed on the unique and distinctive, and advocacy by users for the widespread (digital) availability of such materials is a major opportunity that UDCs present for research libraries to exploit.

Rick Anderson's recent thought piece for Ithaka S+R, *Can't Buy Us Love. The Declining Importance of Library Books and the Rising Importance of Special Collections*[22], draws a distinction between 'commodity' (readily available to a mass market) and 'non-commodity' (rare and unique) items, and argues:

> *'What the world needs research libraries to do now – and this need is both powerful and growing – is provide broad and easy access to the intellectual content of rare and unique non-commodity documents that would otherwise remain unfindable and unusable'.*
>
> *Anderson, 2013, p.4*

Maximising the use and impact of UDCs is heavily dependent on their being available in digital form, as the following section explores.

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21. The published missions and strategies of the 34 RLUK member organisations were accessed online between January and February 2014 to identify common themes.

22. www.sr.ithaka.org/sites/default/files/files/SR_BriefingPaper_Anderson.pdf. Accessed 17.10.14.

Maximising the use and impact of UDCs

The use of UDCs is examined under five headings: research, student learning, public engagement, engagement with business and the economy, and fundraising and income generation. Each section draws on examples of existing practice to demonstrate how UDCs are being used to support the strategic objectives identified as being common to RLUK member organisations. The examples provide a means of sharing existing good ideas and practices amongst libraries holding UDCs. They also highlight where there is the potential to maximise use and impact more widely through investment or innovation.

Research

UDCs are, by their very nature, a unique research resource which can be used to recruit and retain researchers and to attract research funding (RIN and RLUK, 2011). In arts, humanities and social sciences (AHSS) subjects particularly, as Pritchard (2009, p.177) puts it, UDCs can be a 'differentiating characteristic of research universities, the equivalent of unique laboratory facilities that attract faculty and research projects'.

UDCs contribute to research programmes as a resource base, or focus of research. They can be used to inspire and engage new researchers and can act as a stimulator for innovative approaches to research.

UDCs as a resource base or focus of research

This case study below shows how the UDC of one organisation, the National Library of Wales, can be used as the focus of a research project by others, successfully attracting significant research funding. The project demonstrates the potential for collaboration around UDCs, with the follow-up project showing how the wider appeal of this UDC has been used in a project exploring impact beyond academia.

The ability to demonstrate impact beyond academia has become increasingly important under the Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment. The outcomes of this new method of assessing research quality in UK universities will be used to allocate research funding to HEIs from 2015–16 and will have a related impact on institutional reputation. UDC managers can use their knowledge of research projects carried out on the collections in their care and work with research offices to ensure that the collections are adequately referenced in REF submissions.

CASE STUDY

Seals in Medieval Wales

The Seals in Medieval Wales project[23] was based within the Department of History and Welsh History at Aberystwyth University and supported by the Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies (IMEMS) at Aberystwyth-Bangor Universities. Funded by an Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) grant of over £490,000, the project brought researchers at Aberystwyth and Bangor universities together to examine the 'myriad and enticing motifs' on medieval seals and research what they revealed about everyday life by providing 'a unique insight into the personal concerns of women and men across the social spectrum, including those for whom little other evidence survives'. The project formed part of the 'Cultures of the written artefact' research strand at IMEMS, whilst the National Library of Wales contributed many of the seals under study and provided the opportunity to showcase discoveries in a major five-month exhibition. Outputs of the project include an online database of all the seals recorded; to be made available via Aberystwyth University's Online Research Repository.

The research has inspired a further research project Exploring Medieval Seals[24] which develops and test ways in which an academic research project can also be applied beyond its immediate academic audience. This project is again based at Aberystwyth University and has attracted an AHRC grant of over £90,000.

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23. www.imems.ac.uk/medievalwelshsealsinthenlw.php. Accessed 17.10.14.

24. www.exploringmedievalseals.org/home. Accessed 17.10.14.

UDCs and new researchers

> '… Students and younger academics lack the skills, knowledge and confidence to handle material archives and are more comfortable in a digital world …'.
>
> *OCLC survey respondent*

The Jisc and British Library (2012) report on Generation Y postgraduate researchers, the academics of the future, found that this key audience are not making use of analogue primary sources. Comfortable in a digital world, they are less aware of or skilled in using analogue materials and are less likely in their academic futures to consider or recommend the use of analogue UDCs.

Advocacy of the collections, imaginative presentation and the provision of relevant services are all necessary to maximise the potential of UDCs amongst new researchers. Strong, strategic relationships with academic departments will help to raise awareness of UDCs so that supervisors and mentors direct their researchers towards primary research resources. UDC managers can also make a direct contribution to developing the research skills of new researchers by offering research skills sessions as part of induction programmes or alongside other library services. This group of researchers has the potential to use UDCs in fresh and innovative ways as is shown by the Hunterian Associates Programme.

CASE STUDY

The Hunterian Associates Programme

The Hunterian Associates Programme at the University of Glasgow[25] provides an inventive platform for postgraduate researchers to share their expert knowledge and to develop their skills through meaningful public engagement and knowledge exchange activities. By proposing creative ways to present their ideas to the wider public, Hunterian Associates are able to broaden their perspectives on their own research, seeing the ways in which their topics connect to the collection strategies of past and present, as well as garnering immediate feedback through discussion and debate with a public audience.

Projects can take the form of talks and tours, podcasts focusing on particular items web-based or touring exhibitions, interpretive performance or installation, or any other form that engages with the public effectively. Through the programme, the cutting-edge research being carried out by postgraduates connects in exciting and unexpected ways with the University's extensive collections in the Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, the Library's Special Collections and Archive Services.

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25. www.gla.ac.uk/hunterian/learning/hunterianassociates. Accessed 17.10.14.

UDCs as a stimulator for innovative approaches to research

Both of the previous case studies use technology to access physical UDC resources, whether it be through digitisation, visibility online or as a means of involving others in the research process (for example, through blogs, crowd-sourcing, online exhibitions). However, technology has also resulted in innovative approaches to research and (relatively) new research disciplines in which UDCs have great potential.

Digital humanities is an increasingly recognised and established area of research and teaching. Described by the University of Cambridge as 'the use of digital tools to transform scholarship in the humanities and social sciences'[26], many institutions are engaging in digital humanities activities or have well-established digital humanities departments.

Digital humanities research is diverse, examples include:
University of Birmingham: The university ran a project to develop a collaborative environment for assisted 3D reconstruction of Cuneiform tablets to allow experts and enthusiasts to work on the reconstruction of 3D Cuneiform tablets via a 3D interface.

King's College London: Using a 14th century Vatican manuscript to extend understanding of the medieval town of Swansea by connecting it with GIS mapping and 3D digital visualisation, reconstructing the literal perspectives experienced by the medieval witnesses within the city, and exploring the diverse identities and perceptions of urban spaces which are represented in the text.

University College London: Dynamic Dialects, an online articulatory resource that shows the hidden movements of the tongue and other articulatory organs inside the vocal tract during real speech, using the latest anatomical imaging and digital techniques. These resources are designed to aid phonetic training, language teaching and learning, and speech therapy, and improve people's understanding of how speech sounds are produced.

By its nature digital humanities work is highly interdisciplinary, transcending traditional subject boundaries but also crossing domains to bring together HEIs, museums, galleries, libraries, archives and industry.

Digital humanities is a growth area for research and an opportunity for UDCs to feature as a stimulator for research projects. The potential for the use of analogue UDCs can already be seen through the Birmingham and King's College London examples and the Trinity College Dublin/University of Aberdeen case study. Relationships between digital humanities staff and researchers, and UDC managers are important to ensure mutual understanding of the potential of technology and the potential of UDCs. The steady growth of digital humanities as an area of research also raises questions about the UDCs of the future. Technology is being applied to data in new ways and research based on the application of technology to data is being encouraged, for example through the AHRC Big Data Research[27] call as part of the Digital Transformations in the Arts and Humanities strand and the collaboration between AHRC and the Technology Strategy Board to support a joint call for collaborative research and development proposals on Data Exploration[28].

The National Archives (TNA) has been awarded AHRC funding for two projects under the Big Data Research call. One of which, Traces through Time, will enable the development of practical analytical tools to support historical research on the scale of entire populations, spanning over 500 years of British history.

Whilst the focus of the funded research is on the methodologies and the development of tools, it does raise questions about the evolving nature of UDCs – should the data sets which are now being used as such rich research resources be afforded the same significance appraisal and long-term management/preservation structures as the traditional hard-copy UDCs? What would this mean for the relationship between library and institutional repository? There is also the issue of how the methodologies and tools that are developed can be embedded or re-used as part of the research infrastructure once a project has been completed.

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26. www.digitalhumanities.cam.ac.uk. Accessed 17.10.14.

27. Big Data is described in Professor Barry C Smith's blog post on the Science in Culture website as *'data sets so large, and growing with such velocity that they cannot be handled by traditional analytic tools'*. www.sciculture.ac.uk/big-data-in-the-humanities-the-need-for-big-questions. Accessed 17.10.14.

28. www.innovateuk.org. Accessed 17.10.14.

The 1641 Depositions

After remaining almost untouched for centuries, the 1641 Depositions have become a flagship archive in the Trinity College Library Dublin and exemplify the way in which a hitherto little used, but unique and important archival resource can become the hub of highly multidisciplinary activity that not only informs and revises our accounts of history, but also inspires innovation in learning technology and leads to novel approaches to the study of the humanities, while at the same time making a contribution to the contemporary peace process in Ireland.

The approximately 8,000 statements by mostly protestant witnesses to the Irish Rebellion in the 1640s (= 19,000 MS pages comprising about 1.3 million words) were preserved, edited and digitized by a team of historians and computer scientists based at Trinity College, Dublin (TCD), whose library owns the archive, working in collaboration with the University of Aberdeen and University of Cambridge in a project funded jointly by the AHRC and the IRCHSS.

Its subsequent accessibility enabled the University of Aberdeen to lead a project, Language and Linguistic Evidence in the 1641 Depositions, funded by the AHRC under their Digital Equipment and Database Enhancement call, also in collaboration with TCD and with IBM LanguageWare, Dublin. This multidisciplinary team involved socio-historical and forensic linguists, historians, literature and religion specialists, software engineers and computer scientists interested in learning technology. It looked, inter alia, at the discursive construction of the evidence contained in the depositions, the role of women in the rebellion, the language of violence and atrocity and the state of the English language in the texts in the 1640s. It also involved knowledge exchange with IBM LanguageWare on adapting the software to working with non-standardized and highly variable 17th century English. A major output of this one-year project was CLRLE, a Collaborative Linguistic Research and Learning Environment – a computer interface built on an OMEKA platform, designed to facilitate analysis of the depositions and to display the results in interesting, meaningful and attractive ways, aimed at a variety of users from the lay public to experts.

Having collaborated with the Aberdeen 1641 project, the Knowledge and Data Engineering Group at TCD was subsequently successful in obtaining major European FP7 funding for its CULTURA project, which is researching next generation online cultural experiences – guiding, assisting and empowering individual users' interaction with Europe's cultural treasures. Using the 1641 Depositions in this instance as a sample significant digital cultural collection, it is advancing a number of key technologies: text normalisation, entity and relationship extraction to highlight the key individuals, events and relationships in the collections; social network analysis of the entities and relationships within cultural heritage collections and the communities of users engaging with that content; and personalisation to support tailored interaction with the collections.

The 1641 Depositions archive has now become one of the most studied In Ireland and has led to a number of public exhibitions, cultural and information events in the Republic, the North, Scotland and across the globe, focusing on the Irish Rebellion and its impact on current attitudes, historical and cultural understanding in Ireland and contributing to the peace process.

Student learning

Student learning and student experience are part of the core business of many research libraries, and organisations such as universities work hard to attract the best students. Success in attracting the best students in an increasingly competitive HE sector hinges on institutional reputation: for teaching, student experience, and employability. Resources such as student satisfaction surveys and graduate employment surveys[29] are available to inform students in their choices and university marketing strategies reflect their awareness of these indicators. Just as when attracting the best researchers, the distinctiveness of an institution can provide competitive advantage in attracting the best students.

Attracting students

UDCs contribute to the reputation of an institution as a place of scholarship and can help to communicate its scholarly nature. This can be in ways as basic as the use of images of UDCs in recruitment material or other corporate communications, but there is also potential to make a more direct contribution by being used as part of undergraduate teaching. Course content is naturally one of the most important factors determining a student's choice of institution. Publicising the use of UDCs in undergraduate teaching could differentiate a subject offer and contribute to the goal of attracting the best students. At Master's and postgraduate level, the distinctive nature of the collections may be a draw in themselves, particularly those of international significance.

Teaching and skills development

In recent years librarians and archivists have taken advantage of shifts in teaching methods towards the discovery of and engagement with primary sources by welcoming students into special collections reading rooms and forming partnerships with academic staff to embed UDCs in teaching programmes[30]. The application of UDCs to teaching is perhaps most readily made in arts, humanities and social sciences subjects, but UDC managers and academic staff have also successfully used UDCs for other disciplines, especially STEM subjects. For example, early material on contraception and abortion from the LSE Archives is used for teaching a postgraduate course on bioethics.

A recent informal survey[31] of research and other librarians revealed that UDCs are used in teaching all levels of student, most commonly to introduce archives and special collections research skills. Typical student learning experiences with UDCs included:
- Information and digital literacy. Students interrogate both primary and historic secondary sources and build IT skills
- Learning historical research skills and using authentic documents. The dissertation is a potentially useful entry point to reach students
- Using literary or artistic archives to understand the creative process and to stimulate more deeply contextualised responses to study questions
- Curating exhibitions based on UDCs, building subject knowledge and research skills, and experience of team and project work
- Learning how to manage UDCs: for students studying librarianship, archive management or other heritage studies
- Enquiry-based learning: exploring hidden layers or connections around UDCs
- As an opportunity for work experience

UDC managers may also be able to use their knowledge to teach specific research skills such as palaeography and diplomatics or understanding illustrative techniques. Subject-specific sessions may be based around relevant materials from the period or author being studied, as in the case study below from the University of Manchester.

Technology can be used to provide increased access to UDCs for students. Where limited space in reading rooms, and concerns such as handling and security might once have constrained the extent to which students could interact with UDCs, new technology-based learning offers the potential for UDCs to play a much more visible role in students' academic experience. UDC managers have an opportunity to engage course leaders with the collections so that they can be incorporated into materials for VLEs and MOOCs for instance.

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29. For example those produced by the Higher Education Statistics Agency, www.hesa.ac.uk. Accessed 17.10.14.

30. The OCLC survey data shows that, for RLUK member libraries, 37% of all presentations given are as part of college/university courses with a further 12% to others affiliated with the responding organization (OCLC report, Table 2.11, p.111).

31. By Fran Baker of John Rylands Library, who made the replies available with permission.

The SCARLET project

The SCARLET project[32] is a Jisc funded partnership of special collections staff, academics, and learning technologists at the University of Manchester. It created augmented reality layers for special collections materials to enhance student learning. Students involved were studying Italian (15th and 16th century editions of Dante), Greek and medieval Christianity. Instead of experiencing UDCs in isolation in the reading room, the augmented reality platform allowed students to experience the original artefacts while at the same time connecting them to relevant digital assets and secondary sources.

This style of working encouraged enquiry-based learning by enabling students to be actively involved in experiencing the resources and appealed to technologically savvy students while also offering an accessible way to engage with special collections. The second phase, SCARLET+, worked with the Craft Study Centre at the University for the Creative Arts and Mass Observation at the University of Sussex to develop an AR toolkit for teaching with UDCs[33].

This project shows how special collections and academic partners can work together to create experiences for students which they find interesting and enjoyable and which have strong pedagogical value. It also illustrates the potential of mobile technology to make special collections learning more than a show-and-tell. The project found that innovative use of technology improved the image of special collections elsewhere in the institution.

Employability

Research by HEPI and Which? carried out in 2013[34] found that 91% of students said they applied to university to improve their job prospects or to pursue a career. Reputation matters when it comes to employability – both to students in terms of perceived (or actual) employment prospects as a result of studying a particular course at a particular university, but also to employers who will recruit from organisations they perceive as having a good reputation for producing graduates with the skills and knowledge they need.

The development of transferable skills such as communication skills, computer skills, and research skills can come from UDC involvement in taught courses and initiatives such as the Scarlet Project. UDCs can also provide direct opportunities to enhance employability through work experience. Again, partnerships are critical to success: through library staff, academic staff and career services working together, UDCs can be used to provide valuable work experience opportunities which can be promoted to prospective students as part of the distinctive offer of that university. An example is the Department of History at the University of Reading, which makes explicit reference to its approach to increasing employability on its website[35], stating:

'We lead the way by offering work placements in local museums, which help tie the History degree to broader skills, which employers look for from successful graduates. Reading's extensive research collections and the Department's members unique connections in the Heritage and Education sectors support these placements and allow students to develop their own specialist research projects under the guidance of a highly skilled team of archivists and librarians. Comments by former students and employers frequently confirm how much the transferable skills that students develop while at Reading are prized by employers'.

UDCs lend themselves to transcription, metadata, coding, conservation activities, marketing and broadcasting. Internal or external funding may be available to support student work schemes, for example, students at Aberystwyth University researched the social and political context of historic newspaper cartoons at the National Library of Wales[36] as part of a volunteering scheme which received support from the Big Lottery Fund. Some organisations will have careers services which may be able to support the development of work experience opportunities. UDC managers who have run student and volunteer programmes are also likely to have valuable experience to share, and are encouraged to contribute to the UDC Hub.

The opportunities for increasing the impact of UDCs in student learning come from making it easy for students and lecturers/supervisors to interact with the collections. Increasingly, technology has an important role to play in facilitating this interaction although internal advocacy of the collections is also necessary. The UDC Hub could provide a useful platform through which to share examples of the successful use of UDCs to support student learning.

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32. http://teamscarlet.wordpress.com. Accessed 17.10.14.

33. Wiki for this developing resource. http://scarlet.mimas.ac.uk/mediawiki/index.php/Main_Page. Accessed 17.10.14.

34. Which? The 2013 Student Academic Experience Survey in English Universities. www.hepi.ac.uk/2013/05/15/2013-student-academic-experience-survey. Accessed 17.10.14.

35. www.reading.ac.uk/history/hist-employability.aspx. Accessed 17.10.14.

36. www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/archive/2012/06/title-117410-en.html. Accessed 17.10.14.

Public engagement

'The free library for the incurably curious'.

Public engagement, the two-way process of involving a wider public in an activity, is of growing importance to organisations which seek to celebrate institutional history, deliver benefit to society or demonstrate accountability for public funding. The RCUK concordat for engaging the public with research outlines the expectations and responsibilities of research funders with respect to public engagement, to help embed engagement in universities and research institutions to enhance the future of research and benefit UK society and the economy[37]. Universities have taken this responsibility seriously and many have public engagement departments which work on a wide range of activities and with many different audiences.

The benefits that public engagement brings to research libraries include:
• Increased visibility, reputation and profile
• New collaborations, for instance with schools, industry, community groups or other academic partners
• Improved quality of research through broader engagement
• Keeping in touch with developments outside of HE and what is of relevance to society
• Accountability for the public money invested in higher education and a better appreciation of the role of higher education and libraries in society and the economy.

Regardless of whether they have access to public engagement departments, many research libraries already carry out public engagement activities, particularly based on their UDCs.

Increased visibility, reputation and profile

'An exhibition programme is absolutely worth the effort involved, bringing promotional, scholarly and even financial benefits. Once your institution's senior officers have seen the very real benefits that can accrue, from, for example, a VIP private view of an exhibition, they will come to expect, to rely even on your exhibition programme and if they expect and rely on it, they are more than half committed to supporting it'.

Sambrook, 2012

Exhibitions are perhaps the most traditional form of encounter with UDCs, and offer opportunities to showcase and interpret UDCs to greater numbers of people than would ever experience them in the reading room. The physical exhibition allows the public to come close to collections at their own pace and to appreciate their qualities as artefacts and conveyors of meaning. They can celebrate research or other work done at the institution, (contributing to impact demonstrations for the REF assessments) and they can tap into both popular and scholarly enthusiasms, for example, the many institutions that used the Olympics or the King James Bible anniversary in 2012 to highlight UDCs in their collections.

CASE STUDY

Exhibitions at King's College London

Special Collections at King's College London developed a successful programme of exhibitions, following the opportunity in 2002 to use a showpiece room as a high-profile function space and exhibition area: the Weston Room (the former Rolls Chapel) which itself is rich in distinctive features: a Victorian mosaic floor, 17th and 19th century stained glass, Renaissance and late medieval funerary monuments. High quality exhibition cases were purchased through the College Annual Fund, however, this was the only major expense incurred as the programme was run effectively without the need for extra staff or funding. The display area has boosted the institution's public engagement and raised the Library's profile internally. It has also encouraged staff to raise the profile of their UDCs to visiting dignitaries and the public, and has reached out to students and academics at King's to raise their awareness of the university's UDCs for example, medical students were invited to view medical history UDCs.

Sambrook, 2012

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37. www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/concordat. Accessed 17.10.14.

The quality of the physical space available for exhibitions has an impact on an exhibition's success. Maximum visibility and profile will come from exhibitions held in public areas with high footfall (such as library foyers) where staff, students and visitors can encounter UDCs effortlessly, as part of their regular interaction with the institution. Some libraries are creating ambitious spaces which bring together material that is held both virtually and physically, such as the Wellcome's plan to turn their Reading Room into a space that is 'half library, half exhibition, [...which] will be a curated space with events, displays of books and objects from the collections, and state-of-the-art technology to fully exploit [their] ambitious digitisation programme'[38]. Increasingly physical exhibitions are complemented by online exhibitions and in some cases exhibitions are curated purely as online resources, (for example, the exhibitions created by the Hunterian Associates).

New collaborations with schools, industry, community groups or other academic partners

UDCs frequently have significance beyond the research and teaching needs of their parent organisation and an appraisal of collections in terms of significance will help to recognise this. UDCs can be used to engage with audiences beyond academic researchers and students to increase the visibility of an organisation amongst its community and increase its impact in terms of engagement with, and contribution to society. The OCLC survey results show that onsite visits to special collections have increased since 2000 between 43% to 74% depending on user category[39]. UDCs have the potential to appeal to a broad range of external audiences which includes independent researchers, adult learners, schoolchildren, subject enthusiasts and local community groups.

Independent learners and researchers

UDCs offer valuable resources to independent learners who may be inspired to carry out research as a result of the influence of tv programmes such as the BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are*? and *The Great British Story*. Alongside record offices and specialist archives, UDCs in research libraries contain many sources ideally suited to such researchers: estate papers, archives of churches and religious groups, local history publications, historic maps and plans. Independent learners, like academics and students, often build life-long relationships with the research libraries that support their interests, and as a result engage in different ways: studying at the institution, supplying expertise and enthusiasm as volunteers or even donating their own collections of related material.

Schools

Research libraries have developed their engagement with schools in recent years[40]. This has been driven by university missions, by changing curricula which value the use of primary sources, by the interests of funders notably the HLF, and the recognition that it helps to raise awareness of historical sources and history as a subject among young people with the potential for continued study later in life at a higher level.

In addition to school visits and talks, research libraries are also reaching out through websites and e-learning to promote their UDCs as resources for teaching. Durham University has created a set of educational activities and information for teachers and students which link to key themes in the curricula and so are readily exploitable by teachers. The website brings together an extensive range of workshops and resources and is a good example of a research library's work with schools (www.dur.ac.uk/4schools).

Local communities

Whilst there is no disputing that technology offers the potential to reach remote audiences and the facility to look at collections in new ways, engagement with physical collections is still a powerful way of introducing the unique and distinctive collections of research libraries to people who do not normally use them, and a useful way of breaking down perceptions about who can use the collections. Public libraries and archives are often very good at community engagement, for example, the website of Library of Birmingham (www.libraryofbirmingham.com) shows the wealth of exhibitions, talks and visits put on each day for the local community.

Although it has been acknowledged that many universities have extensive public engagement programmes, it is relatively difficult to find examples of how the libraries within those organisations are engaging with their local communities beyond programmes of exhibitions and talks. An opportunity for maximising the potential of UDCs exists in taking a more proactive approach to community engagement with collections, so that they have a stake in the collections, along the lines of recent work by museums[41]. In some cases engagement with local communities can add significant value to collections, for example Manchester Metropolitan University's work with local communities to create 'Moving Memories'[42], based on the North West Film Archive. Where examples of community engagement of this nature do exist, they should be promoted and celebrated.

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38. http://library.wellcome.ac.uk/about-us/projects/development-plan. Accessed 17.10.14.

39. OCLC report, Figure 1.10 Change in level of onsite use, p.45.

40. The OCLC survey data shows that 13% of all presentations given are to local schools, p.56.

41. The Museums Association website provides resources to support community engagement work, including case studies: www.museumsassociation.org/collections-learning/community-engagement. Accessed 17.10.14.

42. www.mmu.ac.uk/news/news-items/1330. Accessed 17.10.14.

Academic partners and industry

This example, from the British Library, shows how the development of a new area of collecting, that of videogame websites, led to other collections in the Library being reinterpreted through videogame technology by students as part of a nationwide competition.

Off the map

The British Library is working in partnership with the National Videogame Archive[43] to collect and preserve videogame websites. Curators at the two organisations work together to develop the collection and invite the public to nominate sites for preservation through the UK Web Archive website. As part of the collaboration the British Library, GameCity Festival (an initiative of Nottingham Trent University) and the software developer Crytek, run a competition 'Off the Map' challenging videogame students to apply videogame technology to the British Library's collections. In the first year of the competition, the winners were students from De Montfort University who applied technology to maps of 17th century London to create a 3D environment.

The collaboration resulted in excellent media coverage for the British Library and its partners[44] and offers a good example of both the imaginative reinterpretation of collections through the application of technology, as well as an example of how the development of new UDCs can bring wider benefits and visibility to other areas of collecting.

Improved quality of research through broader engagement

UDCs can be effective at attracting external interest and participation in research projects, and at inspiring people to contribute to the development of collections by contributing items or knowledge about collections.

The Great War Archive

The Great War Archive at the University of Oxford[45] is a striking example of a community collection. The archive was created as part of the First World War Poetry Digital Archive project, funded by Jisc from 2007–09, which made available digitised papers of war poets held by the University and over 6,500 digital items contributed by members of the public via the website and at open days. The collection has continued to grow via a popular Flickr group.

The success of the archive inspired Europeana to create a similar resource for other European countries in partnership with the Great War Archive: Europeana 1914–18[46] is now building a digital collection of stories, photographs and objects contributed from people in Germany, Luxembourg, Ireland, UK, Slovenia, Denmark, and Belgium.

People responded to and helped build the Great War Archive because it concerned a subject with strong personal, educational and national elements. It connected with personal and family history at the time the Great War was passing out of living memory and also drew on the widespread popularity of war poetry, and First World War poetry in particular, in literature and history courses across the country in schools, colleges and higher education.

Elsewhere, technology and the technology community are being used to enhance information about research resources and to raise their profile, opening up opportunities for re-use and therefore greater value from the initial research investment.

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43. The National Videogame Archive is housed within the National Media Museum and managed in partnership with Nottingham Trent and Bath Spa universities.

44. http://pressandpolicy.bl.uk/Press-Releases/British-Library-maps-are-the-inspiration-for-a-winning-videogame-concept-666.aspx. Accessed 26.02.14.

45. www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/gwa. Accessed 17.10.14.

46. http://europeana1914-1918.eu/en. Accessed 17.10.14.

Wikipedian in residence at The British Library

In April 2012 Andrew Gray was appointed 'Wikipedian in Residence' at the British Library, a one-year post funded by the AHRC. Andrew's role was to look at ways in which AHRC research projects were already engaging with Wikipedia and to work with the Wikipedia community to make the projects more visible so that people can re-use the material. Staff and researchers at the Library were encouraged to engage directly with the Wikipedia community to build infrastructure in terms of skills in creating content and awareness of the broader Wikimedia community. A podcast on the residency is available on the AHRC website[47], and Andrew's blog documents his time at the British Library[48].

The project has helped to inspire other similar projects such as a Wikipedian in residence at the National Library of Scotland and been taken up beyond libraries to help other types of organisations with public engagement, for example, Cancer Research UK appointed a Wikipedian in Residence in January 2014, to update the online encyclopedia's entries involving cancer and to teach others at the charity how to do so, thereby improving public information about cancer.

Maximising public engagement opportunities

Technology has great potential to help UDCs reach wider audiences, (though requires investment in the digitisation of UDCs and the infrastructure to make digitised content accessible remotely). It provides new methods for people to engage with, and potentially enhance, UDCs by enabling external audiences to get involved in library activities.

Examples include:

• Mobile devices offer users computing resources on the move, allowing innovative presentations of UDCs for example,via apps, augmented reality or geo-referencing. These can improve services, enhance the experience of exhibitions, and augment student learning (as described in the SCARLET case study).

• Social media enables curators to tell the stories of UDCs and share their visual appeal, inspiring and developing relationships with new audiences[49]. Associated with this is the growth of crowdsourcing, which allows enthusiastic volunteers to help create metadata, transcribe documents, and even contribute new UDCs.

• Evolving metadata offers improved possibilities for capturing and sharing the different aspects of UDCs that may matter to different audiences. Via linked data libraries will be able to establish connections between information which can appear in many places and which can be re-used and integrated in new ways. RLUK is now the fourth largest publisher of bibliographic linked open data (LOD) in the library domain globally, and intends to work further on promoting use of LOD in this context.

It offers particular potential for increasing public engagement with new types of UDCs, for instance oral history collections. The Visualising Voices case study is presented as an example of how academics and a museum can work together to re-present an oral history collection in a way which maximises its potential for public engagement through incorporation in both a physical exhibition and the museum's website.

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47. www.ahrc.ac.uk/News-and-Events/Watch-and-Listen/Pages/wikipedian-in-residence.aspx. Accessed 17.10.14.

48. http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/digital-scholarship/2013/05/wikipedian-in-residence-conclusions.html. Accessed 17.10.14.

49. Further examples of the use of social media to promote special collections are available in Daryl Green's paper, 'Utilizing social media to promote Special Collections: What works and what doesn't' presented at the 2012 IFLA conference. http://conference.ifla.org/past-wlic/2012/87-green-en.pdf. Accessed 17.10.14.

Visualising Voices

A collaboration between the University of the West of England and the ss Great Britain Trust, the 'Visualising Voices' project[50] uses the oral history collection developed by the ss Great Britain Trust and the media production and animation skills of researchers of the Department of Art and Design at UWE to create an animated film around the voices and stories of the oral history archive to document the salvage and return of the ss Great Britain from the Falkland Islands. The film The Incredible Journey is on view to the public as part of an exhibition on the ss Great Britain, and online (www.ssgreatbritain.org/story/incredible-journey).

UDC managers are clearly aware of this potential; nearly half the respondents to the OCLC survey of special collections have an institutional blog, use Twitter, and/or have a social networking presence such as a Facebook page[51]. However, the survey also revealed that a majority has no current plans to implement any social media tools other than these three. Staff need the skills, confidence, time and support of senior management to make engagement through social media an integral part of their work.

Public engagement is not a standalone activity, nor one that UDC managers should feel compelled to carry out on their own. Benefits come from integrating public engagement with research and learning and this overview has given many examples of how UDCs can be used to support institutional goals in these areas.

Engagement with business and the economy

The Wilson review of business-university collaboration (2012)[52] provides an overview of the many and varied ways in which universities and businesses collaborate. The report reviews opportunities for business-university collaboration in the development of skills and knowledge, in research and innovation, in the process of graduate recruitment, and in universities enabling economic growth in their local communities. The evidence of the role played by UDCs in such activities is relatively sparse. Libraries are exploring the potential of working directly with businesses, using UDCs as inspiration for new designs or products, with support from funders such as AHRC. Between September 2012 and March 2013, Sarah Warsop was engaged as Jeweller in Residence at the British Library[53]. Instead of using visual collections as might be expected, she drew on movement and sound in the library's audiovisual collections to inspire her jewellery designs. Further engagement with the library took the form of support from the Library's Business & IP Centre to help her commercialise her work.

Another example is an initiative at the National Library of Wales (NLW) where funding from the European Regional Development Fund has been used to run *digiDo*, a project which provides free access to high resolution digital content to creative businesses in Wales, to help realise the potential of the NLW's collections and inspire the local creative economy[54]. As with the British Library example, businesses are also given specialist advice on related issues such as copyright and licensing to help maximise their use of the resources. Given that many universities have enterprise or business development centres, UDC managers could explore the potential for using UDCs as a stimulus for activities with these colleagues. Examples of partnerships featuring UDCs and business could usefully be contributed to the UDC Hub. In the context of Europe, Europeana has also been working assiduously to release and appropriately license the cultural wealth of the heritage sector's content inter alia as a collective opportunity for commercial companies[55].

A different form of engagement with the economy is the value added to tourism. A report commissioned by the Heritage Lottery Fund and published in 2013 found that heritage-based tourism is now worth £26.4 billion to the UK economy[56]. The substantial number of visitors to UDCs, exhibitions and events can help boost tourism in a region by offering an attractive destination; for example, The John Rylands Library, was named the 'Large Visitor Attraction of the Year' at Manchester's annual tourism awards in November 2012, and the recently reopened Liverpool Central Library was placed first out of 124 visitor attractions in Liverpool by users of TripAdvisor in 2013[57].

50. www.bristolschoolofanimation.co.uk/1/post/2010/11/ss-great-britain-visualising-voices.html. Accessed 17.10.14.

51. OCLC report, Figure 1.21 Social media, p.55.

52. www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-university-collaboration-the-wilson-review. Accessed 17.10.14.

53. http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/inspiredby/2012/08/meet-our-new-jewellery-designer-in-residence-sarah-warsop-.html. Accessed 17.10.14.

54. www.digido.org.uk. Accessed 17.10.14.

55. http://pressandpolicy.bl.uk/Press-Releases/Europeana-s-huge-cultural-dataset-opens-for-re-use-5ca.aspx. Accessed 13.10.2014.

56. The Heritage Lottery Fund publishes both regular and periodic reports on the value of heritage. Data on the contribution made by libraries is sadly scarce and is limited to references to one-off studies such as the British Library's 2004 public value study, and figures from MLA/ACE which are limited to public libraries. www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/value-heritage. Accessed 17.10.14.

57. www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpools-new-look-central-library-6349612. Accessed 24.02.14.

Fundraising and income generation

UDCs can successfully be used to generate additional funds for their host institutions through contributions to fundraising and income generating activities[58].

Fundraising

UDCs appeal to individual, trust and corporate funders for a variety of reasons, from the emotional aspect of their historical resonance to the scope they offer for volunteers and communities to engage with culture. Funds can be raised to support activities directly related to UDCs such as better storage, reader spaces, display areas, creation of metadata, digitisation, outreach, or the purchase of new or existing deposited collections, and UDCs in research libraries have benefitted significantly from external funding of this nature in recent years. HLF alone has awarded over £281 million to over one thousand library and archive projects[59].

The funding environment has changed with funding becoming harder to obtain, as a result of individuals and trusts receiving reduced returns on investments that fund philanthropic operations, just as the budget reductions in all types of different organisations means more people are seeking funds. The key players in the funding landscape for research libraries have changed too. Jisc, a significant funder of HE technology projects and investor in digitisation, has changed its approach to funding following its transition to operating as a charity, HLF has reviewed its policies so that it now funds projects which focus on digital outputs and AHRC has recently launched its new strategy for 2013–18.

These strategic changes, and the increased competition do not necessarily mean that UDCs are less attractive to external funders, but it does mean that UDC managers need good fundraising skills to make effective applications. UDC managers in larger organisations may be able to work with professional fundraisers in their organisation, but those in smaller libraries and archives often find that they have to write applications on their own, and lack of time becomes a barrier to any fundraising activity. Ray (2012) gives an instructive overview of funding of the archive sector which looks not only at sources of funding for the sector, but levels of experience and confidence of staff engaged in fundraising, as well as information on under-exploited funding streams[60]. The UDC hub provides an opportunity for pooling experience and linking to existing guidance on effective fundraising, including developing the ability to respond swiftly and strategically to opportunities.

An example of the success that a mixed-economy approach to fundraising can bring is shown by the University of Aberdeen's campaign to raise £57 million for a new library.

CASE STUDY

University of Aberdeen, a library for a sixth century

This project exemplifies the use of distinctive local funders alongside a major national scheme and included one funder making creative use of landfill tax credits. The University of Aberdeen ran a fundraising campaign for its new £57 million iconic library, The Sir Duncan Rice Library, which opened in 2011. Preservation of and access, including public access, to the University's special collections was a major purpose of the new build and has been a significant factor in the fundraising campaign. The project shows how a major programme requires funding to be brought together from a wide variety of sources. Note in particular the input of Aberdeen Harbour Board, supporting the photographic archive storage, home to 6,000 glass plate negatives documenting the Harbour's history. The variety of funders included The Heritage Lottery Fund, The Friends of Aberdeen University Library, The Wolfson Foundation, individuals and Alumni, and Biffaward, which, funded by landfill tax credits from Biffa Waste Services, offers grants to projects within a certain distance of a Biffa site (Aberdeen received £45K for a listening room for oral history sound recordings).

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58. Research grants are excluded from this section.

59. www.hlf.org.uk/ourproject/projectsbysector/collections/Pages/index.aspx#.Uw9D-6WMOlI. Accessed 17.10.14.

60. Ray, L., Shepherd, E., and Laperdrix, M., (2012), Funding the Archive Sector. Research Report. TNA and ICARUS (UCL). www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/funding-the-archive-sector.pdf. Accessed 17.10.14.
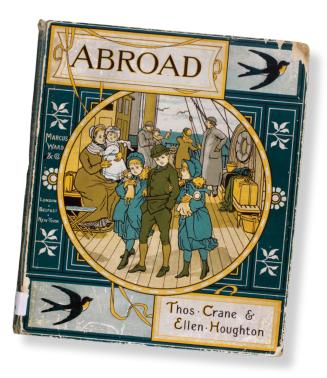
A creative approach to fundraising can include:

Finding unique funding streams: Libraries need to be creative in seeking out funders whose appeal is unique to them: their own alumni, Friends, donors, local businesses, honorary graduates, small trusts with particular links, individuals with specific disciplinary/collection interests.

Seeking funding collectively: A consortial approach to fundraising can be appropriate, for instance in joint-fundraising for acquisitions or for digitisation projects.

Promoting UDCs as recipients of funding: For example, adopt-a-book schemes.

Considering 'many and small' donors as well as 'few and large' donors: Crowd-funding is increasingly popular as a technique and may be effective alongside public engagement activities.

Increasing philanthropy: Research libraries are often in a good position to benefit from individual donations. Their parent organisations such as universities, learned societies, or heritage institutions often have well-developed links with a broad base of supporters unique to that organisation such as alumni, members or friends groups.

The current government is keen to promote philanthropy as a means of raising money, though it has not yet made the significant changes to tax regimes which are likely to increase philanthropic support to levels seen in the US. However, the 2012 HEFCE review of philanthropy in UK higher education makes interesting reading, including in its conclusions: 'There is potential for philanthropic income of some £2 billion additional funding per annum from around 640,000 donors, with an alumni participation rate of 5%, by 2022. Income from legacies will become increasingly significant' (HEFCE and More Partnership, 2012, p.60)[61]. The role of UDCs in supporting the growth of philanthropic activities in research libraries is an opportunity to be explored.

The OCLC survey includes a recommendation to 'Develop a set of arguments to assist institutions with development of external sources of funding in support of special collections' (OCLC report, p.20). This activity is something that an organisation with collective representation, such as RLUK might usefully be able to undertake on behalf of research libraries and is consistent with more general support for improving organisations' ability to advocate the value of UDCs.

Other forms of income generation

The strong visual appeal of many UDCs can help to form the basis of merchandising. Just as UDCs can be promoted as sources of creativity for use by business, so too can they provide potential for income generation by the parent organisation. Large institutions such as the British Library and the V&A have a wide range of self-branded merchandise. Even reading room rules can add an element of distinction where they have found their way onto tea towels on Bodleian Library merchandise.

The UDCs of research libraries are potentially attractive to commercial companies and picture libraries. Many organisations are opening up their licensing to enable free re-use of out of copyright material, and whilst this may appear to jeopardise reprographic revenue streams, they are finding that they are able to protect, or even increase income generation as the increased visibility of low resolution images results in greater demand for high resolution (charged for) images[62].

61. www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/invest/funds/fundraise. Accessed 17.10.14.

62. Unpublished findings from the British Library Preservation Copying Group.

Impact

Impact is notoriously difficult to assess but as a basic first step, the measurement of inputs and outputs is essential in order for UDC managers to understand their own service more precisely, to benchmark performance against others and to make their case for investment.

Results from the OCLC survey seem to suggest that research libraries are poor at collecting consistent and meaningful data about how collections and services are used. For example, the survey revealed serious weaknesses in the way in which data on the use of special collections is recorded, such as to limit the capacity to demonstrate the use of these traditional UDCs. Even the relatively simple indicator of 'onsite visits' failed to provide much useful information about the nature of the audiences as 90% of the overall total number of users were reported as 'other' (rather than the defined categories of: faculty and staff; graduate students; undergraduates; visiting students UK; visiting researchers; international researchers)[63]. This begs the obvious (and intriguing) question – who is using special collections? It also has the more serious impact of limiting advocacy and of limiting the ability to ensure that activities to maximise the potential of UDCs are appropriately targeted or measured, as the OCLC reports notes:

> *'It is likely that librarians can offer far more detail about their users anecdotally, but we cannot demonstrate the level of value delivered to primary constituencies unless we can reliably characterise them across the sector'.*
>
> *OCLC report, p.44*

Anecdotal evidence does suggest that individual libraries collect data on both the levels and nature of use of collections, adding weight to the conclusion that the lack of information available as a result of the OCLC survey results from wide disparity in the way in which information is collected (rather than the fact that information is not being collected). The question is, whether there is sufficient benefit to be derived from collecting data in a standardised form to make the exercise worthwhile to individual libraries. Whilst advocacy for the value of UDCs is one potential application of comparative data, its use to leverage funding would provide greater incentive.

Beyond the basic collection of data about physical use, or measurement of the number of clicks on websites, (which can be used to show the spread of a news story or a cataloguing project), demonstrating the impact of the use of UDCs remains challenging. This observation would seem to be supported by the lack of data relating to the numerous case studies featured in this section. There are plenty of examples of good practice in using UDCs available, but very few of them communicate the impact of the activities or make any attempt to quantify the benefits of the activities. Publicising the impact of the use of UDCs is, nowadays, an essential part of the work of a UDC manager.

Suggestions for measuring the impact of UDCs include:
- **Impact on research**: By monitoring citations or level of involvement in academic bids
- **Impact on students**: By use in projects, observing learning in action, or gathering evidence from focus groups
- **Impact on public engagement**: Via exhibition feedback or media coverage. For example, rather than just counting press column inches or mentions, the National Library of Scotland is using equivalent advertising cost to show the value of their coverage
- **Economic impact**: Working out the value of tourism driven by the organisation or the value of research based on work with its collections

Given the many possible ways of measuring UDC activities and the importance of demonstrating their impact, collective action could help libraries to determine which of these aspects are most important to measure and how to measure them. A common framework for measuring use and impact would allow for comparison between organisations but also, the ability to speak 'as one voice' and therefore the potential to increase advocacy for UDCs. An organisation such as RLUK is well placed to engage with research libraries and the museums sector to investigate the benefits of introducing standardised metrics to benchmark the use of UDCs and evaluate the impact of that use, and to consider whether standardised data on the use and impact of UDCs could be used to support collective fundraising activities.

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63. OCLC report, Table 1.11 Onsite visits, p.44.

Developing and managing UDCs

Two persistent themes have emerged in this report as critical for maximising the potential of UDCs. The first is the need for UDC staff to work collaboratively across their institutions and the second lies in the application of technology to UDCs to increase their visibility, to offer new ways of accessing content and to develop new research opportunities. The themes of collaboration and technology continue in this exploration of how UDCs can be developed and managed for the long term. Robust collection management strategies are fundamental to the identification, preservation and use of UDCs and should be used as the basis for prioritising the institutional commitment of resources. This section follows the best practice framework proposed in PAS197: 2009 Code of practice for cultural collections management[64] and looks in turn at collections development, collections information, collections access and preservation.

Collection development

Collections development policies with defined criteria representative of UDCs will support focused collecting aligned to institutional mission. Many research libraries are adapting their collection development strategies in response to a flat-lining or reduction in the overall budgets of their institutions, to align with external standards and guidelines (such as PAS197:2009 or the recently introduced Archive Service Accreditation standard), and to reflect or anticipate a growth in born-digital materials.

Acquisitions

The OCLC survey shows that nearly 60% of respondents saw their 2009–10 budgets drop as a result of the decline in the global economy since 2008[65]. Although the same survey showed no changes in acquisition funding in the period 2000 to 2009, anecdotal reports since 2009 suggest that reductions in acquisition budgets have now taken place in many institutions, prompting an increasingly strategic approach to budget allocation.

Current strategies for collection development include:
- Focusing on collecting archives and manuscripts as the truly distinctive items that will enhance collections
- Developing collections through strategic acceptance of donations
- Developing collection strengths in new (less expensive) directions
- Fundraising for acquisitions
- Collaborative purchasing[66]
- Participating in shared services such as Jisc Collections[67]

The data on acquisitions funding submitted to the special collections survey, led the OCLC report to observe:

> '… the capacity of the majority of respondents to enhance existing collections purposefully is negligible. If this can be seen as status quo, it would behove the community to acknowledge and plan accordingly'.
>
> OCLC report, p.35

In this context, collaborative approaches may offer real potential for the strategic development of UDCs. The OCLC report figures show that formal collaborative collection development arrangements for special collections and archives in the UK are rare, (though one third of respondents reported informal arrangements with regional partners)[68]. At a national level, RLUK is well placed to view overall trends in collecting and to identify significant gaps which any collective action might fill. The Copac Collections Management project is delivering tools which will enable collaborative collection development to become more widespread, particularly if delivered in the context of a national monograph strategy[69].

64. http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030175180. Accessed 24.02.14.

65. OCLC report, Figure 1.2 Change in overall library funding, p.30.

66. For example the University of Cambridge Library and Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford joint fund-raising campaign to purchase the Lewis-Gibson Genizah Collection. www.lib.cam.ac.uk/newspublishing/detail.php?news=389. Accessed 17.10.14.

67. At scale, Jisc Collections can be seen as a successful example of a collaborative initiative which, by taking a shared service approach, is able to negotiate with publishers to provide libraries with favourable rates for access to electronic resources. www.jisc-collections.ac.uk. Accessed 17.10.14.

68. OCLC report, Figure 1.4 Collaborative collection development, p.37.

69. The National Monographs Strategy project is exploring the potential for a national approach to the collection, preservation, supply and digitisation of scholarly monographs. http://monographs.jiscinvolve.org/wp. Accessed 24.02.14.

Collections on deposit

Past collecting practices have involved the acceptance of collections on deposit, without transfer of ownership or safeguards for the investment in space, cataloguing and other aspects of collections management by the hosts. Such collections are potentially at risk, particularly in difficult economic times, should the owners want to realise their assets. Valuable collections may be split up and lost to public access: recent examples include the Broadlands Archives at the University of Southampton[70], which was saved as the result of a successful fundraising campaign, and the library of Birmingham Medical Institute, held at the University of Birmingham until dispersed by auction in 2012. Research libraries now use robust collection policies which prevent this problem from growing; other libraries and archives may benefit from shared examples of these policies and deposit agreements to inform their own approach.

Born-digital materials

Although born-digital materials are already widely found in special collections departments, (65% of the 72 respondents to the OCLC survey question on born-digital archives reported having collected born-digital materials in one or more formats[71]), the UDCs of the future will include a much higher proportion of born-digital materials. A low percentage of respondents, 13%, reported having a born-digital management strategy in place (a further 31% reported having a strategy in preparation). For RLUK members, there is greater progress in addressing born-digital collections: 23% already have a born-digital strategy with a further 42% having a strategy in preparation. Those organisations that do not have a strategy for managing born-digital materials are to be encouraged to develop one as soon as possible.

The expertise of special collections librarians and archivists can be used to develop UDCs which encompass, or are entirely composed of, digital material. Staff are able to identify content of long-term value and work with depositors or otherwise negotiate acquisition. Sharing examples of strategies to collect and manage born-digital material may increase the confidence of those who are not yet actively collecting born-digital material, and ensure that collection development policies are independent of format so that the significance of the content and its value to the library's researchers, students and wider communities determine the UDCs of the future. The UDC Hub will provide a means of sharing strategies and best practice, but UDC managers would also benefit from development opportunities to understand the digital life cycle and improve their ability to manage born-digital content and communicate effectively with technical colleagues about its long-term management.

Institutional records, research data sets and theses are now all commonly born-digital. The OCLC survey reports that, '*Two-thirds of respondents have an institutional repository, but special collections staff are involved with the institutional records at less than one-fourth of these*'. For RLUK members, special collections are less often involved with the institutional records. The OCLC report suggests that this may be a result of scale: a larger library staff resulting in digital library activities managed separately to special collections.

A further challenge, or opportunity, relates to defining the status of some types of born-digital collections (part of library collections; general collections; UDCs). If digital content is to form an important, and growing part, of the UDCs of the future, institutions should give thought as to how librarians, archivists and institutional repository staff will work together to be responsible for the material over the long-term.

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70. www.southampton.ac.uk/supportus/broadlands. Accessed 17.10.14.

71. OCLC, Figure 1.35 Born-digital archival materials already held, p.74.

Collections information

This report advocates a 'holdings-wide' approach to appraisal so that UDCs, both analogue and digital may be identified and, where appropriate, managed for the long-term. The process of carrying out an appraisal may identify uncatalogued material, or bring to light the legacy of past practices, such as the absence of collecting policies or deposit agreements. As a result of carrying out an appraisal, institutions may be able to identify collections which do not support institutional mission and are potentially better placed elsewhere.

Uncatalogued collections

Hidden collections are collections which are uncatalogued and therefore effectively invisible to researchers. They are not an issue specific to UDCs or research libraries[72], but the presence and extent of hidden collections hampers the ability to identify and hence benefit from UDCs. Increasingly the term 'hidden collection' is used to extend beyond uncatalogued collections to cover those for which catalogues are not online, or for which the metadata is of such variable quality as to severely limit its search potential. Aside from the issue of basic visibility, few of the benefits described in the section on 'Maximising the use and impact of UDCs' are possible without good metadata. So whilst it is right to be optimistic about the potential of technology to enhance UDCs and the contribution they make to research and learning, there remains a significant basic cataloguing issue to be addressed before connecting to many collections held in libraries or embarking on digitisation projects.

The Hidden Collections (HC) report, which forms part of the RLUK UDC strand, reveals the scale of the problem: 13 million printed books held by HC respondents are uncatalogued, representing 18.5% of the collections held by those organisations[73].

The OCLC report also provides data on the online visibility of collections, with the percentage of materials by format that has an online catalogue record found to be as follows:
- Printed volumes 78%
- Archives and manuscripts 64%
- Cartographic materials 56%
- Visual and audiovisual materials 38%[*]
- Born-digital materials 37%[*74]

The Hidden Collections report provides an indication of the extent of the work that needs to be done to make these collections more visible. Actions to address the challenges of uncatalogued collections include:

Mapping hidden collections. Appraisal or mapping is an important first step to reveal material which does not match collecting policy and could be deaccessioned to save space and resources. There is tangible interest in work on a national scale to map priorities as 89% of respondents to the Hidden Collection survey supported the idea of a national online register of hidden collections.

Quick wins with metadata. Librarians and archivists are exploring ways to make hidden collections accessible with existing or limited staffing. These involve thinking about metadata in new ways, for example:
- Digitising metadata which exists only in analogue form[75]
- Raising awareness of collections via collection descriptions to gauge demand and make the case for more detailed work[76]

Simplified processing: Libraries are exploring the simplified processing of archival collections, such as the MPLP (More Product Less Process) approach outlined by Greene and Meissner (2005)[77]. In particular, the value of processing at point of use, rather than point of ingest.

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72. Although the Hidden Collections report states that 'UDCs, whether in special collections or general library stock, are particularly labour-intensive to catalogue and hence more likely to remain un- or under-catalogued', p.9.

73. Mertens, M. and García-Ontiveros, D., 2012. Hidden Collections: report of the findings of the RLUK Retrospective Cataloguing Survey in association with The London Library, RLUK and The London Library., p.6. www.rluk.ac.uk/strategicactivity/strategic-strands/udc/hidden-collections-report. Accessed 17.10.14.

74. OCLC, Table 1.13 Catalogue records, p.58. *see explanatory notes in the OCLC report.

75. RLUK libraries report substantial quantities of print-only finding aids for example, 21% of manuscripts, 34% of maps.

76. The role of the Archives Hub and AIM25 (Archives in the M25 Area) in increasing the profile of archives in higher education illustrates the value of this kind of cataloguing.

77. 51% of all respondents and 88% of RLUK respondents to the OCLC survey use a 'simplified approach' for all or some of their archival processing, p.62 and p.114.

Creative use of staff: Not all cataloguing processes have to be carried out by librarians or archivists with significant expertise. Libraries are evaluating where that expertise is of most value and supplementing it by:

- Providing appropriate opportunities for interns and volunteers, with input from expert staff for training, supervision and evaluation
- Re-skilling existing staff. Changes in library operations and structures may mean that staff from elsewhere in the library or parent organisation can be allocated to working on UDCs
- Using expertise from outside the library to enhance metadata, for example tapping into community knowledge via online crowdsourcing
- Working with researchers to enhance metadata, such as specialists in particular languages or subjects

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CASE STUDY

Lighting the past

Launched in June 2012, Lighting the Past aims to catalogue 150,000 rare and early books in Special Collections at the University of St Andrews, with the assistance of students. The project has developed an innovative two-stage approach, which the Library hopes to share with others needing to catalogue large collections of early books.

Phase 1 pared cataloguing down to its simplest elements whilst still providing enough information for accurate research retrieval and was undertaken by third and fourth year undergraduates, postgraduates and PhD students under the supervision of a full-time cataloguer and Rare Books Librarian.

Phase 2 was run concurrently with the phase 1 work, and was undertaken by rare books experts who catalogued the most important, complex or fragile works, supported by external fundraising. Upgrading the phase 1 records will become the main duty of the permanent rare books cataloguer once phase 2 is completed.

Through this project St Andrews aims to have over 100,000 records from their rare book collections added to their online catalogue and shared with national and international databases such as Copac and WorldCat.

In addition to addressing a major retrospective cataloguing issue, this example demonstrates the added benefits of providing work and specialist training opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and increased visibility of UDCs through engagement with the student body and publication of the project via a blog[78].

The Hidden Collections report identifies next steps (see Annex B) to address the challenges presented by uncatalogued collections. Many of the recommendations require collaborative effort and RLUK is reviewing the findings to inform future work.

Deaccessioning and transfer

In cases where collections have been identified which are not relevant to the holding institution's mission, transferring material to an organisation with other relevant or complementary collections and specialisms may offer a good solution. For example, in 2012 London Metropolitan University (LMU) announced that it was seeking a 'new home or sponsor' for the Women's Library, along with the Trades Union Congress Library. Although the University recognised that both collections were of national significance, it argued that much of their usage was from beyond the University and that the money saved could be invested directly in the learning experiences of LMU's own students [79]. The announcement hit the headlines and the Women's Library became the focus of a high-profile campaign. The Library of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) acquired the collection of the Women's Library [80]. Now known as The Women's Library@LSE, this substantial and unique collection now possesses a dedicated reading room, with a representative selection of its contents being online via LSE's Digital Library. In this case the absence of a strong connection to current institutional priorities at LMU would seem to have contributed to decisions about the collection's ongoing management. The example serves to underline the importance of understanding the relationship between the holding institution, the library and the collections, something which a significance assessment can make clear.

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78. www.st-andrews.ac.uk/library/specialcollections/collections/rarebooks/projects/lightingthepast. Accessed 17.10.14.

79. www.theguardian.com/books/2012/apr/11/women-s-library-campaign-petition. Accessed 17.10.14.

80. www.lse.ac.uk/library/collections/featuredCollections/womensLibraryLSE.aspx. Accessed 17.10.14.

The Women's Library Reading Room

Deaccessioning is an extremely sensitive issue, with the potential for negative repercussions for an institution's reputation amongst researchers, the public, funders and other existing and potential depositors. This means that research libraries need to (and increasingly do) devote as much attention to it in their policies as to acquisitions. Green (2010) describes a successful programme of collections review and deaccessioning. Lessons might also be learnt from the museums sector which has a model programme 'Effective Collections' which was set up to 'stimulate a change in the culture of museums, such that they expect to understand, use and share collections more'[81]. Much of this culture change has been achieved through programmes to encourage collections review, smarter (long-term) loans, disposal (in most cases to another institution) and the sharing of expertise. The project, run by the Museums Association, started in 2006 and has been supported by a £1 million programme of funding from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation. Its impact on the museum sector, both in terms of making better use of stored collections and changing attitudes towards disposal and loans has been profound,[82] and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation now contributes £1 million per year fund to develop collections use, which is administered by the Museums Association. It would be worth investigating whether a similar programme could be applicable to under-used library collections, and those that have been assessed as being of lesser relevance to their holding institution.

Collaborative collections management

Future changes in the development of general collections are likely to include a reduction in print stock as items are gradually replaced by electronic media[83]. If general collections have not been appraised for UDCs, library staff will need to be alert to the potential for UDCs to be present. Last copies may inadvertently be withdrawn because their importance has not been recognised. Materials in unfamiliar languages or scripts, or those in poor condition are perhaps most at risk; the former because of the potential for inaccuracies in cataloguing, the latter because items in poor condition are sometimes perceived as being of lesser value.

Research libraries are exploring ways to prevent this inadvertent loss, at an institutional level and collectively across institutions. At an institutional level, staff can check Copac to establish an item's availability elsewhere before deciding whether or not to withdraw it from circulation.

Collective efforts include the Scottish collaborative print retention policy, which aims to safeguard Scottish material and unique items within Scotland[84] and the UK Research Reserve (UKRR)[85], a partnership between the British Library and higher education libraries. The UKRR is a collaborative distributed national research collection of journals that allows libraries to de-duplicate their print journal holdings of a title if two copies are held by other UKRR members, ensuring continued availability for researchers. The project is now entering phase 3 and has had sufficient success to inspire investigation into the potential for a distributed monograph collection[86]. The Copac collection management project has the potential to contribute to collaborative collections management by helping organisations to identify collection strengths and enabling them to see how their collections fit into the national picture. The outcome of the ongoing research into the potential for a national monograph strategy may also have a profound impact on future collaborative collections management opportunities.

81. www.museumsassociation.org/collections/culture-change. Accessed 17.10.14.

82. Effective collections: achievements and legacy, www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=832356. Accessed 17.10.14.

83. See the OCLC publications relating to moves towards collaborative management of print collections in the US, for example: 'Print Management at Mega-Scale' and 'Understanding the Collective Collection'.

84. http://scurl.ac.uk/what-we-do/publications/scottish-collections-policy. Accessed 17.10.14.

85. www.ukrr.ac.uk. Accessed 17.10.14.

86. The National Monograph Strategy project is led by Jisc, in partnership with RLUK, SCONUL and Newcastle University exploring the potential for a national approach to the collection, preservation, supply and digitisation of scholarly monographs, http://monographs.jiscinvolve.org/wp. Accessed 17.10.14.

Collections access

Technology has transformed the way in which library collections are accessed; both in terms of the way in which users have contact with the content of collections, (through publication in digital form and through the digitisation of analogue collections), and also in terms of the impact of technology on access to information about collections. Research libraries are active in exploring new technologies and concepts in metadata: mining and analysing, linking, mashing up, and highlighting the rich content of collections. The new descriptive cataloguing rules, Resource Description and Access (RDA), allow greater focus on people and places[87], which are aspects that UDC users value, and are thus highly apposite for making UDCs more discoverable to them. Improved search engines, search-engine indexing and the use of search-engine optimisation (SEO) also help to increase visibility. Library management systems increasingly interact with discovery systems, which bring together local and remote resources, the traditional library catalogue, digitised resources and journal articles in one place from which users can launch search queries. Increasingly, the semantic web and linked open data will also play a role in the discoverability of such materials and their greater and more nuanced contextualisation, and RLUK is committed to exploring this area further.

Digitisation

The case studies throughout the section on maximising the use and impact of UDCs have illustrated how digital access can be used to transform contact with UDCs. Increasingly, users expect to be able to access material online and whilst some UDCs are born-digital, most are not and have not been digitised resulting in a significant mismatch between supply and demand[88]. The identification of UDCs within larger library collections provides a means of targeting collection management activity, including digitisation, to those areas of the collection which are of significance to researchers, students and the wider community. But even with that focus, the quantity of undigitised content and the cost of digitisation means that priorities need to be established. The OCLC report results show that there is widespread special collections digitisation activity, with 91% of respondents having completed one or more digitisation projects and/or having an active digitisation programme[89]. The survey results provide hints about the coordination of activity throughout an organisation (25% of respondents have an active library-wide programme that includes special collections), but it does not specifically ask questions about an institution's strategic approach to digitisation.

The challenge for research libraries is to maximise the availability of digital content in a manner which meets user expectations and is within available resources. Given the relative ease with which digital content can be shared, there are opportunities for libraries to benefit from sharing their digitisation strategies and priorities, and for exploring the potential for collaborative approaches towards scaling-up digitisation, sharing information about digitised content and preventing duplication.

A strategic approach at institutional level

Digital content can be produced as a result of many different types of library activity, for example reprographics, picture libraries, preservation initiatives, selective content digitisation to support research projects, digitisation 'on-demand', large-scale funded projects (such as resulted from the Jisc funding of digitisation programmes in the past[90]) and 'mass' digitisation projects, commonly with external commercial partners such as the British Library's partnership with BrightSolid to digitise content from their Newspaper Archive. Whilst such diversity illustrates the importance of digital content to a wide range of users and demonstrates creativity on behalf of institutions creating digital content, it can result in fragmented availability of digital content[91]. A strategic approach to digitisation at an institutional level allows organisations to unite all of their digitisation activity under a common framework, working to consistent criteria. It is particularly useful as resources become more scarce and organisations may find that they need to prioritise digitisation projects.

Scaling-up digitisation to achieve greater impact and better meet user expectations

The OCLC survey reports that one-third of respondents have already done large-scale[92] digitisation of special collections. An approach based on collections rather than individual items has the potential to achieve greater efficiencies in terms of process, as well as impact in terms of output.

87. Ehlert, M., (2010), RDA: Building blocks, Minitex: www.minitex.umn.edu/Cataloging/RDANo2.pdf. Accessed 17.10.14.

88. OCLC report, p.15.

89. OCLC report, Figure 1.29 Digitisation activity, p.67.

90. http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/digitisation.aspx. Accessed 17.10.14.

91. Sustaining Our Digital Future: Institutional Strategies for Digital Content. http://sca.jiscinvolve.org/wp/files/2013/01/Sustaining-our-digital-future-FINAL-31.pdf. Accessed 17.10.14.

92. 'Large-scale' defined as a systematic effort to consider complete collections rather than being selective at item level. OCLC, Figure 1.31 Large-scale digitization, p.69.

RLUK members, holders of so much of the national research collection, are well-placed to look strategically at digitisation, to consider the existing pattern of digitised content, identify priorities for digitisation, find partners, and put together collaborative plans which could be taken pro-actively to potential funders. TNA and have piloted a collaborative aproach to digitisation which has resulted in the establishment of a 'National Digitisation Consortium' which it is hoped will result in economies of scale for digitisation and licensing with the commercial sector[93]. Individual libraries can adopt on-demand digitisation services alongside large-scale programmes to ensure that shorter-term user-demand is successfully managed. Schaffner et al. (2011) describes an approach to user-initiated digitisation.

Shared information about digitised content

Any coordinated approach to the digitisation of UDCs requires knowledge about existing digital collections to avoid duplication. Some work was done in this area by the 2009 Jisc-funded project DiSCmap: Digitisation in special collections: mapping, assessment, prioritisation[94]. With the subsequent development of the Copac collections management tools, and the evolving work on the National Monograph Strategy, shared information about digitised content and a strategic approach to collaborative digitisation now seems a real possibility. More recently, the Jisc Co-Design project Spotlight on the Digital has produced systematic advice and guidance on how to ensure the long-term discoverability of digitised material on the Web, emphasising that close attention has to be paid to observing standards and using multiple dissemination and communication channels in order to protect longevity of discovery and therefore access of such materials[95].

Content aggregation

Initiatives exist to aggregate content at a variety of scales. In some cases, institutional digital libraries bring together the outputs of many small projects, such as the Cambridge Digital Library[96]. In other examples, such as Europeana[97], the World Digital Library[98], or Google Books, aggregation can take place at a much greater scale and connect collections across countries and continents; the inclusion of UDCs in such portals will bring benefits by reaching out to global audiences.

Funding digitisation

Digitisation is not cheap and although large-scale projects have been well funded in the past through agencies such as Jisc and New Opportunities Fund (NOF), the landscape for funding the digitisation of UDCs has changed. Opportunities for external funding still exist, for example through HLF and AHRC but libraries should also consider the opportunities for generating income from their digitised UDCs to off-set costs[99]. Options to consider include:

- Raising income from digitised UDCs via picture libraries or other commercial partners such as ProQuest, or making them freely available via digital libraries and social media such as Flickr
- Commercialising expertise and setting up suites specialising in innovative digitisation techniques and services, for example, the Centre for Heritage Imaging and Collection Care at the University of Manchester[100]
- Forming partnerships with smaller companies in the creative industries which can use digitised UDCs under license in products, on designs or in broadcasts
- Charging non-institutional users for access to digital content

The growing range of options means that UDC managers will need a good understanding of copyright law and the complexities of licensing to achieve optimal arrangements for users and to support organisational aims. Collective action to establish and share best practice on resourcing digitisation projects would save libraries considerable duplication of effort, and a collective approach to funding digitisation could bring real benefits to both the creators and users of digitised UDCs.

93. www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/digitisation-consortium.htm. Accessed 17.10.14.

94. www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/digitisation/reports/discmap.aspx. Accessed 17.10.14.

95. http://digitisation.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2014/06/03/spotlight-on-the-digital-final-recommendations-and-outputs. Accessed on 13.10.2014.

96. http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk. Accessed 17.10.14.

97. www.europeana.eu/portal. Accessed 17.10.14.

98. www.wdl.org/en. Accessed 17.10.14.

99. OCLC report, 62% of RLUK libraries have or are considering commercial contracts to digitise special collections and sell access (44% of all respondents). Figure 2.33, p.118, and Figure 1.32, p.70, respectively.

100. www.library.manchester.ac.uk/ourservices/serviceyweprovide/chicc. Accessed 17.10.14.

Discoverability

As seen above, in regard to hidden collections and collections access, new forms of cataloguing and description will continue to be needed, and as part of that evolving effort, linked open data is already playing a role in discovery and contextualisation. Linked Data is a term first coined by the founder of the World Wide Web, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, and refers to a way of linking conceptual 'things' such as personal and corporate names, places, dates and subjects, by using uniform resource identifiers (URIs – similar to URLs) to establish and maintain relationships in a machine-readable way. It offers the potential for making the World Wide Web faster, smarter and more intuitive by establishing connections to identified resources (or data), rather than to locations on web pages. Including Linked Data in library records means that the data is more readily picked up by search engines such as Google and other indexes which are already using Linked Data.

Linked Data And AIM25

The Jisc funded Step Change[101] and Trenches to Triples[102] projects both sought to make Linked Data metadata creation a normal part of archival cataloguing through a successful collaboration with Axiell, whose CALM software is used by more than 400 archives, and with the popular mapping service, Historypin. New tools have been embedded in AIM25, the popular 130-partner archive description aggregation service for London, managed by King's College London; while the UK Archival Thesaurus, managed by King's and the University of London Computer Centre, has been upgraded to provide a Linked Data subject service for UK information professionals. A new, AHRC-funded, project at King's, Language of access, will explore the potential of Linked Data in teaching.

Many organisations are now using linked data. The Europeana project has produced an engaging animation 'Linked Open Data – What is it?' explaining, in very simple terms, how linked data works and how it benefits both users and memory organisations such as libraries (http://vimeo.com/36752317). Linked Data has the potential to enhance research by establishing more direct connections between items of relevance and its use is likely to become the norm in coming years. It is the type of development which may help to address concerns about the discoverability of digitised content which have been the focus, as mentioned previously, of the recent Jisc project, Spotlight on Digital, run in partnership with RLUK and SCONUL[103].

Underpinning the improvements to collections information and access initiatives is the requirement for good quality and consistent metadata. Adopting and applying national and international metadata standards such as DCR(B) and Dublin Core where this is not already the case will make other activities including the sharing of digital records, collaborative collections management activities and digitisation much easier.

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101. http://openmetadatapathway.blogspot.co.uk. Accessed 17.10.14.

102. http://trenchestotriples.blogspot.co.uk. Accessed 17.10.14.

103. Spotlight on the Digital: http://digitisation.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2013/09/09/spotlight-on-the-digital-how-discoverable-are-your-digitised-collections. Accessed 17.10.14.

Preservation

Effective preservation ensures that UDCs and other parts of the national research collections are available for future audiences. The OCLC survey asked respondents to indicate their most significant collection care problems. 'Repair for use' and 'improved housings' (i.e. boxing and enclosures) were the two most commonly reported[104]. When asked about the different formats with preservation needs, printed volumes, archives and manuscripts, audiovisual and born-digital materials were all indicated as having 'high' levels of need[105]. Emly and Mertens (2012) suggest a number of measures, listed in Annexe C, to be taken by the community to make preservation a library-wide matter for all staff in research libraries rather than a niche concern of conservators and special collections curators.

Rather than engage in a comprehensive review of preservation, this section will focus on one issue which is of particular relevance to UDCs: the issue of brittle paper. The proposed definition of UDCs is likely to encompass significant quantities of this material, for which physical condition is a barrier to continued or increased use. The inherent fragility of many collections of 20th century books, newspapers, ephemera and pamphlets means that the collections that do remain are increasingly scarce (and distinctive). The prohibitive expense of mass deacidification coupled with the fact that it is most effective for material which has not yet become brittle has led to the use of environmental management to slow rates of deterioration as the preferred preservation management strategy in the UK. Digitisation provides a solution for accessing content, but often encounters legal complexities as much of the brittle material tends to be in copyright.

Paper is not the only format that has what conservators call 'inherent vice'. Photographs, film and other audiovisual media, and formats for storing digital files, have composite structures and are frequently made of unstable materials such as plastics; digital content is well documented as requiring active preservation management early in an object's life cycle[106]. Guidance on the preservation of audiovisual and digital materials could usefully be included in, or linked to from, the UDC Hub . Useful resources to help organisations manage born-digital material include Erway's work to demystify born-digital material[107], and the AIMS project, (in which the University of Hull is a partner), to identify a framework for the long-term management of born-digital materials which can be used by smaller institutions[108].

Collection managers at individual organisations would benefit from reviewing preservation management strategies to address the implications of the increasing use of UDCs, particularly if digital exposure is likely to result in greater wear and tear of already well-used physical material. UDC managers should ensure that there is good correlation between collections access and preservation policies such that the role of digital versions of analogue UDCs (preservation surrogates) is clearly explained as a measure to protect vulnerable original material.

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104. OCLC survey, Figure 1.7 Most significant collection care problems, p.39.

105. OCLC survey, Figure 1.8 Preservation needs, p.40.

106. Preservation Management of Digital Materials; A Handbook. www.dpconline.org/publications/digital-preservation-handbook. Accessed 17.10.14.

107. Erway, R., 2012. You've Got to Walk Before You Can Run: first steps for managing born-digital content received on physical media. OCLC Research. www.oclc.org/research/publications/library/2012/2012-06r.html#firststeps. Accessed 17.10.14.

108. http://born-digital-archives.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/practical-first-steps.html. Accessed 17.10.14.

Resources

Space

'Good space' is an important asset in the development and management of UDCs. The space requirements for UDCs include space for storage, exhibition, staff, conservation, teaching and research which is sufficient in both quantity and quality[109] to allow activities to flourish. Given that UDCs exist as collections distributed across libraries any consideration of the issues related to space are not necessarily concerned with a single physical location. The issue is raised in this report because 'space and facilities' were identified by respondents to the OCLC survey as second in their 'three most challenging issues' (behind outreach)[110]. Reviewing the free-text comments for these responses shows that a lack of storage space and exhibition space are common themes. It is not possible to identify from the report whether there is any difference in the experience between RLUK members and that of the wider UDC community.

Improving or increasing space is normally an expensive and time-consuming undertaking. Many RLUK members have already invested substantially in improved premises for special collections and/or the general library service. The Wolfson Foundation/ RLUK Libraries Programme which ran from 2005–09 played a vital role in this transformation, supporting projects which enhanced research spaces, many of which centred on improving special collections areas, such as those at Liverpool, Glasgow, Birmingham and SOAS. It would be interesting to learn what impact these investments have had on access for researchers, students and the wider community. CIBER (2011) shows that investment in space has helped RLUK libraries to keep pace with the recent growth in student numbers. Figures show an increase in floor space from 489,500 m^2 in 2003 to 576,629 m^2 in 2009, and area per use of 0.85 m^2 and 0.83 m^2 respectively [111].

In terms of addressing the challenge of limited storage space for collections growth, the appraisal of collections and identification of those suitable for deaccessioning offers potential for the release and re-use of space. The impact of activities such as participation in UKRR may also free up space for other purposes. Phase one of this project released over 11,000 metres of shelf space and phase 2 (due for completion by 2015) has the ambitious target of releasing 100km of shelving[112].

Off-site storage also provides options for increasing capacity and enabling re-use of on-site space. Thirty-six percent of respondents to the OCLC survey indicated that they had special collections in offsite or other remote storage locations; a further 6% indicated they were planning offsite storage. Offsite storage can provide valuable additional capacity, particularly for low-use material or that which requires specialist storage conditions such as photographs or film. It would be useful to identify whether storage space issues are related to material format as collaborative approaches to specialist storage facilities may provide a cost-effective way of providing high quality storage whilst also releasing space at individual institutions.

Although out of reach of most individual research libraries, the new breed of very large high-tech, high-density stores with automated retrieval systems, such as the British Library buildings at Boston Spa[113], also offer a means of maximising the use of space.

Space audits and analysis of functions may uncover more efficient ways of storing material and in carrying out activities within existing areas for example, co-locating collections, making heavily used material more accessible, or putting the most important material in the safest locations. Guidance on carrying out space audits could be made available through the UDC Hub.

Many engagement activities are inspiring libraries to create more dynamic environments that can accommodate spaces for interactive learning and that are able to support work with audiences of all kinds. For example, a major refurbishment project at the Palace Green Library at Durham University Library has created a purpose-built special collections reading room alongside many other major enhancements to improve storage, access and the visitor experience[114].

Although the concerns expressed by the OCLC survey respondents relate to physical space, it is worth briefly mentioning that thought and planning should also go into the provision of digital space; for storage, research, teaching, and exhibition.

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109. Guidance is available from BSI in the form of PD5454: 2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials; http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030228041. Accessed 17.10.14.

110. OCLC report, Table 1.16 Most challenging issues, p.83.

111. CIBER, 2011. RLUK Library Trends: data from Sconul, the Association of Research Libraries, LibQual, the International Student Barometer and CIBER. A CIBER working paper for Research Libraries UK. p.10. www.rluk.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/RLUK-library-trends-tg-1.pdf. Accessed 17.10.14.

112. www.ukrr.ac.uk. Accessed 17.10.14.

113. http://conference.ifla.org/past-wlic/2012/102-novotny-en.pdf. Accessed 17.10.14.

114. www.dur.ac.uk/library/developments/palacegreen. Accessed 13.10.2014.

Staff and skills

Many of the recommendations throughout this report involve people doing more in order to maximise the potential of UDCs. However, this report does not suggest that UDC managers are responsible for doing everything on their own, far from it. A common theme throughout the report is the benefits gained by working in collaboration with others. Collaboration presents opportunities for developing new skills and opportunities to raise awareness of the existing skills of UDC managers (as well as of the existence of UDCs).

The OCLC survey collected information on staffing and on changes in the allocation of staff time 'focused on special collections related functions', as distinct from staff located in special collections departments. It reports that 40% of organisations have seen an increase in professionally qualified staff since 2000, with 29% seeing an increase in support staff. It also highlights the disparity amongst staffing levels across different types of research libraries. Across the entire population, the mean number of special collections staff (professionally qualified and support), is 16.6 FTE; in universities it is 10.0, however, when national, public and university libraries are factored out the mean falls to 4.0 FTE, with nine of the smaller institutions having 1.0 FTE or less in their special collections[115]. This provides a useful context when considering what can realistically be achieved in terms of maximising the potential of UDCs and the skills development needs of staff connected to UDCs.

The classic skill set for working with rare books includes preservation, historical bibliography, book history, palaeography, Latin and other languages, collection management, cataloguing and reference skills[116]. Archivists via their professional routes and frameworks[117] develop parallel skills such as archival appraisal, description and diplomatics. These skills, combined with the knowledge of collections gained from experience of working with researchers and creating metadata, are essential to exploiting UDCs.

Staff have taken on and engaged with new technologies and audiences while also carrying out their previous and still necessary duties relevant to managing hitherto largely analogue collections. The OCLC report illustrates changes in allocation of staff time with 82% of respondents reporting increased time devoted to education and outreach, 81% reporting increased time spent on technology and/or digital services and 71% reporting increased time on user services. Increasingly, UDC managers must be able to 'sell their wares', to funders, to academic colleagues, and to senior library staff.

UDC managers also recognise that extending their skills to benefit from new opportunities is essential. The survey respondents identify born-digital materials, fundraising, and intellectual property as the areas of greatest need for education and training[118]. These areas reflect the reported changes in activity in allocation of staff time and mirror the areas for increased activity recommended by this report.

The skills development areas highlighted in this report are:
Digital collections: Staff need to develop skills to cope with born-digital, digitised and hybrid collections for example, pro-active acquisitions, use of forensics, the complexities of licensing and other intellectual property concerns, and how to cost projects.

Digital humanities: Staff need to understand more recent areas of academic research, such as digital humanities, which may use existing resources in new ways.

E-learning and teaching: UDC managers increasingly need pedagogic skills, the ability to use technologies such as VLEs, and time to plan, carry out and assess their teaching if their work with students is to have a meaningful impact.

Public engagement: Outreach is the most significant challenge and greatest opportunity for UDC managers[119]. Presentation and communication skills are critical, and media skills are also useful.

Management skills: The growing complexity inherent in UDC collections today requires excellent management and communication skills. Depending on the scale of the organisation, these may include leadership, financial, strategic planning and project management skills.

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115. OCLC survey, Table 1.15 Mean and median number of staff FTE, p.77.

116. The frameworks created by professional bodies CILIP RBSCG (2007) and RBMS (2008) provide more detail.

117. www.archives.org.uk/training/training.html. Accessed 17.10.14.

118. OCLC survey, Figure 1.20 Education and training needs, p.80.

119. OCLC report, Table 1.16 Most challenging issues, p.83.

Advocacy and persuasion: All UDC staff need a sense of the importance of advocacy, for external and internal audiences, and the value of publicising good news. RLUK can help by using their extensive experience of advocacy to help members and others in the sector to establish effective examples of advocacy in practice.

Any review of the skills needed to maximise the potential of UDCs should also refer to the RLUK report 'Re-skilling for Research' (Auckland, 2012) which highlighted a growing need to be able to advise on data management and digital curation issues to support researchers.

Work with the independent sector

Given the range of activities involved in making the most out of UDCs and the diversity of the organisations in which they are found, it is unrealistic to expect all UDC managers to be able to draw on their parent institution for the wide range of skills, experience and technology required to implement all of the recommendations in this report, let alone for all of those skills to be found in a single person. Instead, a combination of core, trained UDC staff who have the flexibility to draw in expertise from outside an organisation offers a more realistic, and cost effective approach to making progress.

Regardless of whether UDC managers work with colleagues from within or beyond their own institutional walls, the emphasis should be on knowledge sharing and collaboration to achieve the potential of UDCs to support institutional mission. This report has frequently drawn on examples of practice from beyond the library sector, illustrating that much good work already exists in other sectors from which UDC managers can benefit. This in turn opens up the potential for collaboration across domain barriers, perhaps even extending to skills transfer programmes or secondments as a method of spreading best practice and learning.
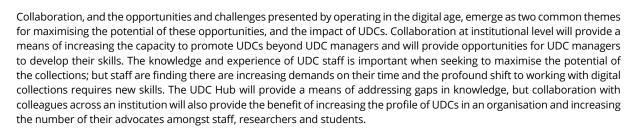
Conclusion

'Unique and distinctive collections' provides a conceptual framework for reappraising, managing and promoting collections in terms of significance to the host organisation. It opens up the opportunity to include collections of all format and age in a consideration of what is of value to support research, learning and engagement. A definition of UDCs is proposed in this report and it would now be valuable to engage with the research library community in a dialogue about its use.

This report has shown that there are many examples of the imaginative use of UDCs to support an institution's mission and enhance its reputation. Through the inclusion of these examples, this report is a first step in sharing good practice. The UDC Hub will provide the opportunity to build on the examples and case studies used here and identify resources which will help to address the recommendations highlighted in this report. It is hoped that the UDC community will contribute resources to the UDC Hub and that it will evolve into a peer-to-peer support network for those working with UDCs.

The opportunities that UDCs present for research libraries can be summarised as:

- Opportunities for enhancing the distinctiveness of an organisation and its ability to attract high quality researchers and students with consequent implications for attracting research funding
- Opportunities for growing relatively new areas of research and learning such as digital humanities
- Opportunities for engaging with local communities and increasing an organisation's contribution to society
- Opportunities for wider public engagement to enhance an organisation's reputation for scholarship locally and globally
- Opportunities to contribute to the economy through use of UDCs by business or as a tourist attraction
- Opportunities to enhance fundraising campaigns and to build philanthropic support through connections with donors and alumni

Collaboration, and the opportunities and challenges presented by operating in the digital age, emerge as two common themes for maximising the potential of these opportunities, and the impact of UDCs. Collaboration at institutional level will provide a means of increasing the capacity to promote UDCs beyond UDC managers and will provide opportunities for UDC managers to develop their skills. The knowledge and experience of UDC staff is important when seeking to maximise the potential of the collections; but staff are finding there are increasing demands on their time and the profound shift to working with digital collections requires new skills. The UDC Hub will provide a means of addressing gaps in knowledge, but collaboration with colleagues across an institution will also provide the benefit of increasing the profile of UDCs in an organisation and increasing the number of their advocates amongst staff, researchers and students.

Recent developments at a national level such as the Copac collections management tool, Jisc's National Monograph Strategy project, and work by TNA to develop a strategic framework for the collection and management of archives will bring benefits to the management of UDCs. These benefits will have most impact if collection holders first assess their collections in terms of significance, as they can then participate strategically in broader initiatives. Given the further potential still of digitisation to increase the visibility of UDCs and inspire new methods of research and teaching, collaboration between research libraries to scale-up digitisation operations could bring significant benefits to the wider research community and economies to individual research libraries. RLUK is in a good position to scope collaborative work of this nature and indeed, is already closely involved in the national initiatives mentioned above.

Pic noir hupé, de la Caroline.

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Abbreviations

AHRC Arts & Humanities Research Council

AHSS Arts, humanities and social sciences subjects

ARL Association of Research Libraries

CyMAL Museums Archives and Libraries Wales

HC RLUK and London Library survey of Hidden Collections (Mertens, M. and García-Ontiveros, D., 2012)

Jisc Joint Information Systems Committee

LSE London School of Economics

MLA Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (until 2011/2)

NLS National Library of Scotland

NLW National Library of Wales

NOF New Opportunities Fund (1999–2004)

OA Open Access. For definitions of Green and Gold OA see Finch 2012

RDA Resource Description and Access (cataloguing rules)

REF Research Excellence Framework (new system for assessing quality of research in UK higher education organisations)

RIN Research Information Network

RLUK Research Libraries UK

RSLP Research Support Libraries Programme (funded library projects 1999–2002)

SCONUL Society of College, National and University Libraries

SOAS School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

STEM Academic disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics

TNA The National Archives (England and Wales)

UDCs Unique and Distinctive Collections

Acknowledgements

Annexes

Annexe A
Recommendations of the OCLC/RLUK Survey report[120]

These recommendations are based on the evidence of the survey and on discussion with special collections communities.

Staffing

1. Analyse the array of duties performed by special collections staff and identify the new skills and expertise needed to move the profession forward in alignment with institutional missions.

2. Develop a plan to provide educational opportunities in areas, both traditional and emergent, in which skills need enhancement across the sector.

External funding

1. Develop a set of arguments to assist institutions with development of external sources of funding in support of special collections.

User services

1. Develop an outreach toolkit, including case studies illustrating best practices, to build skills for presentation and promotion of special collections.

2. Develop pricing models, templates, and shared policies for user-initiated digital scanning to encourage consistency across the sector.

Born-digital materials

1. Define the basic steps involved in initiating a program for managing born-digital archival materials to assist libraries that have not yet begun this work.

2. Investigate the feasibility of extending broadly across the sector the adoption of successful technical environments for managing born-digital materials that have been developed by a small number of UK institutions.

Digitisation

1. Develop both a national strategy for continued digitisation of special collections and a national gateway for discovery of digitized content. As part of the strategy, identify sustainable funding strategies and international partners with which to collaborate.

2. Develop cost-effective models for large-scale digitisation of special collections that take into account the special needs of these materials while also achieving high productivity.

Metrics

1. Determine the potential value and uses of metrics for reporting core statistics (for example, collection size, users, outreach efforts, catalog records) across the sector. If warranted, define categories and methodologies and encourage their use across the sector.

Archival collections

1. Convert print archival catalogues using affordable methodologies to enable Internet access. Resist the urge to upgrade or expand the data unless crucial for discovery purposes. Develop tools to facilitate conversion from local databases.

2. Develop a shared understanding of the goals and characteristics of 'simplified archival processing'.

3. Establish a methodology to assess unprocessed archival collections and develop a plan to make the national collection more fully accessible.

Collection development

1. Define key characteristics and desired outcomes of meaningful collaborative collection development, and encourage collaborations in areas of national significance.

2. Scrutinise local collecting policies to determine how well they reflect the institutional mission and can feasibly be implemented.

Cataloging and metadata

1. Collaborate to share expertise and create metadata for cartographic materials to enable improved discovery of the national collection.

2. Build on the findings of RLUK's Hidden Collections survey of print materials to identify national cataloguing priorities.

Collection care

1. Further inflect the COPAC Collection Management Tools to meet the requirements of special collections. Investigate its potential for determining priorities for preservation and other management activities across the national print collection.

2. Take collective action to share resources for cost-effective preservation of at-risk audiovisual and born-digital archival materials.

Building community

1. Identify beneficial ways in which to build productive relationships across the diverse community of special collections libraries that participated in this survey.

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120. Survey of Special Collections and Archives in the UK and Ireland. Jackie M. Dooley, Rachel Beckett, Alison Cullingford, Katie Sambrook, Chris Shepard, and Sue Worrall, OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc, Dublin, Ohio, 2013. http://oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2013/2013-01.pdf. Accessed 13.10.2014.

Annexe B
Next steps from the Hidden Collections report[121]

Ultimately the work contained in this report originated with the community and to a very large degree solutions to the issues raised will need to come from the community. This is especially true given the impact of the post–2008 financial situation and the reorganisation of some of the major bodies with oversight of these areas in the UK, for example, the MLA and Jisc. It is likely that the community itself will be expected to be more active in resolving the question of how national services are framed, shaped, deployed and maintained. In that context, the following are not endorsements by RLUK or The London Library, but a suggestion of what could be done to improve our collective understanding and realise the value of the hidden collections across the UK that have been described and analysed by this report.

1. Create a national register of hidden collections. This would be open to all collection holders in the UK as a place to self-describe and update information on their uncatalogued or inadequately catalogued material; this would obviate the need to conduct large-scale surveys of such material that, relying on external impetus or funding, are de facto infrequent and variable in their criteria and aims, making comparisons and therefore synchronous analysis difficult. The register could have inter alia the following functions:
   • Describe the extent of uncatalogued material
   • Describe the extent of uncatalogued material in broad subject categories
   • Depict a sense of institutional priorities for cataloging and digitisation, for example
   • Show the extent of catalogues presently not available digitally
   • Show the extent of catalogues presently not available on the internet
   • Demonstrate the impact of retro-cataloguing/retro-conversion funding
   Indicate the maturity and readiness of the community to engage in collaborative cross media/cross-sectoral digital initiatives.

2. In the context of the jointly-led Jisc/RLUK Discovery programme, that collection holders adopt a community licence for any bibliographic records created through retro-cataloguing or retro-conversion programmes, so as to populate the incipient Discovery aggregation with freely-reusable metadata, and lobby the Jisc to consider funding the creation of such metadata.

3. In the spirit of the views expressed by such as the British Academy, lobby with European partners for the funding of retro-cataloguing and retro-conversion of material in the context of the ongoing legislative decisions regarding the Common Strategic Framework, as the EU moves towards fully ratifying Horizon 2020 (FP8).

4. To explore with Jisc and Mimas how Copac can be made more easily integrated into cataloguing workflows, such as through a separate, freely-available cataloguing module targeted at smaller-scale collection holders, to help accelerate, and reduce the barriers to, the creation of online records.

5. To scope the parameters for a study on the research impact of retro-cataloguing and retro-conversion projects and initiatives, and cost-benefit analyses of not making such hidden collections more readily accessible to researchers.

6. To advocate, where appropriate minimal levels of cataloguing, the greater use of volunteers and crowd-sourcing in describing hitherto hidden collections.

7. Raise awareness amongst funders, national agencies and the general public both that vast 'hidden collections' remain after the large-scale efforts of the 1990s and that they are not just about legacy but represent an ongoing challenge regarding new knowledge and new acquisitions, affecting access to research and the realisation of public benefit.

8. Reconceptualise and promote the vision of the 'National Research Collection', comprising ideally collection holders from all sectors under which activity around hidden collections, collaborative collection management, and any future work by UKRR on monographs could be discussed and pursued cohesively.

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121. Hidden Collections: Report of the findings of the RLUK Retrospective Cataloguing Survey in association with The London Library. Contributors, Mike Mertens, Dunia García-Ontiveros, Alison Cullingford, Lisa Jeskins, RLUK, London, 2012. www.rluk.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/RLUK-Hidden-Collections.pdf. Accessed 13.10.2014.

Annexe C
Suggested action from the report of the Preservation Learning Programme[122]

Push for formal written policies to be formulated and adopted in all RLUK libraries, covering at least all physical materials.

Encourage a sense of pervasiveness in terms of preservation training for all staff who will come into physical contact with materials to increase practical knowledge of the first steps which can be taken to address common forms of damage.

Continue to develop the ability to interrogate and utilise online aggregations of metadata, as in the Copac Collections Management Tools, to provide the ever more precise ability to shape collections with confidence, taking into account both local and national needs.

Work more assiduously to 'de-silo' not only content but also staffing structures that impinge on the wide range of niche activities that are present in the ecology of preservation (see the enclosed mind map) – many during training noted that they worked in relative isolation from parts of their institutions that still had a direct overall impact on collection care.

Radically reconsider the relationship between digitised surrogate and original book, assessing what combination of these can best meet the needs of the research community and what that implies for our collections as a whole.

Decide for which categories of material, the physical originals must without question be preserved as part of the National Research Collection with access for scholars as required.

Ensure that resource discovery tools are capable of guiding users to the material they need, whether digital or physical.

Establish mechanisms which will allow individual libraries to take responsibility for long-term retention and preservation of specific titles and signal this to the wider community.

Devise and implement permanent structures which will coordinate activity around the National Research Collection and provide the guarantees which must underpin any collaborative activity on this scale.

122. In safe hands? The challenges for RLUK to make preservation a collaborative work, Emly, M. and Mertens, M., 2012. BLPAC and RLUK. http://copac.ac.uk/innovations/collections-management/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/In-Safe-Hands-the-challenges-for-RLUK-to-make-preservation-a-collaborative-work.pdf. Accessed 13.10.2014

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