

**Copac Collection Management Tools
Introductory Event**

The RLUK Backdrop

Manchester/London 03/10 July, 2013

Overview

- A wee bit of history: the place of (Special) Collections in RLUK
- Changing landscapes and the RLUK work on UDCs
- The National Monograph Strategy

(Special) Collections and RLUK

- Importance of special and research-level collections in shaping RLUK's beginnings
- “Bigger is better” – each library taken in isolation
- Proposals for the UK national Union catalogue (2001-2002) included many major collections not then in ambit of Copac
- RLUK now larger and includes many of those proposed collections
- Through the work RLUK has done on unique and distinctive collections over the past 3 years, it has been recognised that very many such collections still exist beyond RLUK, and are relatively uncatalogued.

The Backdrop to Change

- Not just about Google, i.e., what Google can replace
- Equalising effect of digital resources
- Demands on space have also radically altered
- Need to stand out as an institution
- 20th- century print collections - potential danger but also unrealised value
- This long tail risks being filtered out – so indeed it is just about Google, for Google cannot replace our content!
- Funding environment is changing – particular impact on non-HE collections & on Arts & Humanities
- Increasing institutional scrutiny of the ROI in Special Collections, where much use is by external scholars

New Practices

- Three-year programme between RLUK and the British Library Preservation Advisory Centre - closer marriage of collection care and collection management
- Work at University of Leeds on a new approach to its collections, based on the concept of collection strengths
 - Leeds wanted to understand what a more integrated collection management regime looked like – across traditional special collections department and main library stock
 - Building on existing strengths in the collections
 - Implicitly – How did Leeds' own collections compare with others?
- At same time working within White Rose Consortium on approaches to collaborative collection management
- Requires availability of new CCM tools...

CCM – Copac (Collaborative) Collection Management

- Discovery initiative (Jisc / RLUK) to improve and extend resource discovery mechanisms and approaches for researchers and students
- Exploit benefits of Copac – which had been used by librarians for many years but in a way that was manual and piecemeal
- The CCM tools offer evidence-based answer to the question: “How do my collections fit into the national picture?”
 - Avoid disposal of a “last copy”
 - Framework to actively conserve or digitise, and mark as such to community
 - Supports a coordinated approach
 - But decisions remain with the local institution
- Permit closer and more informed decision-making around what of your collections should be prioritised for retention, conservation, and/or digitisation

RLUK “Unique and Distinctive Collections” Strategic Strand 2011-2014

- Looking at maximising the potential of the “unique and distinctive print and heritage collections” held by RLUK members
- Surveys received responses from a total of 114 separate non-RLUK institutions - 98 were non-HE
- An increasing awareness of RLUK as a body potentially capable of helping a much broader though specific community
- A deeper, practical knowledge of where the Long Tail of unique and distinctive collections exists
- Calls on RLUK to offer assistance on essential collection care and management in even smaller institutions

UDC – Strategic Consequences

- Evident that if we really wanted meaningfully to map the total UK research collection, these institutions would have to be included in the Copac Collection Management tools, and hence Copac itself
- A strategic planning meeting in December 2012 formulated the notion that RLUK could and should in future stand ‘For research libraries, wherever they are’. The Idea was received by the membership in March 2013. Expected to become part of the formal 2014-2017 strategic plan
- RLUK contributing to the Jisc the bid ‘The National Monograph Collection’ as part of the post-Discovery ‘Co-Design’ process

National Monograph Collection

- Investigating shared service approach to maintaining access to print and supporting the national needs of researchers
- Recognises need for UK-wide strategic framework
- Benefits could include:
 - Saving space
 - Addressing de-duplication, cataloguing and preservation
 - Guaranteeing the collection for the nation
 - Exploring new shared solutions
 - More effective document supply
- The work with Jisc should report with an overview of the problem and proposed solutions in December 2013.

Summary #1 - Progression

- RLUK has moved:
- From seeing collections assessed in relative isolation to building tools that allow comparative evidence to be shared and put to work
- From viewing (its special) collections as largely static ones of early-printed books and monographs published before around 1850 to a more dynamic and varied set of criteria that generates value from collections, wherever held in the library
- To a more concrete understanding that a 'National Monograph Collection' has to comprise effectively many collections beyond its own borders to be a meaningful goal

Summary #2 - Remaining challenges

- The disciplines that are most likely to use such collections are hardest hit by funding changes
- Many smaller collections lack resources in terms of staff and infrastructure
- Possible sale of some collections
- The National Monograph Collection may be substantively eroded before we have been able to address the Strategy - it's no longer an academic debate!

Conclusion?

“Not just in time, nor just in case, but dynamic collections in use, over time.”

Contact & Thanks

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Discussion

In the context of the Leeds Case Study:

- Have you discussed wider issues like these at your own institution as part of previous stock withdrawal exercises? Or are they quite new to you?
- Does your institution have any *existing* policies about assessing the rarity of books prior to withdrawal?
- Do you have any thoughts about how we might come to a consensus in deciding what the answers to the questions/issues are?

The slides which follow expand on those in the main presentation

The Inheritance of (Special) Collections for RLUK #1

- Institutionally owned special and research-level collections a majority defining factor in shaping RLUK's beginnings
- Membership criteria heavily based on the strength and depth of an institution's own collections
- Emphasis on any institution's collections having a high, abstract status, evaluated *separately* from others' holdings, perhaps reinforced a sense of members standing alone.
- There have been attempts to include non-HE 'associate members' but these also have relied on a "singularity" principle based on a lone collections assessment

The Inheritance of (Special) Collections for RLUK #2

- Proposals for the UK national Union catalogue (UKNUC, 2001-2002) posited including many major collections that were not then in the ambit of Copac
- However, since that time, the enlargement of RLUK membership has brought the vast majority of those proposed collections in the national aggregation, e.g. The Wellcome Library
- Through the work RLUK has done on unique and distinctive collections over the past 3 years, it has been recognised that very many of such collections exist beyond RLUK, and are relatively uncatalogued.

Seismic shifts #1

- Not just about Google, i.e., what Google can replace
- Our libraries now provide a vast array of digital resources under licence only, none of which is unique to them
- Demands on space have also radically altered - UKRR
- The drive to compete for students also means institutions must stand out: need to offer more than generic experiences around electronic access and student lounges.
- Especial significance in terms of the potential danger to but also the unrealized value of 20th-century print collections
- It is not just about Google: this material also represents the long tail of unique material that the Internet was supposed to deliver to users - we must break the filter bubble with the richness of our own content, and our own means of discovery & metadata interrogation

Seismic shifts #2

- Particularly non-HE collections have been affected by the end of the umbrella organisation, the MLA – Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, in 2012 (announced in 2010)
- Government core teaching funding for Humanities cut, AHRC graduate funds also reduced
- Increasing institutional scrutiny of the ROI in Special Collections departments, where traditionally use has come from external scholars
- Cataloguing and digitisation increasingly adjuncts to research projects, rather than being centrally funded and overseen; now arguably less coordination or understanding of a national research collection

New Practices

- Three-year programme between RLUK and the British Library Preservation Advisory Centre - closer marriage of collection care and collection management. Not item-by-item conservation
- Work that the University of Leeds had been developing in parallel on changing its evaluation strategy: a new collections policy based on collection strengths.
- Leeds wanted to understand what a more integrated collection management regime looked like – across traditional special collections departments and main library stock
- Implicitly – How did Leeds' own collections compare with others?
- The availability of new collaborative collection management tools...

CCM – Copac Collection Management #1

- Emerged from the Discovery initiative with Jisc to improve and extend resource discovery mechanisms and approaches for researchers and students
- RLUK main formal partner in Discovery– we specifically wanted to see how the UK metadata aggregation in the UK could also work harder for research support
- Inversely inspired by UKRR – the top-sliced funded project, ongoing, to effect a “collaborative and coordinated approach between Higher Education Libraries and the British Library to manage the long-term sustainability of retaining low-use print journals.”
- Librarians have been using Copac for many years but in a way that was manual and piecemeal

CCM – Copac Collection Management #2

- The CCM tools allow libraries to understand the uniqueness of their collections much more precisely as a whole: two main elements: Assessing individual items and Assessing collections strand.
- Individual Items strand:
- Quickly see how many copies of any item are reported within Copac
- Support for automated procedures and batch processing interfacing to the local LMS
- Avoid disposal of a “last copy”
- Framework to actively conserve or digitise, and mark as such to community
- Decisions are still with local institution
- Supports a coordinated approach

CCM – Copac Collection Management #3

- Assessing collections strand:
- Takes a collection of titles and reports on how many are held by each library in Copac
- Also reports how many are unique to your library, held by you and one other library, two other libraries, etc.
- Can be based on any subset of your holdings, or any search within Copac (e.g. by author or subject)
- Allows a library to assess the strength of its holdings in a given subject or collection
- Allows an evidence-based answer to the question: “How do my collections fit into the national picture?”
- Again, permits closer and more informed decision making around what of your collections should be prioritised for retention, conservation, and/or digitisation

Unique and Distinctive Collections Strategic Strand 2011-2014 - Policy

“RLUK libraries collectively hold a very wide range of unique and distinctive print and heritage collections, and individual RLUK libraries have developed an array of innovative practice in promoting their value as a research resource. This strand of work will develop opportunities for maximising the potential of these collections in all formats held by RLUK members. This will include activity on public engagement, fundraising, promotion, resource discovery and delivery, and digitisation, and will also encompass value, impact and staff skills. A particular strand of work will focus on digital humanities which will explore innovative research methods, issues of access, search and re-use.”

Unique and Distinctive Collections Strategic Strand 2011-2014 - Outputs

- The appointment of a part-time RLUK UDC Officer, Alison Cullingford, of the University of Bradford
- The publication of two substantial reports: 'Hidden Collections' (www.rluk.ac.uk/content/rluk-hidden-collections-report), in conjunction with The London Library, and the 'Survey of Special Collections in the UK and Ireland' (www.oclc.org/research/activities/specialcollections-survey.html) with OCLC Research.
- Fieldwork conducted by Alison Cullingford that will go towards creating an extensible web-based manual of best practice and case studies in terms of the promotion, outreach, fundraising and staff reskilling around special collections as traditionally understood

Unique and Distinctive Collections Strategic Strand 2011-2014 - Outcomes

- A very positive response to our survey work underpinning both reports from other collection holders
- In total there were 114 separate non-RLUK institutions that responded to either survey, of which 98 were non-HE
- An increasing awareness of RLUK as a body potentially capable of helping a much broader though specific community
- A deeper, practical knowledge of where the Long Tail of unique and distinctive collections exists
- Calls on RLUK to offer assistance on essential collection care and management in even smaller institutions

Unique and Distinctive Collections Strategic Strand 2011-2014 - Consequences

- Evident that if we really wanted meaningfully to map the total UK research collection, these institutions would have to be included in the Copac Collection Management tools, and hence Copac itself
- A strategic planning meeting in December 2012 formulated the notion that RLUK could and should in future stand 'For research libraries, wherever they are'. The Idea was received by the membership in March 2013. Expected to become part of the formal 2014-2017 strategic plan
- Our contributing to the Jisc the bid 'The National Monograph Collection' as part of the post-Discovery 'Co-Design' process

National Monograph Collection #1

“Monograph collections have grown up based on local needs with no real national strategic focus. As print collections age the community needs to make decisions on what should be preserved, what digitised (if not already) and what deaccessioned. A national approach to this, exploiting technological solutions would encourage a shared service approach to maintaining access to print and to support the national needs of researchers. The value of this is recognised, and it must be part of a UK-wide strategic framework. Aspects of the framework would include preservation strategies, priorities for digitisation (and an understanding of digital surrogates), discoverability issues and the role of document delivery services now and in the future”

National Monograph Collection #2

A shared national strategy for monographs is recognised as being a desirable approach for libraries. This approach could deliver the following benefits:

- Saving space
- Addressing de-duplication and cataloguing
- Guaranteeing the collection for the nation
- Exploring new shared solutions
- More effective document supply

The work with Jisc should report with an overview of the problem with proposed solutions in December, 2013.

National Monograph Collection #3

- Special relationships - the academy, the locality, and researchers
- The National Archives in the UK has shown significant leadership in actively working on creating and cementing the relationship between the academy and the rest of the archival world
- RLUK would want to encourage the same kind of relationship between bibliographic collections, wherever they are, and researchers
- There is a tension between smaller collections needing and wanting greater profile and footfall to maintain collection integrity, and their ability to provide researcher facilities and ease of access

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Summary #2 - Remaining challenges

- The disciplines that are most likely to use such collections within and beyond our membership have been hit hardest by changes to government HE funding regimes
- Many smaller collections lack resources in terms of staff and infrastructure - much is not even catalogued and systems are not 'standard' compared to HE institutions
- Collections have always been sold and 'under threat' but austerity in the UK has meant many personal academic archives are not finding a home and monograph collections are being traded out of financial duress
- The National Monograph Collection may be substantively eroded before we have been able to address the Strategy - it's no longer an academic debate!

Conclusion?

“Not just in time, nor just in case, but dynamic collections in use, over time.”