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Cataloguing and retroconversion: what do we need to know as a community ?

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Origins of this paper

- JISC/RLUK Resource Discovery Taskforce
- London Library “Retrospective Cataloguing, or, The ‘forgotten projects’ ” survey supported by RLUK/MIMAS
- A visceral response to the survey



The visceral response

- seemed oddly targeted
- questions likely to evoke information that did not offer comparable evidence for the archives sector
- an emphasis on retroconversion begged the question about the extent of uncatalogued material
- insufficient evidence of awareness of aggregators in use in the sector: AIM25, A2A, HUB, Archive Wales, SCAN
- didn't address the growth of digital archives
- didn't address digital access to surrogates sufficiently.



Why did RULK/JISC want the information ?

resource discovery

- 1997: Making the most of our libraries' suggested 50 million records awaited retroconversion.
- 1999-2002: £30 million allocated to RSLP, 14 million items covered.
- 2007: RIN study (library/researcher consultation) suggested 50% of research collections still hidden.



Opening your mouth and

- Lesley Richmond, I and doubtless others made our views felt
- New survey document aimed at HE encouraged by RLUK
- Discussed at UKAD Steering Committee as potentially applicable and useful more widely



Opening the Treasury

- scope ?
- scale of work ?
- should we/can we do it now ?



Timely ? (1)

- Aggregators have come of age and considering next steps.
- Significant advances in how we can and offer access to data
- Renewed appetite for information on which to build strategy for discovery and data management.



Timely ? (2)

- Renewed driver in research communities to open up their data (as well as publications) for research driven by Open Access agenda.
- Library communities seeking a role.
- Wider shared services agenda.
- Impact of the recession.



How much of our archives are catalogued

? fond/collections

- series
- piece

Measured by linear metres or number of boxes.



How well are holdings catalogued/recorded ?

• accession record

- box list
- fonds – extended ISAD (G) e.g Archives Hub/AIM25
- detailed list

Extents ?



How standards based ? Use of what for what ?

- NCA Name Authority Rules
- UKAT
- Library of Congress subject headings
- ISAAR (CPF)
- EAC
- MARC AMC
- ?

Extents ?



Format of the catalogues ?

- hard copy
- word processed/spreadsheets only
- PDFs only
- CALM/ADLIB/other proprietary
- custom design software
- embedded in library/museum catalogues

Extents ?



Extent of record enhancement

- indexed/thesaurus support for fonds description
- indexing of detail catalogues

Addition of community generated content to catalogue entry?



Online accessibility of catalogues (1)

- within the institution only
- exposed by institution through Google
- available via national/regional portals (e.g SCAN, Archives Wales, AIM25, Hub, A2A)

Extents?



On line accessibility of catalogues (2)

- crosswalk software with library/museums within institutions
- more broadly (PRIMO, Worldcat Local, etc)
- use of semantic web techniques
- Linked data



Enrichment of online access (1)

- catalogue links to individual surrogates
- full digital databases themed or whole collections
- contribution of digital surrogates to externally hosted sites
- online exhibitions/focused articles
- content provision to Virtual Learning Environments



Enrichment of online access (2)

- provision of image galleries
- offer flickr
- offer RSS feeds/Twitter etc



Next possible steps ?

- Creation of online questionnaires
- Creation of backend tool to hold and crunch data(? 3 year trial)
- RLUK latest funding approved – looking for partnerships
- Scope for taking a two tier approach to reduce work
 - data from aggregators as a first cut
 - data from TNA work with local government

Do we have the appetite ?