



The National Council on Archives

Full Disclosure

Releasing the value of library and archive collections

A report to the Pathfinding Group of the British Library, Library and Information Commission and the Library and Information Co-operation Council by UKOLN and the National Council on Archives on a national strategy for the retrospective conversion of library and archive catalogues.

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 A National Strategy

Incomplete information, missing facts and unsatisfied users – these are an everyday occurrence because of the lack of comprehensive electronic catalogues and finding aids across the UK. Much of our national intellectual and cultural wealth is hidden from sight. Once brought into the light by retrospective catalogue conversion, the use of previously hidden material rises substantially, benefiting users and maximising the return on investment by the holding institutions.

This situation is the motivation for a study commissioned and funded by the British Library (BL), the Library and Information Commission (LIC) and the Library and Information Co-operation Council (LINC). This document reports the findings of the study carried out by UKOLN: the UK Office for Library and Information Networking and the National Council on Archives.

It recommends the setting up of a coordinating focus and a phased programme of activities which will work towards full disclosure of library, archive and museum resources. While the museum domain was not in the study remit, it is recommended that it should be included in a national strategy.

1.2 The Need for a National Strategy

There is unanimous agreement that a national strategy of retrospective catalogue conversion would bring immense benefits for a wide range of users in the UK. It is recognised that there are some risks to a national programme but general agreement that the benefits outweigh the risks.

A national strategy would enable maximum utilisation of resources for academic and personal research at all levels for both the library and archive domains. It would assist resource discovery and widen access to research literature. It is an essential pre-requisite for cross-searching projects that would assist national resource discovery.

It would assist in various government initiatives (e.g. Lifelong Learning, National Grid for Learning) that will only work effectively if the content of collections is recorded. Since, on the whole, the majority of users want the information they seek regardless of the format of the material or the type of holding institution, the strategy should be extended to include work in the museums domain.

Increased knowledge of collections leading to additional use maximises the return from investment in stock and staff, making them more cost effective. Extending the knowledge of collections can have an economic benefit in research, business and tourism. It will also improve opportunities for personal development and fulfilment.

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For libraries, resource sharing is optimised through knowledge of additional copies reducing pressure on existing known copies and facilitating inter-library loans by identifying items within regions and nationally thus reducing the need to go further afield for items, in itself a cost saving. A well managed national programme would share the load of creating records by providing a pool of records that could be re-used, again making the process more cost effective. This could and, it is hoped, would increase cross-sectoral cooperation. Resource sharing in this sense applies only to a limited extent in archives as much more of the material consists of unique copies and inter lending is not a service provision.

Currently, retrospective catalogue conversion effort is fragmented. A national programme is seen as a means of avoiding re-inventing the wheel in terms of project management and discovering what might be appropriate methods and resources to use. It could also foster collaborative initiatives between institutions, including cross-sectoral and cross-domain partnerships.

Because retrospective conversion effort is fragmented and funded specifically, the amount to be done will only be reduced slowly in the present climate of individual effort. The advantage of a national programme would be to maximise results from input and minimise duplication of effort.

Working on national priorities to cover the most urgent areas will bring benefits to the institutions and the users. It is hoped that establishing a national programme and demonstrating that work is in progress will encourage funders to invest in this area.

A national programme would bring national benefits in the area of standards for both content (the amount and type of data held) and format (i.e. data storage and retrieval). It will help in both the archives domain where use and acceptance of standards is at a relatively early stage and in the libraries domain, where despite many years of standard availability and use, there remain pockets of non-standard practice. Until acceptable content is provided, remote access will not function in an effective way.

1.3 Key Issues

Our findings underline the need for a national programme. The following issues were seen to be relevant in its establishment.

1.3.1 Full Disclosure of the National Intellectual Record

1. The national intellectual record resides in many libraries and archives, physical and digital. Increasingly, it will be possible to search across these in various combinations. But no matter how good the automated search methods, if catalogue data does not exist, potentially valuable materials will be invisible and lost to use.
2. Many of these collections are unique, and are a key part of our cultural, scientific, industrial and civic heritage. They have enormous, demonstrable potential to act as resources to support life long learning, adding depth and richness of example to the core narrative of learning resources.
3. If such collections remain uncatalogued, use will remain low. For libraries there is the additional danger that this will lead to short term pressures to discard. Digitisation alone is not the answer as not everything will be digitised, and catalogues will still be needed to access both the digitised and the non-digitised. Materials therefore need to be adequately recorded and described – the disclosure of the resource.
4. Full disclosure depends on conversion of existing non-machine-readable catalogues and finding aids, and original cataloguing. The manual forms represent substantial additional resources to what is already accessible electronically.
5. Discovery is the process by which a user finds the material and/or information he/she is seeking. Disclosure and discovery are intimately related and discovery relies on effective disclosure. The target of this initiative is disclosure, but it is important that any coordinating focus works closely with partners to ensure that appropriate discovery and access frameworks (for initiatives such as *Building the New Library* and *Archives On-Line* and *Share the Vision*) are put in place.

Canal records (deposited by British Waterways) are held in 15 different repositories throughout the UK, in museums as well as record offices.

In a major university research library, users can find themselves consulting up to 8 files in the 5 manual forms of catalogue plus 3 online files.

1.3.2 Addressing the Challenge

6. The problem is considerable. It is generally acknowledged that the estimates for the volume of library records and archival finding aids which need to be converted significantly underestimate the scale of this task. Previous estimates (which did not include the national libraries' own requirements, nor the need for original cataloguing) indicate that substantial financial investment is required to address this.
7. Historically, much work on this has been funded by institutions. While this will continue, budgetary restrictions and institutional priorities mean that it will take many decades to address the problem by this route alone. It is unlikely that a single programme can meet the costs of this challenge. What is needed is a focus which levers existing institutional and programme funding by achieving scale economies through shared effort, by securing strategic additional funding, and by providing a coordination and strategic framework.

Records not yet in machine-readable form:

HE libraries

28m records (c.6m titles)

Public libraries

12+m records (c.6.5m titles)

Other libraries

9+m records

The National Council on Archives estimates suggest that around 2 million pages of finding aids need conversion.

8. There is universal agreement that a strategic, coordinated approach is necessary to address this challenge. While there is enthusiastic support for existing initiatives, there is unequivocal demand for a national programme which overcomes the existing fragmentation of policy and funding. The preference is for a top down initiative. In the absence of this, there is support for a bottom up approach (which will still require a top-level overview) to coordination to demonstrate to government how seriously the issue is taken.
9. Such an initiative needs to proceed on the basis of prioritised need, which will vary between domains and sectors and may well change over the lifetime of the programme. Some work, which should be undertaken in consultation with existing funding initiatives, will be required to define such prioritised needs. Initiatives within the strategic framework are likely to be sector and/or domain specific.
10. As new patterns of use and expectation develop in a network environment, we need to profile requirements to inform prioritisation. What services and categories of resource best suit the interests of active users, learners and researchers? For libraries, some work can be done in areas such as the analysis of inter-library loan requests and user enquiries and should build on any existing work on this topic. Archives services operate in a more controlled environment and generally have a good understanding of the usage of their collections, although the needs of a new generation of remote users may differ from those of existing users.
11. Throughout its lifetime a national programme will require sufficient library and archive practitioners with relevant training and skills for this area. In recent years, library and information studies programmes have reduced the cataloguing element such that recruiting staff for the initiative may at times prove difficult. To address this there is a need for a review of the available resource in skilled personnel and how this can be increased in the short term.
12. There are potential risks in undertaking a national programme but the recommendations take these into account. The proposals are for a high-level strategic focus of minimal size to avoid too much funding being spent on bureaucratic procedures. The problem is large so the national programme will operate in phases for effective management. The phased structure with regular reviews also avoids over optimism on the funding, timescales and effort required.
13. It is important that existing projects are not prejudiced by the development of an umbrella strategy. By using the first phase to start integrating the existing work, time and funding opportunities will not be lost. While the top layers of the programme require an integrated approach, there will be a need for library and archive projects to go forward in parallel respecting the individual needs of the domains. Working on national priorities to cover the most urgent areas will bring benefits to the institutions and the users. It is hoped that establishing a national programme and demonstrating that work is in progress will encourage funders to invest in this area.

1.3.3 Maximising the Investment

14. The investment in a national programme is justified by the ‘better value for money spent’ that coordination gives and the ultimate benefits to the nation when it is completed. Expenditure and effort can be reduced by user need prioritisation of where efforts should be targeted, re-use of records where possible, and support for standards for project management as well as for data format and content. Substantial resources have been invested in the staff effort to create and maintain the manual forms and it makes economic sense to maximise the investment by conversion to electronic form.
15. Learning and cultural activity is best supported by services that assist users to work with the full range of past and present materials that form the intellectual record. Full disclosure will also reveal more of the character of localities, supporting business and social life. The case for the national programme, based on its relevance to national information, learning and cultural initiatives, needs to be made strongly to government.
16. It is important that a coordinating focus is alert to the significant cultural, learning and informational initiatives underway, and effectively promotes the value of library and archive resources in these contexts. The first step to releasing the value of these resources is their adequate description so that their learning opportunity can be recognised.
17. Increased knowledge of collections leading to additional use maximises the return from investment in stock and staff, making them more cost effective. Extending the knowledge of collections can have an economic benefit in research, business and tourism. However, the increasing knowledge of collections and the resulting additional use has implications for institutions in terms of access restrictions on some materials, conservation, preservation and security issues, and the ability of current staffing levels to cope with increased demand. It is not possible to specify what additional pressure may be caused, but the benefits of resource sharing would mitigate the pressure.
18. Where part or all of specific conversions are contracted out to commercial agencies, there are benefits to both vendors and clients where a single set of specifications can be agreed for several clients; additional, institution-specific requirements can be negotiated individually as ‘add-on’ requirements.
19. It is recognised that such vendors have commercial interests and this will affect how they see a national programme of retrospective conversions and subsequent record sharing (either free or by sale). For many projects, the records are automatically shared with some form of union database, sometimes maintained by the vendors. However, for some smaller institutions, especially where internet access is not an option initially, it might be appropriate to set up some union files. These might be topic specific or perhaps date specific. In this scenario there might be need for negotiation with vendors who have undertaken the conversion work.

At Cambridge University Library, the retrospective conversion of records for 2 microform collections is only 40% complete but usage of the collections has doubled. Usage of German Baroque material has gone up 6-fold since record conversion.

Use of the searchable indexes for the National Register of Archives has increased greatly. Telnet connections rose from 450 users per month in the first 6 months (1995) to a peak of 2,857 in November 1998, but usage dropped when the web service became available. The web service started with 73,700 pages delivered in June 1998, rising to 108,000 pages delivered in April 1999.

1.3.4 Support for Resource Disclosure, Discovery and Access

Lambeth Palace Library is halfway through an appeal-funded conversion of its catalogue of printed books. However, it has now accepted the early collections from Sion College, but has no funding for computerising the catalogues for these items.

20. Libraries can benefit from the use of existing reservoirs of records to reduce duplication of creation effort. It would be valuable to develop some guidelines and standard agreements which facilitate the use of such resources.
21. During the consultations and workshops, support has emerged for the creation of collection-level descriptions to support navigation and selection of relevant collections, as well as to inform prioritisation for record creation. Such descriptions should be collected into a register which would in itself be a valuable national resource, especially when cross-domain needs are considered.
22. Libraries, archives and museums have developed professional practices and values appropriate to the needs of their collections and users. There will be a continuing need for separately developed practices, but it is important to begin to identify areas of real convergence where it is useful to have agreement. This is especially the case as these institutions stand side by side on the network and deliver their content into learning and information environments.
23. Standards for both content (the amount and type of data held) and format (i.e. data storage and retrieval) are seen as essential to a national programme. This will help in both the archives domain where use and acceptance of standards is at a relatively early stage and in the libraries domain where, despite many years of standard availability and use, there remain pockets of non-standard practice. Until acceptable content is provided, remote access will not function in an effective way.
24. There is concern about the quality of records that would be used as source material in conversions, since many records will have been created at different periods to different criteria. There is also concern that a central standard imposed for all data could be higher than required or appropriate for specific institutions and/or their systems. Some institutions may only be able to offer records to the programme at less than an agreed ideal level, and there may need to be pragmatic acceptance of this. Programmes such as EngSTC may create a fuller record which a library may choose to re-use in place of its own.
25. Although the focus of this study is on retrospective catalogue conversion, and the full disclosure of resources, it is clear that disclosure is one aspect of a full service and that developments in this area have potential ramifications elsewhere. It is important that an effective apparatus for discovery is in place; in addition to the search methods and interoperability issues, there are accessibility issues for users of languages other than English and the needs of those with disabilities (e.g. the visually impaired). More effective disclosure will lead to greater demands on access, and consequently on preservation and other issues. Such areas have not been dealt with in detail, but any programme needs to be aware of these as collateral issues.

1.4 A National Coordinating Focus

There was general agreement that a national coordinating focus should be put in place. It was felt that this focus should be a strategic, cross-domain body that can have synergy with other bodies and initiatives. In order to function effectively, it needs a remit and the authority to carry out that remit. There was most support for placing the body within the new Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLAC), either as part of it or constituted by it. (There was some limited support for a totally new body or existing sectoral bodies.)

This is a long-term view since MLAC will not come into being until April 2000, its own remit is still being considered and it will focus on England. There is a requirement in the short term to launch the initiative, undertake initial elements of the programme and to get to the point where the above recommendation can be carried out. The Pathfinding Group will need to develop contingency plans if MLAC support is not forthcoming.

Since it will be another year before MLAC is operational, it is proposed that the Pathfinding Group continue to function and operate as a shadow focus, taking on the initial elements of the strategy. This will also ensure continuity between the current situation and the point when a new coordinating focus can take on the programme. It is suggested that given the present situation the British Library continue to coordinate the Pathfinding Group.

To undertake the shadow role the group will need, as a priority, to review its membership. It should consider extending representation via umbrella groups in certain areas: national and regional viewpoints, increasing archival representation and inclusion of museum representation, and professional general and special interest groups. Increasing the size of the group too much will make it ineffective, and consideration should be given to using working groups and focused topic meetings for specific issues where relevant interested parties can take part.

In its review, the Pathfinding Group will need to examine its role as a shadow focus and the appropriate structure for carrying this out. The new role and structure should be reflected in a new name for the group.

Also in the review, the group will need to consider how it can best respond to the activities recommended for Phase 1 of the national programme. It will need to put in such administrative support for the group as may be required to make it effective. Such support might include a web site and a contact point (perhaps a named individual) for the initiative to handle written, telephone and email enquiries. While a base at MLAC is seen as the best approach, the reconstituted Pathfinding Group may need to operate as the coordinating focus for a period after MLAC comes into being, even if the remit for a base at MLAC is accepted. Again, if MLAC support does not materialise, the Pathfinding Group will need to continue in this role.

In the interim, it is essential to make a start on the national programme immediately, even though no specific funding has been secured for this as yet. The Pathfinding Group, as a shadow focus, will need to find, from amongst its membership or by bidding for funding, sufficient funding to achieve the targets the study team has identified for Phase 1 of the national programme. There will be a need to prioritise which activities from Phase 1 can be done with the funding it is able to find.

The eventual coordinating focus should be lean, ensuring that the vast majority of funding goes into the programme, taking on some tasks and contracting out others.

The coordinating focus should carry out, either directly or by commissioning other organisations and individuals, the following types of activity within the phased programme.

- Put together a business plan for the programme.
- Decide on which tasks it will undertake and which will be sub-contracted.
- Start on its own tasks and arrange for sub-contracting other work.
- Promote the benefits (increased user service, maximising investment in stock and staff, and the economic value to areas such as research, business and tourism) to government and the public in general.
- Work on putting future funding in place.
- Make a national assessment of the priorities for both libraries and archives.
- Influence the current funding streams by showing where bids fit into a national programme.
- Establish a method of dissemination of information on the programme to the domains.
- Utilise work done in related studies in taking forward some tasks.
- At the top levels of the programme, keep the strategy inclusive of libraries, archives and museums. At varying lower levels, there will be a need to develop strands in parallel for the three domains.
- Consider the regional dimension and build this into the initiative. Establish connections with appropriate agencies in the regions.
- Build dialogue between the retrospective conversion initiative and other initiatives concerned with the delivery of service, e.g. networks, clumps and search technologies.
- Create a retrospective conversion framework – options here are:
 - model projects
 - interface with suppliers, software producers and keyboarding agencies
 - standards for format, cataloguing and authority control.

1.5 A National Programme

A period of 10 years is required for this initiative, which is expected to deal with around 80% of the existing catalogue records not presently in machine-readable form.

The programme requires a combination of a top down approach that draws everything into a cohesive plan, supported by a bottom up approach to implementation that works from the basis of existing projects, funding and support and towards establishing governmental support and funding to complete the task.

Within the overall timescale the initiative should be broken down into phases of between 1 and 3 years, depending on the tasks involved and the funding available. The duration of these phases is related to the 'future horizons' of government and the major funding agencies.

The library of a professional society is converting its card catalogue to an automated system by employing a student for 4 hours per week. Since October 1996 (with a gap of 6 months) some 4,000 records have been converted out of a total of 30,000 to 35,000 records.

Full details of the targets for the programme can be found at 6.3.3

Phase 1

The recommended period for this phase is 1 year.

It is important that this initiative is implemented as soon as possible. Since the recommended proposal to establish a coordinating focus within MLAC cannot be effected until April 2000 at the earliest, and it cannot be assumed that MLAC will take it on, there is a need for an interim body to oversee the initiative. It is proposed that the Pathfinding Group, under the coordination of the British Library, take on this role initially. If there is acceptance for the focus to be based at MLAC, it is likely that the interim group would need to operate for some time after April 2000, including work on an effective hand-over that ensures that any current impetus is not lost.

The group would need to review its own membership and consider the need for appointing additional members to reflect regional viewpoints, increasing archival representation and inclusion of museum representation, and professional general and special interest groups.

The group would coordinate the initiative, contract out tasks, and build on existing work where possible. The tasks identified for Phase 1 are ambitious and it is not likely that all of Phase 1 can be achieved in 1 year, given the committee format of the Pathfinding Group itself and the limited funding it may be able to attract initially. It will therefore need to prioritise the tasks it undertakes. It is likely that some groups within the library and archive domains may be able to help in kind by undertaking some tasks.

The sole, part-time librarian at 1 college library estimated that it would take around 20 years to carry out retrospective catalogue conversion by fitting it into the existing workload.

Tasks for Phase 1

In this phase the shadow focus will need to examine its role and how best it can forward the objectives of the strategy.

- *Assess priorities for record conversion*
- *Build a register of collections*
- *Identify and monitor projects completed and in progress*
- *Work with funding bodies – advise on priorities*
- *Promote the strategy to library and archive domains (especially at the level of top management), government and funding bodies*
- *Create awareness in the domains*
- *Develop and promote standards and best practice guidelines*
- *Provide support for staff and projects*
- *Carry out a skills audit*
- *Disseminate information about the initiative via network presence and alternative print routes*
- *Bid for funds to do work as required*
- *Evaluate progress in Phase 1*
- *Plan Phase 2.*

Phase 2

The recommended period for this phase is 2 years.

The Pathfinding Group starts planning the hand-over to the coordinating focus, if one has been established. If no coordinating focus is established, the group continues to coordinate the initiative and to consider further options for a coordinating focus.

The plan for Phase 2 would be set as part of Phase 1 and is likely to include the tasks listed below. Monitoring progress would include reviewing which of the tasks set for Phase 1 had been started and were still in progress, which had been completed, and which had still to be tackled.

Tasks for Phase 2

- *Monitor progress on programme*
- *Monitor progress on initiative*
- *Funding – continue to work with funding bodies and look for additional funding*
- *Evaluate Phase 2*
- *Plan Phase 3.*

2. Introduction

2.1 Libraries, Archives and Museums – a Shared Challenge

Libraries, archives and museums are entrusted with the national intellectual and cultural record. They are the collective memory of the nation, unparalleled repositories of knowledge, imagination and learning. This record is made up of books, documents, artefacts, maps, sounds and images, which are harvested from all aspects of personal, organisational and national life. The resources of memory organisations are used by the scholar, the child, the learner and the business person. They help us do our work, they support our aspirations, enrich our experiences, and open doors on imagination and creative learning. They support the business and commercial life of communities directly through their services, and indirectly as parts of tourism activity. At the same time, they are an enduring part of the public identities of our cities and towns, social assembly places whose use and civic presence acknowledge their social significance and the public value accorded to them. These great institutions link us to our ancestors, and secure our intellectual and cultural legacy to future generations.

Experience of libraries, archives and museums is woven into our private and civic lives, and users will continue to enjoy the physical experiences the use of their collections offers. However, we are now seeing the creation of a new global digital space based on the Internet and other technologies. Memory organisations are actively connecting their collections to these emerging knowledge networks, and this in turn places the emphasis very much on the challenges of serving users in a shared network space. They are developing new practices to ensure that their long-standing professional and social values are manifest in this new environment.

Such values make these institutions central to the interests of a learning society. They uphold:

- the provision of equitable access for all to learning opportunities and information. (Without such access, life-long learning is an activity of the few.)
- the organisation for use of the intellectual and cultural record in its historical continuity and current breadth. (This should respect the needs and contexts of the materials they handle and relate them to the wider fabric of knowledge, separate from consideration of their market value. Without such organisation, users will be overwhelmed by resources of unknown quality or origin.)
- the safeguarding of this record for future use through preservation and other strategies. (The record serves present and future users.)
- the unity of the intellectual record. (They present the physical, the digitised and the 'born digital' as complementary parts of the fabric of knowledge, and work to make the medium of delivery support the learning, imaginative or informational experience, rather than determine it. They are driven by the interests of users rather than market considerations.)

Memory organisations have always created catalogues and finding aids which disclose information about their collections in structured ways. They help release the value of collections by promoting their use; they support their users by saving their time, and by bringing them together with useful and interesting resources. Effective disclosure is the key to effective use of the collections. This becomes of even greater importance in a network environment, where discovery is entirely dependent upon effective disclosure through catalogue data. It is no accident that the most successful Internet companies to date all support resource disclosure and discovery: they help people find what is of interest to them, and help providers make materials available. They define the information universe their users inhabit.

Increasingly, unless it is described in a catalogue or finding aid, a resource will remain invisible to the user and its value will not be released in use. In this way, the user's information universe is defined not by what is in the collection, but what is in the catalogue, with a consequent loss of imaginative, informational or learning opportunity. This is a type of amnesia, a loss of our collective memory.

This is the context for this study. It explores what needs to be done to support the 'full disclosure' of the holdings of libraries and archives in the UK. While the study had no remit to consider the situation in the museums domain, it is recognised that this domain has similar concerns and should be included in a national strategy. Full disclosure will be achieved when existing catalogues are converted to machine-readable form, and when previously uncatalogued materials are represented in catalogues or finding aids. While both these areas are important, the focus of this study is with retrospective conversion, which makes resources visible to the user, and which needs to be carried out as soon as possible.

2.2 The Study

In June 1998 the British Library convened a Pathfinding Group to take forward the recommendations of the report by Philip Bryant *Making the Most of Our Libraries* (BLRIC report no.53). This group agreed to fund a study to work on this. UKOLN and the National Council on Archives were successful in jointly tendering for the work, which started at the beginning of January 1999.

The remit for the study required the team to carry out the following:

- Briefly review major developments and significant new projects begun since the Bryant report.
- Outline a methodology for a national **retrospective catalogue conversion strategy**, building on both the Bryant report and the CURL feasibility study, and relating to other national planning and funding strategies in the library/archive field.
- Identify the appropriate body for coordinating a national strategy.
- Identify possible sources of funding to be investigated at a later stage.

2.2.1 Study Methodology

The study team used a variety of methods to carry out the tasks required. An open email discussion list was set up to both inform the library and archive communities about the project and to benefit from their collective experience and knowledge. Some web pages on the study were also set up on the UKOLN web site.

For the review of post-Bryant developments in the UK, the team used a combination of requests to the communities for information (via the email discussion list and early press releases) and searching the literature for relevant articles. In addition, information on a few projects was passed on during the telephone consultations strand (see below). The response to the appeal was good and colleagues were very helpful in providing details of projects, details of which are in Appendix F.

Contact was also made with staff working on two studies in related areas that were being carried out at the same time. Work on the Needs Assessment Survey of Heritage Material and Collections was completed at the end of November 1998, and a report submitted to its funders, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Library Association. From information given to us about the survey (see 4.1.2), it appears to be a likely source for some of the data required for the proposed register of library collections. Unfortunately the CURL feasibility study on how a national programme of retrospective conversion in its member libraries could contribute to the nation's heritage of printed materials was being carried out at the same time as this study (see 4.1.1). Because of the parallel timescale, its findings are not yet available (no date has been advertised for this) and it was not possible to build on the CURL work as requested by the Pathfinding Group in the study remit.

For background material for drawing up a methodology for a national strategy the team carried out a telephone consultation with representatives of various sectors and bodies within the library and archive communities. In addition, three workshops were held to further discuss the main issues that had arisen from the telephone consultations. The workshops were held in Birmingham, Edinburgh and London in order to enable a wide range of people to attend. The team is very grateful to colleagues who participated in either or both of these exercises at very short notice. Telephone consultation respondents are listed in Appendix C, workshops attendees in Appendix B, and the workshop summary in Appendix H.

The report was largely drawn up on the basis of the above approaches but, in addition, a national conference was held on 10th May 1999 at the British Library Conference Centre at St. Pancras, attended by more than 140 delegates. Representatives from all areas of the library and archive domains were joined by others from a variety of organisations and government projects for whom this initiative is relevant. The outline and recommendations for the national programme, the coordinating focus and the necessary funding were presented and then discussed in breakout sessions at which delegate participation was extremely good. Overall the conference welcomed and supported the initiative. Various points raised at the conference have been incorporated into this report. A list of conference delegates can be found in Appendix D and a conference summary in Appendix I.

3. Background: Where We Are Now

The national heritage of the United Kingdom includes the wealth of material collected over the years and held in both libraries and archives. Part of this valuable resource is located in the libraries of academic institutions, research bodies, public library services, learned societies, professional bodies, cathedrals and other religious institutions, specialist groups, government departments, museum reference collections and heritage properties. Another part of it is located in archives – not only the national, local authority and university repositories, but also the archives of professional bodies, societies, businesses, charities, religious institutions, private individuals and the great landed estates.

Ideally, all of this material would be accessible to any user for whom it had significance. The range of potential users of the resource is wide, from scholars in academic institutions and commercial research, to users in the wider community investigating particular interests, and school children working on curriculum projects.

A bridge is needed between the resource base and the would-be users, and catalogues and finding aids have traditionally provided this bridge. The forms of catalogues have changed over the years, and collections have been catalogued to different degrees of thoroughness, but they still provide a gateway into a collection. Collectively they enable users to access collections in different sectors and across domains.

Libraries have a long tradition of catalogues, from the early handwritten guardbooks, through printed lists, card catalogues, and microfiche or microfilm catalogues, to machine-readable records. While many libraries now have machine-readable records on open public access catalogues (OPACs), all these forms of catalogue can still be found in libraries as the primary form of access.

In the 1960s computers started to be used for library catalogues, firstly in universities and polytechnics, followed by colleges, and by public library services. Other types of libraries also now have computerised catalogues but this is by no means universal. Generally, libraries started machine-readable cataloguing with current acquisitions and then worked on existing stock in phases. Inevitably, funding dictated how much could be done and institutional priorities dictated which items were covered when choices had to be made. By the early 1990s there was an awareness that a backlog existed but no hard evidence on the scale of the problem. Philip Bryant's studies on the need for a national programme for retrospective conversion provided the first set of hard data to measure the size of the problem. This estimated that around 50 million records awaited conversion, putting the cost at between £80 m and £100 m. However, concern has been expressed that additional problems in technology and equipment requirements face small, specialist libraries of various types, thus increasing their costs.

Many archive repositories are still dependent upon manual catalogues, varying in quality from seventeenth century manuscript handlists to modern typescript. An increasing proportion of repositories has begun to generate the current output of finding aids in database form or as encoded text in the last few years, but, with a few notable exceptions, little progress has yet been made in the task of converting older manual lists to electronic form.

In 1998 the National Council on Archives report, *Archives On-Line*, articulated a vision of a national archival network, which could both enable remote access to information about the location of archives, and enable thorough searches to be performed across the vast mass of data

in archival catalogues to an extent and with an ease that the current, largely manual arrangements, do not permit. The principle obstacle which the archive domain faces in achieving that vision is the need to convert retrospectively the vast mass of existing manual catalogues, estimated at around 2 million pages (perhaps 12 million catalogue records) to electronic form and to upgrade the catalogue records where necessary to meet modern minimum standards.

On the basis of costings carried out by the Public Record Office and Birmingham City Archives, the total costs of this conversion were estimated at £33m to £38.5m. Although lower in cash terms than the total needs of the library sector identified by Bryant, these costs are far higher in proportion to the total national annual expenditure on archives. It follows that a much higher proportion of the costs of a retrospective conversion programme for archives will need to come from outside sources than Bryant proposed for libraries, and, while there are a few repositories which will be able to redirect resources to cover these costs, many others will be able to make no contribution from internal resources at all without ceasing other, equally vital aspects of their work.

3.1 Surveys: Libraries

In 1994 it was clear that in addition to the material with machine-readable records, there was an unknown quantity of potentially valuable items, some of them unique, which were either recorded only in one of the older, manual forms of catalogue, or were not recorded at all. Those retrospective conversions of catalogues which were being carried out, were institutional initiatives, dependent on available funding and often on a 'do a bit this year and try and do another bit next year' basis. It was therefore desirable to try and establish the extent of the problem.

In 1994 the Follett Implementation Group on IT (FIGIT) commissioned a study of the justification for a national programme of retrospective conversion of library catalogues. The study was funded by the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCs) through their Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC). Led by Philip Bryant, the study was carried out between October 1994 and April 1995.

The view of the Project Monitoring Group for the FIGIT study was that retrospective conversion of library catalogues was of major cross-sectoral interest, and recommended that a further study be carried out on this in libraries which were not HEFC funded. A proposal to the British Library Research and Innovation Centre (BLRIC) for funding was approved in December 1995. Again led by Philip Bryant, the study was carried out between January 1996 and mid 1997.

Quantitative data for the two studies indicated that a substantial number of records has still to be converted to machine-readable form. In higher education libraries there are around 28 million records (representing around 6 million individual titles) requiring conversion. In public libraries the numbers are over 12 million records (representing around 6.5 million individual titles) and in all other types of libraries there are over 9 million records.

The surveys covered libraries and collections with an enormous variation in range and size of printed collections, from the smallest at 80 items and the largest at more than 5 million items. The report concluded that a national programme would benefit both individual institutions and the wider public, research and scholarly communities. It would maximise benefit from investment in stock, assist with decisions on collection management, facilitate remote searching, and help reduce the load on inter-library loan services. In addition, the creation of records would provide a valuable resource to be re-used by other

Records not yet in machine-readable form: <i>HE libraries</i> 28m records (c.6m titles) <i>Public libraries</i> 12+m records (c.6.5m titles) <i>Other libraries</i> 9+m records

libraries.

Bryant estimated that at that point in time the total cost of retrospective conversion nationally would be between £80m and £100 m. Since, as a general rule, matching money would be expected from institutions in receipt of special funding, and this is often set at 50%, he estimated that the additional money to fund such a programme would be £40m to £50m. He further postulated a 5 year programme with £8m to £10m required each year.

3.2 Surveys: Archives

In June 1998 the National Council on Archives published its report, *Archives On-Line*¹ which examined the significance of the new information and communications technologies for the archive profession. It identified the development of searchable online access to the existing catalogues of archival collections in the United Kingdom as an urgent priority for the profession, if archives are to remain visible in the information society. The report recommended the creation of a network to provide access from a single gateway to all archival catalogues in the UK. It proposed and costed a model for an independent network but accepted that it is more likely to be constructed using existing infrastructure to provide the network connections. Crucially, data held on the network would, however, be searchable from the central gateway, using Z39.50 interoperability software, which has been tested with archival data.²

The National Council on Archives estimates suggest that around 2 million pages of finding aids need conversion.

The report identifies that although the cost of creating and maintaining the infrastructure of a national network would be significant in the context of archival budgets, much the largest and most daunting cost would be that of a large-scale programme for the retrospective conversion and upgrading of existing manual finding aids to digital form. Although the number of archive repositories which possess digital cataloguing systems is increasing rapidly, they are by no means ubiquitous, and, even where they are used for new cataloguing, there has generally been no attempt as yet to convert retrospectively the large heritage of manual, non-standard catalogues created in the past.

The NCA did not undertake a large-scale survey of the retrospective conversion issue, but focused on the evidence available from three sources about the scale and likely cost of the profession's needs. The first was the volume of lists held by the National Register of Archives, which receives copies of the completed catalogues from most UK archives. These lists currently extend to about 1,500,000 pages of text. To these must be added the substantial volume of catalogues held by repositories in formats such as card catalogues, which are not suitable for copying for the NRA. Altogether, it would be reasonable to estimate around 12,000,000 catalogue entries (2,000,000 pages) as the size of the retrospective conversion problem.

The cost of retrospective conversion for archives depends significantly on the extent to which old manual catalogues need enhancement before they can be mapped to modern international standard data structures. In one of the few large retrospective conversion projects to be undertaken so far, the Public Record Office found that only minimal enhancement

¹ Available electronically at <<http://www.archives.org.uk/index2.html>> or from the NCA, c/o Birmingham Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ, or by email at: nick.kingsley@birmingham.gov.uk

² By the National Networking Demonstrator Project, the report of which is available at the following website: <<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/projects/srch/reports/ksfinhtml.doc.html>>

was essential, and that conversion costs as low as £2 per page could be achieved. A desk study by Birmingham City Archives, however, suggested some repositories could face much higher costs, even if the most deficient existing lists were excluded from consideration, and on this basis a total retrospective conversion cost of £33m to £38.5m was estimated by the study.

The NCA is pursuing the implementation of its recommendations through a series of First Stage Implementation Projects, one of which, *Access to Archives* (A2A), is seeking funding for the retrospective conversion of a large body of catalogue data from English local authority and private repositories. This project will seek to apply the Public Record Office's retrospective conversion methodology to data from widely varying repositories, and it is currently anticipated that costs of about £4 per page will be involved.

3.3 Definitions

The major focus of work in this area is that of **conversion of existing manual catalogues and indexes to machine-readable form**, but it is known that there are also substantial amounts of uncatalogued materials that will need retrospective cataloguing. Libraries and archives will often need to do both retrospective cataloguing and retrospective catalogue conversion to provide machine-readable records for their entire stock.

In addition, even where the major part of a project is retrospective catalogue conversion, some element of checking and upgrading of records is likely to be required, not necessarily with item in hand. Conversion overlaps with cataloguing when an agency uses the manual record to individually locate and use records from a database.

The proportion of retrospective cataloguing and retrospective catalogue conversion is likely to vary with the domain. In the archives domain, there will be a higher focus on retrospective cataloguing as all archives are effectively unique, and as there is a very large cataloguing backlog in many repositories. Staff working in both retrospective catalogue conversion and retrospective cataloguing may also require additional professional skills, such as palaeography for manuscripts, specialist knowledge for maps and early printed materials, and so on.

For the purposes of this study, the terms retrospective cataloguing and retrospective conversion have been defined below. Examples of likely methods used in the two approaches are included with the definitions in the Glossary in Appendix E, which also defines other terms used in the report.

Retrospective cataloguing

Cataloguing from the item in hand to produce a machine-readable record on **an item-by-item basis** for material which is not in the category of current acquisitions.

Retrospective catalogue conversion

The **conversion of existing records** in manually produced catalogues into machine-readable form for use by computers. This can also include upgrading or overwriting low-grade records with higher standard records.

4. Recent Developments

Work on retrospective conversion in libraries has been progressing slowly since the 1970s. However, there has been no monitoring of this and details of projects have not been centrally recorded. The study team was asked to review major developments and significant new projects begun since the time of the Bryant report (1997). The timescale of this study was too short to allow for a questionnaire-type activity and so the data has been collected in two ways. First, requests were made to the communities to supply details of projects that their institutions were engaged on, with a good level of response. Secondly, reviewing the literature and the Internet provided useful additional information.

Developments fall into two areas. First, there are other studies and surveys being carried out. Secondly, there are the individual and collaborative projects themselves. Since this problem is not confined to the UK, the study has also looked at what is happening further afield, and particularly in Europe. Within the timescale of the study, this review has been able to cover the major work in this field. However, there may be other studies and surveys and there certainly will be other projects that have not yet been identified – the study team was still being notified of additional institutional projects while the final text of the report was being prepared.

4.1 Studies and Surveys

4.1.1 CURL Database Study

Contributed by Juliet Leves

The Consortium of University Research Libraries is currently carrying out a feasibility study for the Heritage Lottery Fund to investigate how a national programme of retrospective conversion of catalogue records in its member libraries could contribute to the nation's heritage of printed books and other resources. The study began in October 1998. It was clear from the outset that a major funding opportunity would arise during the course of the study in the form of a call for bids from the Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP). It was therefore decided to collect as much detail as possible concerning collections in the CURL member libraries which still had manual catalogue records.

Data collection for the study was done in two stages. The first stage, carried out from October to December 1998, was a retrospective catalogue conversion needs survey of all collections of printed materials in CURL libraries which still had manual catalogue records. Manuscripts and archives were not covered in detail, but libraries were invited to supply general information about these collections. Libraries were also asked to assign priorities for retrospective conversion.

The second stage, carried out from January to March 1999, attempted to gather more detailed information about the collections by asking libraries to complete a template broken down by type of material, date range, language and broad subject area. This was followed up by a structured telephone interview to establish the suitability of the manual catalogue records for the different methods of retrospective conversion. Libraries were also asked about which collections they considered rare or unique, either regionally or nationally. These interviews are currently being analysed.

The data collected has already proved useful in targeting collections for retrospective catalogue conversion and putting together expressions of interest in response to the RSLP call. Further work on bids for this and other funding opportunities will continue in the course of the study.

4.1.2 Needs Assessment Survey of Heritage Material and Collections

Contributed by Sophie Young

LASER was commissioned by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Library Association to carry out this preliminary investigation into the state and value of the documentary heritage held by public libraries in England. The survey ran from 1st June until 30th November 1998.

The main aims of the survey were:

- To identify and evaluate items and collections of heritage significance held by public libraries in England in terms of cultural value, condition, accessibility and type or extent of existing resources to support them.
- To produce some preliminary data about material held in public libraries that was of most value to the national, regional, and local heritage, and most at risk from environmental or management conditions.
- To examine methodologies that had already been used in similar needs assessments within the UK, also taking into account the methods already used in other heritage sectors. The data gathered was to be capable of being ranked, or otherwise compared.
- To supplement the listings and descriptions in the *Directory of Rare Book and Special Collections*.

In addition to books and manuscripts, the survey encompassed a wide range of media including art prints, sound recordings, film, microform and artefacts. However, newspapers, modern electronic/digital media and surrogates were not surveyed.

Survey criteria for inclusion in documentary heritage are that items in collection:

- are predominantly more than 20 years old
- are of enduring local/regional or national significance
- have been created in or have strong cultural, historical or other links with the UK and Ireland
- are considered to have long term significance of unique or special value.

The form of the study and its strategies

A self-assessment questionnaire and a weighted scoring system, based on key questions from the questionnaire, were designed to identify and evaluate the heritage significance of material as well as the risks to which it might be exposed. Risks were divided into the following areas: management, usability (condition), access and accommodation.

Questionnaires were distributed to contacts in each public library authority in England. Contacts were either chief librarian/section heads or personnel appointed to receive questionnaires on their behalf. Two versions of the questionnaire were produced: the original version which was distributed to all public library authorities; and a truncated/abbreviated version which was made available on request.

Respondents were given the choice of detailing either collections or individual items. The project received a 100% response rate to the questionnaire. 145 out of a total of 147 public library authorities identified and filled in information about at least one item/collection they held which they considered to be part of the documentary heritage according to the survey's criteria. The remaining 2 authorities did not feel they had any significant collections to report. Information about 896 items/collections held by public libraries in England and considered

to form part of the documentary heritage was collated from questionnaire returns.

The project was advised by a steering group consisting of specialists in the fields of libraries, preservation and heritage. The British Library Research and Innovation Centre (BLRIC) and the National Preservation Office (NPO) collaborated with the project over questions in the Preservation Needs Assessment Survey.³

Progress to date

The survey was completed and the final report submitted to the HLF for consideration by the HLF Trustees at the end of November 1998. No decision has yet been reached regarding the public dissemination of the final report.

Relevance of the study for national retrospective conversion strategies

The survey found that of the total of 887 collections included in the survey:

- 266 were identified as totally uncatalogued 30%
- 102 were identified as catalogued at collection level 11%
- 441 were identified as catalogued at item level 50%
- 75 were identified as catalogued at item level in part 8%

(Note: in 3 instances there was no response to the question)

The survey found that although many collections were identified as being of regional or national significance, in many instances their owners had no knowledge of them being listed or described in any external directory/catalogue. There was clearly more that could be done to make users outside the local area aware of their existence and significance. The percentage of uncatalogued stock was high by public library standards and it was considered that this deficiency underlay a major access problem which would benefit from HLF support.

Comments sometimes drew attention to collections which respondents considered to be in need of retrospective conversion or upgrading. They also indicated the existence of what came to emerge as a separate category of partially catalogued collections. The tendency of libraries to amalgamate small local history collections into one larger collection for description purposes, or subdivide local history/special collections according to media type, was reflected in respondents' comments and apparent varying levels of cataloguing within collections. Certain parts of collections were catalogued to item level while other parts were catalogued at a lower level or remained uncatalogued. Within partially catalogued collections, books were more likely to be catalogued at item level than other media.

4.1.3 Our Shared Past

In 1997 a project team led by the Public Record Office undertook a survey of the needs of English local authority archive services; the result was published in 1998 as *Our Shared Past: an Archival Domesday for England*. This concluded that: '71% of local archives desperately need additional resources to play a full part in the information revolution'. Most local archive services are now at least planning to produce automated catalogues, and several have already made significant progress in this area. Some are now producing fully automated catalogues for their new accessions, while their older collections are still catalogued manually. Concerning the latter, one city

³ Published as: Eden, Paul. *A Model for Assessing Preservation Needs in Libraries*, 1998 British Library Research and Innovation report no.125

archivist has stated that ‘it is difficult to regard these collections as actually catalogued since access is abysmal’; the contrast with the brisk efficiency of the automated system is very striking.

The funding requirement for changing to an automated cataloguing system should not be underestimated; many would echo the comment of one head archivist that the ‘greatest input of resources is needed in IT for cataloguing and other access to collections’. The funding for projects for the retrospective conversion of manually produced catalogues and indexes and for new cataloguing work in an automated format would produce many benefits for searchroom and remote users. Both groups would be able to adopt more sophisticated search strategies, identifying much more rapidly material likely to be of interest to them, and the possibility that relevant material might be overlooked would be **markedly diminished**. Funds for this purpose would also ensure that the awkward transitional phase from manual to automated systems could be as short as possible. If complete automation is not quickly achieved, then public users will have to master two systems and the complexity of searching will be increased rather than diminished.

Our Shared Past was produced partly to give guidance to the Heritage Lottery Fund on the perceived priorities of the archives sector for financial support, but related only to English local authority archive services. Parallel exercises have since been undertaken for archives of all kinds in Scotland and Wales

At the request of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the NCA has produced a further report, entitled *British Archives: The Way Forward*, which attempts to prioritise the manifold needs identified by the various survey reports, and to produce a blueprint for the application of HLF funds over the next 5e years. This identifies the construction of a national archive network of catalogue data as the highest single priority for the archives profession in the immediate future, and recommends that ‘to reflect this highest priority, we would suggest to the Trustees of the HLF that a high percentage (say, 30%) of the annual archive allocation of funding is devoted across the next five years to the support of the National Electronic Network for Archives: in part and initially to assist with the creation of the infrastructure, but also, by supporting individual applications for the conversion of catalogues and other resource discovery tools to digital format.’

In addition to the above archive works, there is a directory of archives *British Archives* (3rd edition published in 1995) which is a repository-by-repository guide to high-level collections.

4.1.4 JISC Archives Sub-Committee Survey

A rather wider survey into the archival needs of higher education institutions has been carried out in the higher education sector: <<http://www.willpower.demon.co.uk/JISC/Survey1.htm>>. This found that ‘only 52.5% of holdings are catalogued at “file level”, i.e. approximately the level of the units produced for consultation by archive users, and 32.4% of holdings were catalogued at “item level”.’ These two figures are not mutually exclusive so the amount catalogued at either level or both is in the range from 52.5% to 84.9%. There is not a statistically significant correlation between the proportions reported as catalogued and the existence of professional staff, but this does not take account of the quality of the cataloguing work.

The application of cataloguing standards is still very uneven, with over 60% of holdings catalogued according to local standards. As the national and international standards developed from the best pre-existing practice, these local standards may be quite satisfactory. The amount catalogued in accordance with ISAD(G) is 5.7%, and this

Canal records (deposited by British Waterways) are held in 15 different repositories throughout the UK, in museums as well as record offices.

standard is being used by 21 out of the 128 institutions surveyed. Many institutions use word processing software to prepare their catalogues and finding aids, and as they are thus in machine-readable form they could be made available on the Internet as text files, though this would require significant work by archival and computer staff. The files might need to be substantially restructured before it was possible to apply full tagging such as SGML to provide adequate formatting and retrieval functions. To provide detailed and specific access by names, places and subjects will require substantial indexing work. Only about 7% to 30% of material has been indexed fully, depending on level. Standards for indexing are not yet widely used and many different systems have been applied."

4.1.5 Futures Together

Contributed by Chris Dodd

February 1998 saw the start of 'Futures Together', a 2-year, £60,000 British Library Research and Innovation Centre project managed by the West Midlands Regional Library System. The aim is to investigate the value, scope and accessibility of special collections (encompassing printed, archival and audio-visual materials) held in diverse organisations across the region comprising Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, the West Midlands County and Worcestershire.

In the past few years the library and archive communities have been requested to respond to numerous surveys and this continues. So the question is 'What is different about Futures Together?' Well, many audits (e.g. Virtually New and the JISC archival surveys) tend to look at specific sectors or at issues such as staffing, accommodation, finding aids, etc. This project is different in a number of interrelational ways, by being collection driven, content-oriented, cross-sectoral and involves more than postal surveys by including in-depth independent audits of many collections.

From rare literary archives to contemporary specialist resources, from Elgar and Shakespeare to Aerodynamics and Vehicle Safety, the region has a lot to offer in this area. The main deliverable of the project is the recommendation of 'holdings to access' strategies to make these resources more easily accessible to the wider public, both physically and 'virtually' through ICT. This will include prioritising specific materials (regardless of sector) for selective digitisation and improving electronic finding aids and resource discovery tools (including collection and item-level cataloguing and retrospective cataloguing and retrospective conversion of records).

The core of the work involves on-site analysis of the content, access arrangements and finding aids to specific collections of at least regional significance held in all academic, public and special libraries, museums and record offices across the region. Around 500 collections (including separate archival accessions) will have been audited in all public and academic libraries by July 1999. An estimated further 200 collections in museums and private and voluntary sector organisations will have been audited by the end of the project along with a second-tier audit of the thousands of archival collections in some 15 record offices across the region. The methodology used in this exercise may well have transferable values in assisting other regions seeking to establish a regional strategic approach to prioritising electronic content development and resource discovery for their special collections and archives.

4.1.6 Virtually New

In 1998 the report *Virtually New: creating the digital collection* was prepared for the Library and Information Commission by Information North. It was a review of digitisation projects in local authority libraries and archives. The Executive Summary notes the following:

The review contains an overview of the progress and nature of digitisation projects in the sector, with discussion of key issues; a catalogue of completed, current and planned digitisation projects; identification of core genres of material and criteria for selection of collections for digitisation; a proposed action plan and identification of potential funding sources and key implementation partnerships.

Public libraries are generally well advanced in the automated cataloguing of their current loan and reference collections, and in networked access to catalogues. However, in local studies and special collections there are many important collections where catalogues have not been automated or which remain uncatalogued. This is a key area for libraries in the development of networked resource discovery, and is of absolutely crucial importance for archives. Cataloguing and indexing of collections is a necessary corollary and in many cases a prerequisite for digitisation. Some of the digitisation projects in the survey are essentially **automated cataloguing projects** which plan to add images of documents in a later phase.

4.1.7 National Preservation Office

The National Preservation Office (NPO) has been working on a preservation needs assessment project. The project aimed to develop a model for assessing the preservation needs of paper-based and photographic materials (including microforms) in libraries and archives, to facilitate an assessment of national preservation needs and priorities, thereby contributing to the development of a national preservation policy. The draft model was tested and evaluated in different sizes and types of library and archive. The project report is available as British Library Research and Innovation Centre report no. 125 *A Model for Assessing Preservation Needs in Libraries*. Part 1 presents the main findings of the research and part 2 presents the model, together with recommendations on further development and use, including suggestions for its development for use in archives (now being worked on at the Public Record Office). The model is designed to be a standard methodological survey tool and was used as part of the Needs Assessment Survey (see 4.1.2). It is hoped that the software being developed will be available in the late autumn 1999.

The NPO is also working on a Register of Collection Strength and Status with David Haynes Associates; it is expected that this work will be completed in the late autumn 1999. Both of these projects extend knowledge in the collections area and are potentially valuable to work required in a retrospective conversion initiative.

4.2 Multi-Institutional Projects

4.2.1 English Short Title Catalogue (EngSTC)

Heythrop College Library will use the EngSTC as part of its retrospective cataloguing project that includes records for its rare books collection.

The EngSTC is a resource collaboratively developed by the British Library and the University of California to record, with locations, all printed items published before 1800. Begun in 1977 and originally titled the Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), it covered the period 1701 to 1800. In 1987 it was decided to extend coverage to include material from the earliest printing in England (c.1473). EngSTC covers not only items printed in English-speaking countries, or countries under British colonial rule, but also items in English printed elsewhere and items with false imprints purporting to have been printed in English-speaking countries.

The nature of the material is varied. In addition to the works of major figures of the period, the file contains records for all types of literature never previously catalogued – for example, lists of all kinds, notices, advertisements, slip-songs, election ephemera and other single-sheet material.

While collections held at the British Library formed the core of the original ESTC database, the EngSTC is now based on the collections of 1,600 institutions world-wide and work is still in progress. The EngSTC is accessible in both online and CD-ROM versions.

4.2.2 Cathedral Libraries Project

Lambeth Palace Library is halfway through an appeal-funded conversion of its catalogue of printed books. However, it has now accepted the early collections from Sion College, but has no funding for computerising the catalogues for these items.

This project, coordinated by the Cathedral Libraries and Archives Association (CLAA) had four aims.

- To achieve the cataloguing of those books in cathedral libraries published up to 1800 which are uncatalogued as yet, using machine-readable records wherever possible.
- To convert existing manual records for cathedral libraries into machine-readable records.
- To convert existing machine-readable records into a common format.
- To promote the sharing of machine-readable records between cathedral libraries in order to achieve economies of scale and to provide wider access.

A catalogue is now in print as a 2 volume British Library publication. Records from Vol. 1 (*English Books to 1700*) have been submitted to the EngSTC project for locations to be added to the database. The data for Vol. 2 (*Continental Books to 1700*) exists as 26,000 records in MARC format; no decision has yet been made on a final location for these records. Further work is now needed on material published between 1701 and 1800.

4.2.3 Scottish Archive Network

The Scottish Archive Network (SCAN) is a project to make top-level finding aids of all Scottish archives available on a single Internet website, together with a range of additional user services. It involves 46 Scottish archives (of national institutions, local authorities, universities, further education institutions and surveys of private papers in private hands) covering all major Scottish archives. Funding of £4m has been agreed with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Genealogical Society of Utah, and the National Archives of Scotland (NAS). By the summer of 1999 there will be 28 people working on the project.

The project is in three parts. Part 1 is the creation of the Scottish Archive Network (SCAN). Within this, top-level finding aids of every archive in Scotland will be held on SCAN using the General International Standard for Archival Description (ISAD(G)) and the National Council on Archives name authority files. Part 2 is the automation of the register of testaments (or the wills of Scots from 1500 to 1875). This will include the digitisation of around 3.3 million images and the retrospective conversion of index entries. Part 3 is the development of the existing electronic catalogues in the NAS, again requiring retrospective conversion.

In Wales, a scoping study for the establishment of a Welsh Archival Network was approved by the Archives Council Wales at the end of 1997, and detailed proposals are being developed.

4.3 Individual Initiatives

Despite the fact that external funding is limited and restricted to specific areas, a number of libraries and archives have begun or continued work on a variety of retrospective conversion projects. Some have been funded by the institution, some by outside funds, and most by matched funding under various funding stream calls.

To obtain information on projects currently in progress, or recently completed, or still at bid stage, the study team looked at the professional literature, the web and at publications of fundraisers. It also asked libraries and archives to contact the team with details of specific projects.

Details of more than 40 projects in the UK have been passed to the study team, covering a wide range of specific subject areas. Projects also range from complete libraries and archives to specific sections within the larger units and work is being carried out in all types of library and archive. Further details can be found in Appendix F.

The funding for these projects is institutional or combinations of institutional and grant funding (mostly HLF and NFF). However, a range of other funding is also mentioned: New Opportunities Fund, Non-Formula Funding, Research Support Libraries Programme, British Library grant, donation, Grant in Aid, EU Pathway scheme and Save & Prosper scheme.

Retrospective work is currently in progress in the following subjects:

Architecture and planning
Art
Canals
Cartoons and caricatures
Horticulture
Printing and illustration
Slavonic and East European material
South Wales coalfield

4.4 Developments outside the UK

4.4.1 CERL Hand Press Book Database

The Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) initiated the Hand Press Book database in 1992. The primary objective is to record all books printed in Europe during the hand press period (i.e. before 1830) in a machine-readable database. CERL currently has 28 full members and 22 associate members spread over 25 European countries plus one associate member in the USA. The HPB database is a multinational database held on RLIN. It became a live file for searching in 1997 and consists of files contributed by libraries and other organisations, adapted to function in a single system.

The records are available to members for downloading, on the principle of a shared catalogue. In September 1998 the database consisted of records from the following libraries:

Catalogue	Records
Bavarian State Library catalogue 1501-1840	c.500,000
Swedish National Bibliography 1700-1826	c.50,000
Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico (SBN file to 1830)	c.70,000
Bibliothèque nationale de France Catalogue des Anonymes 1455-1800	c.30,000
National Library of Zagreb, books to 1830	c.2,500
National and University Library of Ljubljana	c.15,000
National Library of Scotland	c.15,000
<i>Shortly to be added</i>	
British Library, German imprints of the 17th century	c.20,000
Short Title Catalogue Netherlands	c.200,000
Swedish National Bibliography of the 16th century	c.5,000
Incunabula Short Title catalogue (ISTC)	c.20,000

4.4.2 European Union Archive Network

The European Union Archive Network (EUAN), a joint project with partners from Scotland, Sweden, Italy and the Netherlands has been accepted under the Info2000 call from DGXIII of the European Commission. The underlying vision of EUAN is that a citizen should be able, using the Internet, to get information about the contents of the national archives of another country of the Union. The project will examine both archival aspects: (a) how to ensure consistent and standardised description independent of language and information technology aspects and (b) how to navigate between the different computer systems. The project will produce a prototype user interface together with reports and guidelines on promoting further European standardisation in these areas.

4.4.3 Republic of Ireland

Trinity College Library in Dublin is the largest library in Ireland. It has a total of 3 million volumes (of which around 1m have records in machine-readable form while the remainder have either older manual records or are uncatalogued) plus extensive collections of manuscripts, maps and music. Retrospective conversion began in the early 1980s but was always dependent on finance available. In the early 1990s an anonymous donation of £225,000 spread over 3 years was secured and specific catalogues were identified for conversion under this funding as the Stella Project. With the first phase of the project completed in December 1996, further funds were received from the anonymous donor together with some institutional matching funds for a 2-year extension, again to work on specific catalogues. The Library is currently in the process of developing proposals for the final phase of retrospective conversion.

4.4.4 France

Under a project administered by the Bureau for the Modernisation of Libraries, 21 libraries in France are having their catalogues retrospectively converted by OCLC. The project approach offers advantages: a single set of specifications was agreed with OCLC, cutting down on costs at the tendering stage and simplifying their operations. In addition to the records each library has for its own stock, the records are also put into a union database and they become part of the OCLC WorldCat database.

4.4.5 The Vatican

It has been reported in the press that the Vatican Library has agreed to the sale of exclusive publishing rights to the entire stock of the Vatican Library to a commercial firm in order to fund the computerisation of its card catalogue.

4.4.6 Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the issue of retrospective conversion of catalogues is affected by the state of the technology as well as the funding available. They have decided to try a method which uses OCR to scan the records held on card catalogues as its initial phase. This process produces a very simple record that can then be manually manipulated into a MARC format (in their case UNIMARC). This is being undertaken in the National Library at Prague as a demonstrator project for Eastern Europe.

4.4.7 Austria and Switzerland

The Austrian National Library is working on a project named Katzoom. This is a halfway house method in which catalogue cards are scanned and held online, searchable via a browsable index. The project has a website at <<http://euler.onb.ac.at/katzoom/eng/katzooma.htm>>.

The same approach has been used by Zurich Public Library in Switzerland.

4.4.8 Russia

The Lenin Library in Moscow has just started work on a European-funded scheme to transfer millions of catalogue cards to an Internet-accessible database. Existing MS-DOS records will be imported into a new database and scanning will be used to create new records from old typed and handwritten ones. Updating the millions of entries from the Library's 220 catalogues is a long-term project that will go on well into the next century.

4.4.9 USA: American Heritage Project

The American Heritage Project (the website can be found at <<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/FindingAids/EAD/ameriher.html>>) is a demonstrator project to create a national union catalogue of finding aids relating to the American heritage, with special reference to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The intention is to bring together hundreds of finding aids comprising thousands of pages of text. By concentrating on a specific subject area and historical period, the database will enable the project to study the encoding and content issues associated with combining information on related subject matter from different institutions in the same database. It is hoped that it will provide sufficient information on a topic to attract significant numbers of users, permitting accurate user-behaviour studies.

The project is based at the University of California, Berkeley, and also includes material from Stanford University, Duke University, and the University of Virginia. Locally created records are passed to the central database. Collection-level material is given in the US MARC format, while finding aids are represented using Encoded Archival Description (EAD). Encoded Archival Description is a standardised format for the representation of archival finding aids as SGML (Standard Generalised Mark-Up Language) encoded text. The format is based on and capable of being mapped to the ISAD(G) data content. The union database allows a user to search a bibliographic catalogue displaying collection-level records and, from within the bibliographic record, to click on a user interface button that will launch a browser to navigate the collection's finding aid. The project is designed to look at a range of issues:

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- intellectual issues, including the development of finding aid content standards to enable finding aids from different institutions to coexist in the same database, and even to be integrated;
 - political issues, including looking at the problems of decentralised creation and maintenance of finding aids, and at issues surrounding the ownership and responsibility for creating local catalogue records which will be consistent with the central database;
 - technical issues, including access, and the description and control of finding aids representing collections with related subject matter from different institutions. The remote creation and maintenance of finding aids will be considered, as will the potential use of natural language retrieval technology on the union database;
 - economic issues, such as the cost of finding aid conversion, data input, database maintenance, training and documentation.

This project has a significant value in charting approaches to the sharing and networking of archival data, and potentially also for cross-domain resource discovery. It demonstrates the potential for the added value of retrospectively converted finding aids. The American Heritage Project is one of 4 related projects forming part of the California Digital Library; their website is at: <<http://sunsite2.berkeley.edu/oac/>>.

5. The Challenge Ahead

5.1 Issues

The library and archive domains both have major retrospective catalogue conversion needs. While not within the remit of this study, the needs of the museum domain in this area should also not be ignored or underestimated. Much research, whether private or institutional, will require the searcher to access material in all 3 types of institution. Retrospective conversion requires commitment of funding and in the past this has been institution dependent and therefore variable. A few institutions have managed to catalogue their complete stock in machine-readable form, and many more have substantial proportions in this form. However, there still remains a large quantity of material that is either not recorded or is only recorded in manual catalogues or finding aids. This material remains 'hidden' from the view of potential users.

The primary objective of libraries and archives is to collect material in defined areas, store it, provide searching tools to identify and locate individual items within collections, and provide varying forms of physical access to the items. The searching tools – catalogues, indexes and other finding aids – are, in many cases, incomplete with the result that a reduced level of service is provided. In some institutions there may be the need to upgrade some minimal and low standard machine-readable records.

In addition, the fact that in many institutions a variety of catalogues and indexes have to be searched is a further disincentive to users. Catalogues may also include 'dump' entries where a single entry represents many items (e.g. French language pamphlets, around 2,000 items). Such 'dump' entries do not even function effectively as collection-level records.

For libraries, while for some institutions recent material is most in demand, all institutions will have some level of demand for older stock. For some institutions both recent and older material is equally in demand, and in others the older material has majority usage (e.g. national libraries, specialist libraries and other types of 'library of last resort'). For archives, there is commonly little difference in use between collections that were received a long time ago and more recent acquisitions. Since archives almost never discard material once it has been appraised and catalogued by the institution, retrospective catalogue conversion is not a need that will go away; if the job remains undone in 50 years time, it will still need doing just as much as it does today.

While there are advantages and benefits to a joint national strategy for both archives and libraries, it is recognised that at some points in the programme there will be a need for archive and library projects to go forward in parallel. There are specific needs in each domain to be considered and taken into account.

While there are obvious benefits to a national programme, care must be taken that the inauguration of an umbrella strategy does not prejudice existing projects and opportunities. It needs to incorporate these as part of the overall initiative.

HUMAD2 is the Hull University manuscripts and archives database. It contains searchable collection- and item-level descriptions for over 70% of the archival and manuscript holdings in the University of Hull's Brynmor Jones Library.

5.1.1 Coordination

Effectively, the archive profession already has a national strategy for retrospective catalogue conversion, in the recommendations set out in *Archives On-Line*; the difficulty is funding its implementation. Having to respond to sector-specific and institution-specific opportunities and being limited to projects below £5m for HLF funding, means that the coordination role is vital and that task is proving challenging. Libraries are in the same position of having to respond to sector-specific and institution-specific opportunities and there is a definite risk that lack of coordination means certain areas fare better than others in funding and that there is duplication of effort in record creation. A joint national retrospective catalogue conversion strategy for archives and libraries offers the opportunity to apply political pressure to maintain and increase funding for retrospective conversion.

5.1.2 Standards

Coordination is also required in other areas. A joint strategy can enforce adherence to agreed professional standards, the contribution of catalogue records to the national network, and collective decisions on prioritisation. It can support sharing the costs and benefits of developing name authority files jointly by libraries and archives.

5.1.3 Resource Sharing

For libraries involved in inter-lending, it is crucial to their service levels to be able to locate accurately materials inside and outside their regions. Efficient use of local resources before applying outside the region results in a more cost-effective service. At present, regions mostly operate with a mix of machine-readable and manual catalogues; the older catalogues particularly may not have been kept up to date with the result that they no longer reflect actual holdings.

Resource sharing for libraries also focuses on sharing of records. It is felt to be important that the contribution of public funding to their creation should be reflected in the terms under which they are available for re-use. When sharing records, the use of acceptable standards and formats is important.

5.1.4 Convincing budget holders

Libraries and archives are committed to providing the searching tools but what they can achieve is limited by funding. In many cases, current budget levels already limit staff and equipment for day-to-day work. The funding of retrospective conversion, for most institutions, has to come from other sources. It is often difficult to convince those who allocate the budgets that this area is important, and a national programme is seen as a useful lever and incentive to change attitudes.

In addition to the cost benefits of resource sharing, there are other economic benefits. Increased use of collections means that investment in stock and staff is maximised. Increasing the known element of collections can also have economic benefits in research, business and in tourism.

There is the potential danger that senior management will recognise more easily the value of high-profile, 'technological' initiatives such as digitisation, and favour them over the seemingly more mundane retrospective catalogue conversion work. It is unrealistic to suppose that everything can and will be digitised and digitisation projects in themselves often involve retrospective conversion work to identify what needs to be digitised, and to provide the access methods by which the images can be retrieved.

5.1.5 The Smaller Institution

It is crucial for archivists and for smaller libraries, that a national programme should not only allow but effectively bring about cross-funding and administrative support between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. The fact that some institutions, (e.g. the Public Record Office and the Essex Record Office amongst others) have paid for the whole cost of their own retrospective conversion needs, should lever 100% funding for an institution which has no hope of funding or project managing its own needs.

5.1.6 Access Policies

Providing better search tools will result in raised levels of requests for physical access. Some libraries may need to revise their access policies and review which users can have physical access and under what conditions. Funding streams can require specific access levels as terms under which funding is granted. For some items, increased requests for access will raise conservation and preservation issues and there may be a need in some collections for retrospective catalogue conversion to be accompanied by other projects in conservation, preservation and the provision of surrogates. For certain items, the issue of security will also need to be considered. Staffing is another area where increased use of collections will have an effect. It will maximise return on investment when staff capacity can cope, but in some institutions increased usage may require staff deployment review.

The other side of access is consideration of user needs in access methods. Ethnic communities and those with the various forms of disability all have problems in using common forms of access. Widening access by adding to catalogues and finding aids needs to be supported by work to assist these groups to use such aids. It is also important to remember that the format of the material they wish to locate may also be of crucial importance. A visually impaired person who is trained to read Moon text needs to know which items are held in that format and in the spoken word and are therefore useful, and which are in Braille which they may be unable to use. Some work is already going on to support this.

5.1.7 Collection Description

To achieve an effective national programme, a mapping exercise is required for libraries, similar to the one already carried out for archives. Some institutions and cooperative bodies do know what collections they have and what is or is not catalogued and in what form, but many others have varying levels of information. A possible approach to this would be to take information from a number of recent surveys that have included this and amalgamate these into a register; this would require some further work to try and ensure comprehensive coverage.

While collection-level description has long been part of archival practice, libraries are only now looking at this issue; some work is in progress. It may be that the mapping exercise could produce collection level-descriptions for libraries that could be held centrally and perhaps form the basis of a gateway structure.

5.1.8 Support

There is a general feeling that various kinds of support should be explored. Many institutions do not feel they know enough about the various methods and combinations of methods for retrospective catalogue conversion. Others feel it would be very helpful to talk to someone else considering or just starting or finishing work in a similar area. Another suggestion for support is provision of contact details for those with expertise in the field to help with problems encountered, especially at crisis points. It is also suggested that support would be

needed for staff in terms of training and that this could be organised and/or provided by the central body.

There is a consensus that there should be a central access point that can provide some information and can provide contacts for other information, and that the coordinating body for the national programme should undertake this. A comprehensive website is felt to be desirable. This could include 'Frequently Asked Questions' to help institutions thinking about a project, 'Standards File' listing the standards that support the national programme, 'Project Register' to enable institutions to identify others working in the same area, 'White Pages' listing databases either online or on CD-ROM that can be considered as sources of records, and 'Yellow Pages' to give links to record suppliers and companies working in the retroconversion field.

5.1.9 Staffing

If a national programme is established, there is an issue of staffing. Institutions do not have spare capacity of suitable staff and would need to recruit for retrospective conversion. Even when the bulk of the work is contracted out, there will be varying levels of staff requirement e.g. project management, microfilming or photocopying, and editing and checking. The basic approaches are: (a) all staff required are recruited outside the current staff establishment, (b) staff are seconded from the current establishment and temporary staff recruited to take over their current duties, and (c) there is a mix of new and current staff working on the project, with some new staff covering current duties. Not too much difficulty is seen in recruiting for clerical-type posts, but more for recruiting staff with cataloguing expertise and for specialist areas. The level of difficulty may vary with geographical area.

It is difficult to gauge the level of professionals within the domain to satisfy the needs that may be generated by a national programme. Increasingly library and information studies courses have reduced the cataloguing element within their courses, partly since there is less demand for this work in many institutions when dealing with current acquisitions. There is seen to be a need to undertake a skills audit to inform the initiative. The library and archive professions then need to be involved in initiatives to tackle the problem.

5.2 Priorities

Generally, there is an acceptance that prioritisation is necessary. The resources available, even at the most optimistic level, will be limited. Funders are moving in the direction of consulting with communities on area overviews (in effect, prioritisation) in an effort to distribute limited resources to achieve maximum benefit. It is realised that there may be tensions between institutional priorities, sector priorities and national priorities but there is a feeling that, if nothing is done, the problem remains and may get larger, and there is a distinct risk that items that are not catalogued may be discarded.

There is general agreement that attention should first be focused on the 'most important collections'. What these are perceived to be varies with the sector. Alongside this acceptance is a warning that 'cherry-picking' the most significant collections (in either the libraries or archives domain) will allow funders to perceive diminishing returns to continued investment in retrospective conversion over time, increasing the chances that the process will never be completed. To some extent this also risks penalising some institutions by not considering them of sufficient importance to merit help.

The sole, part-time librarian at 1 college library estimated that it would take around 20 years to carry out retrospective conversion by fitting it into the existing workload.

5.2.1 Archives

Within the archive sector, there is a fair degree of consensus that priority collections might be selected on the basis of the needs of those users most likely to benefit from remote access. In a typical local authority archive service, these would be likely to include its diocesan records, perhaps its Quarter Sessions records, the big family and estate collections and perhaps a few historic business or institutional archives. In other repositories, the types of record held are less predictable, but the principle of responding first to the greatest user needs would still be valid.

5.2.2 Libraries

The library sector priorities vary with the library type. The study consultations found that for some libraries (government, health and arts in particular), grey literature of various types would be a major concern. A range of other libraries (public, academic and national) see a priority area in non-English-language materials – this ranges from Welsh-language materials and East European languages in general to the Oriental languages. Other areas mentioned as priorities were a mixture of collection, content and format. The areas noted were electronic and AV media, maps, music, performance sets in music and drama, films, local studies materials including plans and photographs, nineteenth century material, periodicals, public library reserve stock, and the stocks of small, specialist libraries and archives in many subject areas. Further details on this can be found in Appendix G. There is also the need to look at this from the user point of view – what is it that users are looking for? Existing and further work in the analysis of inter-library-loan requests and user enquiries could provide some information in this area.

5.2.3 An Overall View

Respondents made the following various suggestions as to how priorities could be set. There should be an overall plan that systematically identifies thematic, professional or other groupings which have common interests or problems (e.g. health libraries, regional systems, waterways archives). Further work on establishing priorities within these could then perhaps be passed on to interest groups (such as ARLIS in the art and design area). For libraries, there could be a guideline procedure for this – identifying some big benchmark collections and then the small, specialist collections that usefully fill in specific gaps. The middle group is seen as having the greatest overlap and could be best served by being able to take records from the benchmark and specialist conversions.

5.3 Standards

There is general agreement that standards are essential to a national programme. There is also majority support for the view that this may initially be at a broad level. If this is the case, the view is that there needs to be a core set of minimum requirements. There would also need to be a requirement that records created at the lowest levels should be capable of upgrading at a later date. One of the current funding initiatives, the Research Support Libraries Programme, has set minimum recommended standards for records created under projects which it is funding.

5.3.1 Libraries

There were differences here between the library and archives domains. The library domain, which has had format standards in place for some time, felt that MARC format should be the standard in use. On a pragmatic basis, and since conversion programmes exist, most respondents felt that both UK and USMARC should be acceptable

within a national programme. A shift to use of USMARC in the HE sector was noted and there are implications arising from the UK/USMARC harmonisation programme. It was recognised that small libraries and libraries with older automated systems might have more difficulties in this area. There is also the problem of libraries with non-standard, in-house designed automated systems that do not, and cannot, use standard record formats. One suggestion was that it could be a task for the regional library systems to accept records in other formats and convert/upgrade them to the nationally agreed standard. In this area significant work is going on already in some regions.

5.3.2 Archives

The archival domain is in a different situation. Machine-readable records have been created over a much shorter time span and the format standards are used to a lesser degree. However, the sector is in agreement that the foundation for successful and mutually compatible retrospective conversion is an agreed mandatory subset of the International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G)) as a data structure standard. EAD is increasingly widely accepted as a display format but storing descriptions in EAD tends to limit the searches that can be performed on data. Storing data in a relational database and converting it on the fly to EAD for presentation purposes may be more useful. A conversion/mapping utility from EAD to MARC is of value for the incorporation of collection-level descriptions in bibliographic databases, which is a significant issue for some higher education institutions. The attention of archivists is firmly focused on creating a searchable national database of multilevel catalogue data, ideally in the form of a distributed network as modelled in *Archives On-Line*. A series of implementation projects is being planned and implemented to bring this about.

5.3.3 Content

As well as the format standard, a content standard is important. For libraries, this is seen ideally as AACR2, but at a pragmatic level many respondents would accept a defined minimum set of requirements. However, there is concern over some libraries whose systems use only brief circulation-type records rather than full cataloguing records, since other libraries looking for record sources are unlikely to want such records. It is recognised that in many collections in the library domain items have been catalogued to different rules and levels of fullness over the years. The ideal for a national programme is that for any item without an acceptable bibliographic record in existence at present, a record should be created once to the nationally agreed standard. For archives, it is recognised that such a standard would increase the consistency of searches, so it is undoubtedly desirable, but the task of applying it retrospectively is daunting. Archivists should be developing a data content standard and applying it to new records being added to databases in the future.

5.3.4 Small institutions

It was accepted that there are practical difficulties for small libraries and archives. These are often 1 person units with all the pressures and restrictions that this entails. Automated systems are less likely to be in place and those that are may be in-house developments. Systems in place may well be old systems the institution cannot afford to change. Additional support might therefore be required in the form of 'pump priming' money to upgrade systems, and for staff training. It was seen as important to encourage small units to adhere to standards and to make this known to systems suppliers who work in this area.

A professional society library is converting its card catalogue to an automated system by employing a student for 4 hours per week. Since October 1996 (with a gap of 6 months) some 4,000 records have been converted out of 30 to 35,000 records

5.4 Funding

There is a feeling in both the archive and library domains that mass retrospective conversion will only happen quickly and across all institutions if the government and/or a major funder such as the Heritage Lottery Fund supports it and puts resources behind it.

At the start of the study, the team was aware of the major funding streams outlined in the following paragraphs. Two of these streams have been wound up while the others are currently in place. While these schemes have undoubtedly made, and some will continue to make, a contribution to reducing the amount of records still requiring conversion, there has been no consultation between schemes and, until recently, no attempt to look at the overall situation to establish priorities. This has resulted in a situation where the communities do not gain maximum benefit from previous projects' coverage and the possibility that a proportion of records are being produced several times over for the same item.

5.4.1 Non Formula Funding in the Humanities

In 1994 the higher education funding bodies of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland invited submissions for non-formula funding of specialised research collections in the humanities; this funding stream was restricted to libraries in the higher education sector. Funding was focused on conservation, cataloguing of collections (in a format suitable for access over the network) and preservation and many of the projects funded included 2 or all 3 of the activities. Grants were awarded on the basis that institutions provided access to collections for external researchers on the same basis as for researchers within the institution. By 1996 some £45 million had been committed. A report *Accessing our Humanities Collections* lists the work funded during the periods 1994-95 and 1995-96. While the project did not focus solely on retrospective conversion, nearly 200 projects were concerned, either wholly or partly, with either retrospectively converting manual forms of catalogue or retrospectively cataloguing material not previously catalogued, or some combination of these.

5.4.2 British Library Grants for Cataloguing and Preservation

The British Library has recently discontinued the awarding of grants for cataloguing and preservation. Grants awarded under this scheme were for either the cataloguing or preservation of collections or, as was the case with many projects, a combination of the two areas, in both libraries and archives. The Awards Committee gave priority to retrospective cataloguing or to upgrading brief, low-standard catalogues rather than to retrospective catalogue conversion.

During the period 1993-96 a total of 68 projects were funded, wholly or partly, for cataloguing. Another 20 such projects were funded in 1997-98 and a further 9 in 1998-99, bringing the total under this initiative to 97 projects. In the letter announcing the cut, the British Library suggested that institutions which had hoped to apply for the grants consult the BL publication *A Guide to Additional Sources of Funding and Revenue for Libraries and Archives*.

5.4.3 Research Support Libraries Programme

The Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and the Department of Education for Northern Ireland are funding this new national initiative for the higher education sector. The HEFC Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP) begins in 1999-2000 and is expected to run through to 2001-02. Subject to commitment of funds, it is expected to award up to £30 million over the

3 years. 'Targeting Retrospective Conversion of Catalogues' is one of the four strands of the programme. Under this activity RSLP expects to concentrate on retrospective conversion of existing records although some original cataloguing may under certain circumstances be supported. Bids for funds under this area will not be sought separately but will have to be submitted as part of either the 'Research Support for Humanities and Social Sciences' or the 'Collaborative Collection Management' strands. A number of priorities for the programme have been identified in collaboration with the academic community: grey literature, image collections, maps, archival and other manuscript material. RSLP has issued a statement of standards of records to which projects will be expected to conform. The programme will consider funding the 'tidying up' of a small number of collections currently funded by Non-Formula Funding.

5.4.4 Heritage Lottery Fund

The remit of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), under the National Heritage Act 1997, includes documentary heritage projects; support can be given for historic library collections, and specialist collections such as local history libraries, rare books, manuscripts and archives of all kinds, including photographic, film and sound archives. Acceptable activities include cataloguing, listing and microfilming items and improving intellectual access to collections and their content. Support for digitisation is not ruled out but is regarded as a lower priority at present. Collaborative projects are welcomed and applicants from the higher education sector must demonstrate that the project will benefit the wider public. The HLF is currently moving towards sectoral documentation in assessing project applications. These include the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council report, the Heritage Collections in England survey and the NCA report *British Archives: The Way Forward*.

5.4.5 New Opportunities Fund

Within the New Opportunities Fund there is a 'Digital Content' stream of funding. Under this, retrospective catalogue conversion costs can be funded if they are a critical part of a learning resource.

More speculatively, the Community Access to Lifelong Learning (CALL) initiative announced in March 1999 is a £200 million scheme with the aim of engaging more adults in learning at a community level and increasing access to information and communication technology by developing a nationwide network of learning resources. CALL projects will be centred primarily on existing premises, will concentrate on lifelong learning rather than core curriculum, focus on IT infrastructure and will be targeted chiefly at adults. It may be possible for some retrospective conversion projects to be funded in this area, since providing Internet access to a service will only operate effectively if the content, in the form of catalogues and indexes, is present.

5.4.6 European Union

The Fifth Framework includes the area 'Accessing Cultural Digital Content'. It is possible that some projects could be funded under this scheme. The concept of libraries, archives and museums working more closely is welcomed and cross-domain projects encouraged.

5.4.7 Additional Sources of Funding

Respondents to the study team investigation came up with a list of other possible options for financial support; some of these options had been successfully used for funding while others are more speculative suggestions.

One option was institutional funding, either as matched funding to a grant or as the sole source of funding. Also mentioned were institutional

appeals (perhaps linked to anniversaries), and private money and gifts. It was suggested by some that if a national programme were in place and visibly seen as a national priority, this might encourage some institutions to vote additional funds for this work.

Small specialist charities and trusts were mentioned. There is a need here to identify very carefully the body to be approached and to match the bid to its criteria. Other larger trusts and foundations such as Leverhulme, Mellon and Getty had supported some projects. It was noted that the Sainsbury Trust might be a possibility though the approach has to be made through a family member, and that the Carnegie Foundation appears to be becoming more open to approaches by professional groups. The William H. Gates Foundation is looking at computers for libraries in low income areas; while this is mostly for the less developed countries, there may in the future be opportunities for UK libraries.

Government money from various sources is another suggestion. The DCMS Wolfson Challenge Fund 1999-2002 will focus on supporting the infrastructure for the public library network, and the point has been made that electronic catalogues are part of the infrastructure. Initiatives such as the National Grid for Learning, and the Lifelong Learning Partnerships programme may possibly have some funding that can support this area. The Library and Information Commission administers a £200,000 grant fund for improving library services to visually impaired users and uses advice from Share the Vision. If projects include specific access for such users, funding might be available for that element. There may be further higher education initiatives following the Non-Formula Funding and the Research Support Libraries programmes. It has also been suggested that there may be funds from the proposed Museums, Libraries and Archives Commission, and perhaps from the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Parliament and the Regional Development Agencies, though how much and for what is still unclear.

6. A National Strategy

6.1 Why and Why Now?

Government initiatives currently focus on (a) the need to get information technology out to schools and public, and (b) the need to strengthen the infrastructure that supports lifelong learning, raising achievement levels and reskilling the workforce. The need for retrospective cataloguing and conversion of catalogues is a basic requirement in supporting these initiatives. This is the obvious opportunity to put a national strategy in place. The moment is now. We need to make sure that this opportunity is understood and acted upon.

The content (the stock) is already held in libraries and archives and the challenge is to discover it. Much stock is currently recorded in catalogues and indexes in machine-readable form, but some stock is only recorded in manual forms, often to older cataloguing standards with varying forms of access points in use. Work is going on to improve automated searching methods, and linking catalogues through clumps and gateways. However, this ultimately relies for success on the content it is accessing. Being able to search 5 different catalogues from a home PC will not provide effective searching if each catalogue only records 75% of the stock; there is always the potential for missing the items that were really important.

A huge amount of resources in terms of funding, time and effort has already been invested in the compilation of these finding aids. It would maximise this investment to take this work 1 stage further and make the catalogues and indexes uniformly accessible. Cooperative effort under a national programme would bring cost-reduction benefits in record re-use, shared best practice and guidelines for standards, procedures, and project management, while ensuring that the most important material is covered as a priority.

The problem is not going to go away if it is ignored. For archives, since material is rarely discarded after appraisal and cataloguing, if the work is not done now it will still be there in 50 years time. For both libraries and archives the problem is likely to actually increase where institutions are not currently cataloguing in electronic form. For libraries, there is the danger that the significance of collections may be unknown, material (which may be unique or unique to the UK) may be discarded on the premise that since it is uncatalogued or only accessible via manual catalogues it is unimportant. Again for libraries, the regions and other collaborative groups providing the inter-lending infrastructure will run the risk of discarding last copies of titles and of requesting items from outside the region or group when it can be satisfied nearer at hand more easily and at a lower cost.

Retrospective conversion is therefore one of the basic elements of a national library and information policy. The library and archives domains have recognised this need for some time and effort has already gone in to remedying the situation, albeit in an uncoordinated way. They recognise that there is a need to look at this in national terms and to put together a programme that will make most effective use of whatever resources can be found, utilising where possible the traditional cooperative approaches that are a trademark of the domains. They also feel that there should be government funding to help them support government initiatives.

6.2 A Coordinating Body

Requirements for the coordinating focus are that it is a strategic focus which can have synergy with other related national initiatives and the larger pattern of activity, with a cross-domain approach. At present the suggested new Museums, Archives and Libraries Council (MLAC) is the body that best fits the requirements and has the most support from the communities. Other suggestions that have been made are domain based (British Library, Public Record Office) and therefore, strategically, would be the second-choice route.

Positioning the focus in MLAC has problems in that at present it is not known what its structure and remit will be. Furthermore, MLAC will not exist until April 2000 and the national programme for retrospective conversion needs to be put in place as soon as possible. One suggested option is to position the coordinating focus as part of the LIC as an interim measure in order to get something going, keeping in touch with MLAC planning, and as far as possible keeping a structure and role that will fit with the new overseeing body. Our recommendation is that for the present, the Pathfinding Group that commissioned this study take on the coordination of the initiative in the interim.

The retrospective coordination body could be an arm of MLAC and carry out all the work itself. However, while there is a perceived need for a coordinating focus, it is also felt that this should operate as a 'lean' unit with the minimum of staff for the tasks in hand. Following on from this viewpoint, it may operate best by sub-contracting specific work out to other bodies, especially in relation to domain-specific issues.

In order for the effective co-ordination of a UK-wide programme, there will need to be mechanisms for representation and input from the home countries and the English regions. This could be in the form of steering committee or advisory committee membership.

While a national strategy is focused on the UK, there has in the past been cooperation at various levels and in different areas with the Republic of Ireland. Given the possible overlap of records in the library domain between the two countries, the programme should do what it can to foster cooperative work in the retrospective conversion and cataloguing area.

The remit for this study has meant that work has concentrated on libraries and archives. It has become obvious that the museum domain has similar needs, and the top-level strategy for a national programme will need to look at incorporating a museums element.

For the programme to address the needs of both the library and archive domains there will be a need for representation from, and contact with, relevant sources of professional expertise. Acceptance of a museums strand to the national programme means there will be similar requirements in the museums domain. It is likely that this extended representation and contact would be on two levels: membership of a steering or advisory committee and the participation in working parties and sub-contracted work.

A national programme of retrospective catalogue conversion is an essential component of a national library and information policy.
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6.3 A National Programme

There is a clear need for a national programme so that funding is used most effectively and gaps in coverage are eliminated. Although at present no funding has been committed to a national programme, it is important that a programme is mapped out and agreed as a national objective now. This provides the targets and the tasks within an overall timescale, and a selling point to influence potential investors in this venture. By setting out the programme, progress can be monitored and lack of progress due to inadequate funding identified.

The optimal approach would be to design the programme with a blank sheet and do some preliminary work before putting it into operation. However the reality is that work is already going on. More than 40 known projects and an unknown number of unreported projects are already in progress. Some funding streams are in place that can be approached for funding in this area. Libraries and archives cannot afford to ignore the funding that is already available.

The programme must avoid the umbrella strategy adversely affecting current progress. It should not prejudice existing and incipient projects. There will also be a need for both archive and library projects to go forward in parallel; there are distinct needs for the two domains and the strategy must both integrate and diverge. The programme therefore needs to take account of what is going on and quickly find a way to influence the relevant current initiatives. It must also take the longer term view and influence what happens in the future and provide the steer between the present and the future.

To influence the current situation, the programme will need to concentrate initially on providing an 'added value' service to the funders through a national overview of collections and priorities. Some data is already available on this from recent other studies so the programme should aim to collate this and complete the picture.

6.3.1 Action Plan

The library and archive domains need to move forward on this. The initial stages require government acceptance for the optimum scenario. The domains should however consider what they can progress themselves if government support is deferred or not forthcoming.

Ensuring take-up will require the major bodies and institutions in the library and archive domains to present their case to government. They will also need to sell the programme to individual libraries and archives contemplating retrospective conversion so that they operate within the national programme.

A broad outline of the actions which need to be taken are:

1. The library and archives domains accept and support the strategy outlined in this report.
2. The library and archives domains recommend to Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) the placing of a national programme of retrospective conversion in the remit of the new government agency, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLAC).
3. The library and archives domains accept the Pathfinder Group as the coordinating focus to take on Phase 1 as an interim arrangement.
4. A working party should be set up to determine the nature of the coordinating focus, its remit and resources.
5. The agency with the covering remit appoints staff to the coordinating focus.

-
6. The coordinating focus reviews the overall programme and timescale and sets the targets for Phase 2.

The next level of the strategy needs to work at a more detailed level. This has been built up by setting the project in an overall timescale that is divided into phases, and a set of recommended tasks for the early phases.

6.3.2 TIMESCALE

The *Making the Most of Our Libraries* report suggests that 50 million records await conversion in libraries, not forgetting the additional problem of uncatalogued material. The *Archives On-Line* report notes that HMC estimates that the lists of holdings of British archives would extend to around 2 million pages requiring conversion. These are best estimates and there are some suggestions that the figures are an underestimate.

What can be achieved is dependent on the amount of funding available. At present, funding is limited, varies from year to year and comes from several sources, making it difficult to predict how long it might take to complete the programme at current resourcing levels. Given the scale of the problem, the national programme needs to have a sufficiently long-term view, bearing in mind the dangers of too long a plan.

Given an overall timescale, the programme needs to be broken down into phases. The length of phases within the overall period will vary and is dependent on a number of factors. Crucially, funding streams and the political initiatives that create them are unlikely to be able to give commitment for periods longer than 2 to 3 years. There is also a need for the library and archives communities to be able to see progress and achievements within a reasonably short period. For the coordinating body itself to progress the programme in the most effective way, there will be a need for periodic review and the success or otherwise of previous phases will influence the design of succeeding phases.

The optimum approach is seen as a medium-term project which is broken down into phases. Phase 1 will be crucial to the success of the project. There are a number of tasks that would need to be undertaken or at least begun in this phase.

The following recommendations are therefore made.

- The national programme should place its objectives within an overall timescale of 10 years. It should be acknowledged from the start that this will not complete everything but would enable the majority of the work to be done.
- Within the overall period of 10 years, the programme needs to be broken down into phases. It is recommended that Phase 1 lasts for 1 year.

6.3.3 The Programme

6.3.3.1 Overall Timescale

A period of 10 years is required for this initiative, which is expected to deal with around 80% of the existing catalogue records not presently in machine-readable form.

The programme requires a combination of a top down approach that draws everything into a cohesive plan, supported by a bottom up approach to implementation that works from the basis of existing projects, funding and support and towards establishing governmental support and funding to complete the task.

Within the overall timescale the initiative should be broken down into phases of between 1 and 3 years, depending on the tasks involved and the funding available. The duration of these phases is related to the 'future horizons' of government and the major funding agencies.

6.3.3.2 Phase 1

The recommended period for this phase is 1 year.

It is important that this initiative is implemented as soon as possible. Since the recommended proposal to establish a coordinating focus within MLAC cannot be effected until April 2000 at the earliest, and it cannot be assumed that MLAC will take it on, there is a need for an interim body to oversee the initiative. It is proposed that the Pathfinding Group, under the coordination of the British Library, take on this role initially. If there is acceptance for the focus to be based at MLAC, it is likely that the interim group would need to operate for some time after April 2000, including work on an effective hand-over that ensures that any current impetus is not lost.

The group would need to review its own membership and consider the need for appointing additional members to reflect regional viewpoints, increasing archival representation and inclusion of museum representation, and professional general and special interest groups.

The group would also need to examine the role of a shadow focus and an appropriate structure to start implementing the initiative. With a new role and structure, it would be appropriate to consider a new name to reflect this.

Targets for Phase 1

The group would coordinate the initiative, contract out tasks, and build on existing work where possible. The tasks identified for Phase 1 are ambitious and it is not likely that all of Phase 1 can be achieved in one year, given the composition of the Pathfinding Group itself and the funding it may be able to attract initially. It will therefore need to review the targets in the light of available resources and prioritise the tasks it undertakes. It is likely that some groups within the library and archive domains may be able to help in kind by undertaking some tasks.

Assessment of priorities for record conversion: In some areas this could use existing data. Some information on the priorities for the archives domain will be derived from the JISC Archives Sub-Committee survey on needs in higher education institutions and work done by the Access to Archives project. For public libraries there is the *Needs Assessment Survey of Heritage Collections and Materials held in Public Libraries in England*. For the HE sector, the Research Support Libraries Programme priority areas and the data on rare or unique materials, either regionally or nationally, from the current CURL study. Priority assessments would still need to be carried out for collections and materials held in public libraries in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and for collections and material in the independent, special and voluntary organisation libraries.

Outcome: A set of national priorities for all relevant domains and sectors.

Build a register of collections: The archives domain has already made substantial progress towards creating a 'register of collections' through the work of the National Register of Archives; searchable indexes to this data are available online at <<http://www.hmc.gov.uk>>. This data could be enhanced to indicate the existence of manual or machine-readable catalogues. A similar register is required for the library domain. It would be sensible to develop this as a separate database. To assemble this, information already collected for other work should be

collated and updated and completed by additional work. (Initial sources would be *Needs Assessment Survey of Heritage Collections and Materials held in Public Libraries in England*, the *Directory of Rare Book and Special Collectios*' and data from Philip Bryant's *Making the Most of Our Libraries* studies. Other potential sources are the current CURL and 'Futures Together' studies and recent and current work at the NPO.) The register should include details of whether collections have machine-readable records or not, in order to enable monitoring of what still remains to be done. Other work being done in the field of collection-level descriptions is likely to prove useful.

Outcome: A register of collections in the library domain.

Identify and monitor projects completed and in progress: Data collected for this study, and from the funding streams' successful bids listings could be used to compile a list. Supplementary survey work might be required. Details of projects recently completed would be used to update the register of collections. It is unlikely that there will be funding available in Phase 1 for the initiative to administer, but there should be new projects taking advantage of the current funding streams.

Outcome: A list of projects recently completed and in progress.

Work with funding bodies: Establish and maintain relationships with existing and potential funders. Use the priority assessments to advise funders on national priorities when assessing bids. Use the register of collections data to inform funders of the areas still requiring investment.

Outcome: Useful working relationships with funders in place.

Promotion: Develop and implement an information strategy, which includes outreach to the community, and the promotion of the programme to government and funders. 'Champion' the importance of this work where relevant, and promote its relevance to initiatives such as the National Grid for Learning. Work on the establishment of a coordinating focus for the initiative. Work on putting the case for additional national funding for the initiative. If possible find some 'champions' in the public arena to support the strategy.

Outcome: Government support for the initiative. Coordinating body established. Additional funding secured.

Awareness: Monitor funding streams currently available. Inform library and archive domains of the streams available and any priorities set by the funding bodies. Monitor multinational and international initiatives in this area and inform the domains of any opportunities to participate in such initiatives that will further the national programme.

Outcome: The library and archive domains are kept aware of relevant initiatives.

Standards: Establish standards and best practice guidelines for record creation and access policies. These may necessarily be different for the library and archive domains but where possible joint practice should be agreed.

Outcome: Standards and best practice guidelines agreed and disseminated.

Support: Establish support for staff through advice and referral services. Establish a clearing-house to help locate people with appropriate skills.

Outcome: Support services in place.

Skills Audit: Undertake a skills audit to identify potential shortfalls in the number of skilled personnel available to undertake the work

required in a national initiative. Work with the professional bodies to address the problem, exploring the feasibility of short courses and other options.

Outcome: A skills audit completed. Planning on addressing the problem initiated.

Dissemination: Establish a network presence. This would make the registers, guidelines, and clearing-house services available through a central focus, with appropriate links (e.g. to the National Register of Archives site). The most appropriate host location would be that of whatever coordinating focus is established but an interim site may be required. Since many libraries and archives do not yet have Internet access, consideration should be given to alternative print routes such as professional journals and newsletters.

Outcome: A website for the initiative. Alternative print dissemination route in place.

Evaluate Phase 1: Identify which of the planned tasks for Phase 1 has been implemented. Review progress on each of the implemented tasks and evaluate their contribution to the initiative.

Outcome: A list of tasks indicating implementation status.

Plan phase 2: Plan and set targets for Phase 2. If a new coordinating focus has not been designated, then Pathfinding Group retains coordination role for Phase 2 and should again review its own composition. Planning for Phase 2 should include a longer-term look at how subsequent phases would take forward the programme.

Outcome: A targeted plan for Phase 2.

6.3.3.3 Phase 2

The recommended period for this phase is 2 years.

The Pathfinding Group starts planning the hand-over to the coordinating focus, if one has been established. If no coordinating focus is established, the group continues to coordinate the initiative and to consider further options for a coordinating focus.

The plan for Phase 2 would be set as part of Phase 1 and is likely to include the following tasks. Monitoring progress would include reviewing which of the tasks set for Phase 1 had been started and were still in progress, which had been completed, and which had still to be tackled.

Monitor progress on programme: Monitor collections completed against register of collections. Review priorities for collections still needing retrospective conversion.

Outcome: Updated register of collections. Revised national set of priorities.

Monitor progress on initiative: Review tasks from Phase 1. Arrange for completion of unfinished tasks from Phase 1.

Outcome: Plans to complete unfinished tasks from Phase 1.

Funding: If Pphase 1 work has been successful in securing additional funding for the initiative, either administer or advise on administration of the funding. If additional funding has not been secured, make further effort to secure such funding. Whether or not additional funding has been secured, review current funding streams available and inform library and archive domains of the funding streams and any priorities that have been set by the funding bodies. Continue to work on

influencing funding bodies to use national priorities set in the retrospective conversion programme.

Outcome: The initiative administers, and/or advises on administration of funding.

Plan phase 3: Review progress of Phase 2. Plan and set targets for Phase 3. If new coordinating focus has not been designated, then Pathfinding Group retains coordination role for phase 3. Take an initial look at how subsequent phases would take forward the programme.

Outcome: A targeted plan for Phase 3.

6.4 Dissemination

Dissemination needs to take place in 3 areas. It needs to target at government level to ensure support and funding. This would include presentation of the report to the Library and Information Commission for referral to DCMS, and statements of support by relevant bodies within the communities. It needs to target institutions to assist libraries and archives within those institutions to get the national importance of this issue recognised. It needs to be focused at individual libraries and archives to inform them of the new approach and encourage them to take part. They need to know what help and support it can give them.

- After acceptance by the commissioning group, this report should be mounted on the web and appropriate mailing lists used to publicise it.
- The respondents in the consultations are in favour of a brief summary document to be mailed out nationally to the domains.
- The study remit includes publishing articles in the professional press of both the library and archive domains on the study and its recommendations.

There is support for a comprehensive website to be put in place as part of the work of the coordinating body. This would keep the programme in the public eye and also keep the communities informed about progress. The study web pages on the UKOLN site are not intended to be a permanent site but material contained there could form the basis of a new site. Potentially, there is also data available from other studies that could be utilised for the new site.

At the same time it is recognised that many medium and small libraries and archives do not at present have access to either email or the Internet. It is suggested that use be made of professional body mailing options and newsletters to disseminate widely.

Appendix A

PATHFINDING GROUP

Chair to 1st April 1999

Nigel Macartney British Library Research and Innovation Centre

Chair from 2nd April 1999

David Bradbury British Library

Members

Chris Bailey Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL) (from 1.4.99)

Vic Gray National Council on Archives

Stephen Green Heritage Lottery Fund

Margaret Haines Library and Information Commission

Frances Hendrix Library and Information Co-operation Council (LINC)

Graham Jefcoate British Library Early Printed Collections

Clare Jenkins Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL) (to 31.3.99)

Ronald Milne Research Support Libraries Programme

Support

Hazel Dakers British Library Research and Innovation Centre

Stephanie Kenna British Library Research and Innovation Centre

UKOLN AND NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES

Study team

Ann Chapman Research Officer, UKOLN

Lorcan Dempsey Director, UKOLN

Nicholas Kingsley NCA and Central Library Manager (Archives, Local Studies and History), Birmingham Central Library

Additional work by UKOLN staff

Reference searches on the Internet

Michael Day Research Officer, UKOLN

Creation of study web pages

Sarah Ormes Research Officer, UKOLN

Workshop facilitator

Chris Kirk KC Switch Enterprises

The National Council on Archives was established in 1987 as a representative council to bring together the major bodies and organisations concerned with the care, custody and use of archives and to provide a forum for the regular exchange of views between them.

UKOLN: The UK Office for Library and Information Networking is funded by the Library and Information Commission (formerly by the British Library Research and Innovation Centre) and by the Joint Information Systems Committee of the Higher Education Funding Councils, as well as by project funding from the JISC's Electronic Libraries Programme and the European Union. UKOLN also receives support from the University of Bath where it is based.

Appendix B

WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

Birmingham workshop: 26th February 1999

Tudfil Adams	Powys Library Service
Philippa Bassett	Birmingham University Archives
Elizabeth Bennett	Swansea University Archives
Vivian Cook	OCLC
Alan Crookham	University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre
Chris Dodd	WMRLS
Rhidian Griffiths	National Library of Wales
Peter King	Bristol University Library
David Liddle	Consultant
Mary Mackenzie	Shropshire Record Office
Graham Roe	Sheffield University Library
Nigel Rudyard	NWRLS
Gillian Whichelo	British Waterways

London workshop: 2nd March 1999

Gill Cornelius	Natural History Museum
Moira Goff	ESTC project manager
Richard Haywood	British Library AP&C
Richard Harris	Essex Record Office
Deborah Jenkins	London Metropolitan Archives
Thalia Knight	Royal College of Surgeons
Marian Lefferts	CERL
Yvonne Lewis	National Trust
David Mander	Hackney Archives
Patricia Methven	Chair JISC Archives sub-committee
Margaret Procter	Liverpool University Archives
Jane Savidge	National Art Library
David Shaw	University of Kent, Cathedral Libraries
Rachel Stockdale	British Library Manuscripts Department
Ruth Vyse	University of London Archives

Edinburgh workshop: 4th March 1999

Gordon Anderson	Glasgow City Libraries
Ishbel Barnes	Scottish Archives Network
Gordon Dunsire	Napier University Library
John Hall	Durham University Archives
Ann Matheson	National Library of Scotland
Robert Newton	School of Information and Media, Robert Gordon University
Maureen Ridley	Scottish Regional Library System
Anne Rowe	Cumbria Archive Service
Murray Simpson	Edinburgh University Library
Jennifer Tait	Dundee University Archives
Rachel Watson	Northamptonshire Record Office

Appendix C

CONSULTATION BY TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

As part of the study, a structured telephone interview consultation was carried out. The aim was to consult as widely as possible, but because of the limited time to carry this out it was not possible to contact some people that we had hoped to consult. In addition the issues were discussed informally with a number of other contacts at meetings and events. The following is a list of those that were consulted.

List of consultation contacts

Ishbel Barnes	Scottish Archives Network
Alan Bell	The London Library
Alun Bevan	The Library Council, Republic of Ireland
Barry Bloomfield	Retired
Sue Brown	Library Association
Philip Bryant	RETIRED
Paul Bunn	British Library
Stella Butler	Consultant
Patrick Cadell	National Archives of Scotland
Mike Dale	Saztec
Petros Demetriou	Innovative
Chris Dodd	WMRLS
Steve Dodd	Interlending Wales
Doug Dodds	National Art Library
Stuart Ede	British Library
James Elliot	British Library
Geoffrey Forster	Association of Independent Libraries
John Gray	Linen Hall Library
Vic Gray	National Council on Archives
Stephen Green	Heritage Lottery Fund
Jennifer Grew	South Bank University
Rhidian Griffiths	National Library of Wales
Frances Hendrix	LASER
Peter Hoare	Historic Libraries Forum
Graham Jefcoate	British Library Early Printed Collections
Deborah Jenkins	Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government
Chris Kitching	Historical Manuscripts Commission
Chris Koster	LINC and Kensington & Chelsea Libraries
Janet Lees	OCLC
Ray Lester	Natural History Museum

Yvonne Lewis	National Trust
Michael Long	Information North
Bill McNaught	Society of Chief Librarians
Pat Manson	European Commission DGXIII
Ann Matheson	National Library of Scotland
Bernard Naylor	Southampton University
Bridget Powell	SWRLS
Maureen Ridley	SRLS
Frank Robinson	Nineteenth Century STC
Nigel Rudyard	NWRLS and Unity
Norman Russell	Queen's University Belfast
Deborah Shorley	ARLIS
Peter Smith	Viscount
Hugh Taylor	Cambridge University Library
David Thomas	Public Record Office
Sarah Tyacke	Public Record Office
Geoff Warren	WMRLS
Paul Watry	Liverpool University
Rachel Watson	Northamptonshire Record Office
Alison Wheeler	EMRLS
Terry Willan	BLCMP
Combined response	SCURL members

Appendix D

CONFERENCE DELEGATES

List of delegates at the 'Under Development' conference held on 10th May 1999 at the BL Conference Centre, St. Pancras

Elizabeth Archer	Nottingham University Library
John Ashworth	The British Library
Robert Atkinson	The London Library
Paul Ayris	University College, London
Christine Bailey	CURL
Toby Bainton	SCONUL
Anne Barlow	Saztec Europe Ltd
David Blake	The British Library
John Blunden-Ellis	CALIM
David Bradbury	The British Library
Sue Brown	The Library Association
Philip Bryant	Independent
Joan Bullock-Anderson	Churchill College
Paul Bunn	The British Library
Peter Burnett	Bodleian Library
Stella Butler	CURL
Matthew Byng	Department of Trade and Industry
Ann Chapman	UKOLN
Mary Clapinson	Bodleian Library
Chris Coates	University of North London
Dave Cook	JISC Secretariat
Vivien Cook	OCLC Europe
David Cooper	Oxford University
Gill Cornelius	The Natural History Museum
Ros Cotton	British Library
Alan Crookham	University of Warwick
Mike Crump	The British Library
Hazel Dakers	The British Library
Michael Dale	Saztec Europe Ltd
Gill Davenport	Joint HE Funding Councils
Jack Davis	Galsgow City Council
David Dawson	Museums and Galleries Commission
Lorcan Dempsey	UKOLN
Pauline Dingley	National Museum of Science & Industry
Douglas Dodds	National Art Library
Sarah Dodgson	The Athenaeum
John Dolan	Birmingham City Council
Robert Duckett	LA Yorkshire and Humberside Branch
Gordon Dunsire	Napier University
Stuart Ede	The British Library
James Elliott	The British Library
Stephen Ellison	House of Lords Record Office
Karen Esson	Westminster City Council
John Feather	Loughborough University
Elizabeth Finn	Oxfordshire Archives
Heather Forbes	Hampshire Record Office
Geoffrey Forster	The Leeds Library
Veronica Fraser	Department of Health
Gabriella Giganti	Courtauld Institute of Art
Moira Goff	The British Library
John Gray	Linen Hall Library
Margaret Haines	Library and Information Commission

Peter Harbord	Durham University
Catherine Hare	University of Northumbria at Newcastle
Richard Harris	Essex Record Office
Gareth Haulfryn Williams	Gwynedd Council
Richard Haywood	The British Library
Ruth Hellen	IAML (UK)
Frances Hendrix	LASER
Brian Hillyard	National Library of Scotland
Carol Holmes	London Borough of Lambeth
Beth Houghton	Tate Gallery
Claire Hudson	Theatre Museum
Kathryn Hughes	National Library of Wales
Jackie Hwang	University of Birmingham
Elspeth Hyams	Institute of Information Scientists
Nick James	Leicester University
Heather Jardine	Corporation of London
Graham Jefcoate	The British Library
Hettie Jones	LA West Midlands Branch
Richard Jones	BMA Library
Michael Jubb	Arts & Humanities Research Board
Ruth Kamen	Royal Institute of British Architects
Stephanie Kenna	The British Library
Peter King	University of Bristol
Nick Kingsley	Birmingham City Council
Chris Kirk	KC Switch Enterprises
Robert Kirk	West Sussex County Council
Thalia Knight	Royal College of Surgeons of England
Chris Koster	LINC
Morag Kyle	Edinburgh City Libraries
Vanessa Lacey	Cambridge University
Jeannette Lake	Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine
Juliet Leeves	Independent
Marian Lefferts	CERL
Yvonne Lewis	The National Trust
David Liddle	Society of Chief Librarians
Ewa Lipniacka	LASER
Norman Madill	University of Leeds
Samantha Mager	Shropshire Records & Research
David Mander	London Borough of Hackney
Genea Maresch	The Polish Library
Vanessa Marshall	National Preservation Office
Graham Mckenna	British Geological Survey
Anne Mealia	CURL
Diane Mercer	University College, London
Patricia Methven	King's College, London
Ronald Milne	Joint HE Funding Councils
Bernard Naylor	University of Southampton
Howard Nicholson	University of Bath
Fiona O'Brien	BBC/LA Libraries Project
Sarah Ormes	UKOLN
David Owen	Share the Vision
Tim Owen	Library and Information Commission
Michael Page	Surrey History Service
Martin Palmer	Essex County Council
Richard Palmer	Lambeth Palace Library
David Pearson	The Wellcome Trust
Stella Pilling	The British Library
Glynis Platt	John Rylands Univ. Lib. of Manchester
Penny Pope	University of Westminster
Jeremy Potter	University of Brighton

Claire Powell	London Library
Frank Robinson	Nineteenth Century STC
K.M. Rolph	Tyne and Wear Archives
Seamus Ross	University of Glasgow
Ann Rowe	Cumbria County Council
Bruce Royan	Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network
Deborah Ryan	North West Regional Library System
Richard Sargent	Historical Manuscripts Commission
Karen Sayers	York Minster Library
Ruth Shaw	Museums, Libraries & Archives Council
Julia Sheppard	Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine
Gerry Slater	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
Geoff Smith	The British Library
Louise Smith	Museum Documentation Association
Robert Smith	The British Library
Steven Smith	Institute of Historical Research
David Stewart	Royal Society of Medicine
Emma Stewart	London Metropolitan Archives
Rachel Stockdale	The British Library
Paul Sturges	Loughborough University
Iga Szmidt	The Polish Library
J.R.H. Taylor	Cambridge University
Richard Taylor	National Railway Museum
Alan Thomas	Thames Valley University
David Thomas	Public Record Office
Frances Thomson	University of Liverpool
Richard Thurlow	The British Library
Linda Tomos	Wales Information Network
Andrew Wale	Glasgow University
Alison Walker	National Preservation Office
Julia Walworth	University of London Library
Geoff Warren	West Midlands Regional Library System
Maureen Watry	University of Liverpool
Paul Watry	University of Liverpool
Rachel Watson	Northamptonshire Record Office
John Watts-Williams	National Library of Wales
Patricia Whatley	University of Dundee
Alison Wheeler	Suffolk County Council
Gillian Wheeler	British Waterways
Terry Willan	BLCMP Library Services
Gwyn Williams	Society of Chief Librarians
Christine Wise	London Guildhall University
Susi Woodhouse	EARL
Christine Woodland	University of Warwick

Appendix E

GLOSSARY

The separate development of the language of librarianship and archival science has led to some confusing variations in the use of words which are common to both professions, such as collection and record. The differences between manuscripts and printed works have also led to very different curatorial practices for the arrangement and description of archival and library materials. In the interests of clarity, a short summary of normal curatorial practices in the two professions is given here, together with definitions of the key concepts. Every effort has been made to ensure that this report is consistent in its use of terminology, and the definitions given below should apply to each use of the terms described in the report.

The organisation of materials in an archival repository. Archival repositories (also known as archival institutions, and confusingly as Archives) may be free-standing institutions or part of larger organisations, such as a university library. Even in the latter context, however, it is usual (and essential for best practice) for the *archives* to be physically and intellectually distinct from the institution's other materials.

Within the archival *repository* will be held a number of different *fonds*, representing the archives generated by a single individual or organisation (e.g. the James Watt papers, or the Beacon Insurance Co. records, or the records of the Colmore family of Newhall). In large repositories, these fonds may be grouped together in intellectually convenient ways, into *management groups* (e.g. School Records, Ecclesiastical Records etc).

A typical fonds will be analysed intellectually into subdivisions. The number of *levels of description* appropriate for any given fonds will depend upon the complexity of the organisation which created them, and hence of the archives themselves. Frequently, however, a fonds will be divided into *series*, the components of which have a relationship because they result from the same process or activity, and each series into *files*, which are usually the physical entities produced for consultation by users. Files themselves may be subdivided into *items*, the smallest intellectually indivisible archival unit, e.g. a letter, memorandum, report, or the minutes of a single meeting. Other levels of description, intermediate between these levels, may be added as necessary to reflect the structure of the fonds; such intermediate levels would be referred to as sub-fonds, sub-series, sub-sub-series etc.

The terms fonds, series, file and item, which are the recognised international standard archival terminology, do not, however, yet have wide currency among British archivists, who frequently use other terms for the same concepts. British terminology has itself not been consistent, but the terms *collection*, *class*, *item* and *piece* probably have the greatest currency. **The international standard terminology has been adopted in this report.** Descriptions of fonds, series, files and items etc. seldom exist in isolation. Most commonly they are combined in a *catalogue*, where the descriptions of the various levels are arranged in a logical order. A *guide* usually concentrates on information at fonds, or at fonds and series levels, so as to give a summary indication of the holdings of a repository or the scope of a management group.

The organisation of materials in a library. *Libraries* usually exist in relation to a larger organisation (whether a university, local authority, or other type of body) but some (such as subscription libraries) are independent.

While many libraries are housed in one physical location, those serving large organisations are often divided into branches either on the basis of subject coverage or geographic location. Within the physical location, stock is generally stored on a thematic basis, using some form of subject classification.

Many libraries divide their stock into *collections*, which may or may not be physically separated from other stock. Collections may reflect physical format (sound recordings), user category (junior fiction), subject areas (the history of printing or William Wordsworth), or bequest source (the Addenbrooke collection). They can range in size from a few items to several thousand.

In the past, library stock was traditionally in the form of printed materials, together with manuscripts, maps and printed music. Recent years have seen libraries including all physical formats, including the electronic ones, in their stock.

Historically, libraries have referred to their stock in terms of *titles* and *volumes*. Each individual version (edition) of an intellectual printed work is termed a title (thus the 1st and 2nd editions of a book are 2 separate titles). Libraries often have multiple copies of some titles, and the number of physical items is referred to as the number of volumes. Where a library has 5 copies of 1 edition of the Bible, it has 1 title but 5 volumes. With the increase in other material types in stock, the term volumes may be replaced by items.

Each title is described in a *bibliographic record*, which is 1 entry in a *catalogue*. Older manual forms of catalogue (guardbooks, sheaf and card catalogues) may have 1 or more copies recorded on a single entry or have individual entries for each physical item. Electronic catalogues more usually (though not always) have one bibliographic record per title which includes details of all the copies held. The number of records in a catalogue may therefore reflect either the number of titles, or the number of volumes, or a combination of both.

Just as stock is separated into collections, the catalogues often reflect this. In a card catalogue, for instance, there may be separate sequences for the different collections. The trend today is for the electronic catalogues to be merged and for the bibliographic record to indicate that an item belongs to a specific collection through holdings data.

TERMS

Domain. This term is used to refer to broad areas of activity. It is the word that has been preferred in this report to distinguish between archives, libraries and museums. It is also the term used to distinguish between digital and hard-copy materials, e.g. 'in the digital domain'.

Sector. This is the term used to distinguish between institutions with different funding and government structures, e.g. the higher education sector; the local government sector.

Retrospective catalogue conversion

The **conversion of existing records** in manually produced catalogues into machine-readable form for use by computers. This can also include upgrading or over-writing low-grade records with higher standard records.

Examples of methods used are (a) image scanning processes, (b) agency keyboard input from marked-up originals, and (c) batch runs against other databases using some form of key for matching. Various degrees of editing and adding copy-specific data may be required dependent on the methods used and this on occasion may require recourse to the item in question.

Retrospective cataloguing

For material which is not in the category of current acquisitions, **cataloguing from the item in hand** to produce a machine-readable record on an **item-by-item basis**.

Examples of methods used are (a) original cataloguing, (b) individually locating and using an existing record from a database, and (c) participating in wider collaborative projects where libraries use the item in hand to notify a central body of holdings and can derive/acquire a record from a project file. Methods (b) and (c) can include adding copy-specific data as required.

Archival terms

Archives. This term is not used to refer to institutions, but only to the physical materials which comprise their resources. The term *records* is commonly also used in the same way, but in this report 'archives' has been used consistently.

Catalogue. A multilevel finding aid, typically containing descriptive information at all levels of description from the fonds to the item, and intended to provide a detailed information on the structure and content of a fonds.

Class. In British archival terminology, commonly used as an alternative to *series*.

Collection. In British archival terminology, commonly used as an alternative to *fonds*.

File. An organised unit of documents grouped together either for current use by the creator or in the process of archival arrangement, because they relate to the same subject, activity or transaction. A file is usually the basic unit within a series. In British archival terminology, a file is confusingly commonly called an *item*.

Fonds. The whole of the documents, regardless of form or medium, organically created and/or accumulated and used by a particular person, family or corporate body in the course of that creator's activities and functions. In British parlance, commonly referred to as a *collection* or as an *archive* (in the singular).

Guide. A finding aid, often but not invariably containing fonds-level descriptions only, intended to provide a high-level overview of the holdings of a repository.

Item. The smallest intellectually indivisible archival unit, e.g. a letter, memorandum, report or the minutes of a single meeting. In British archival terminology, however, the term *item* is commonly used as an alternative to *file*, and the term *piece* is preferred to *item*.

Level of description. The position of a description in the hierarchy of the fonds in which it occurs, e.g. 'series level', 'fonds level'.

Management Groups. In some archival repositories, *catalogues* of *fonds* are grouped together in ways that reflect similarities between the creating entities of the fonds; e.g. School Records, Ecclesiastical Records.

Piece. In British archival terminology, commonly used as an alternative to *item*.

Record. British archival practice uses this term both for the documents held in archival repositories, and, following library practice, for the catalogue data about a particular *file* or *item*. For clarity, this report uses the word 'record(s)' only to describe catalogue data, and uses 'archives' to describe the documents themselves.

Repository. This is the term preferred to denominate an archival institution.

Series. Documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit because they result from the same accumulation or filing process, or the same activity; have a particular form; or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt or use. In British archival terminology, a series is frequently called a *class*.

Library terms

Authority file (name). A list of established preferred forms of personal and corporate names, so that any author can be consistently identified as one specific person.

Bibliographic description. The description of a published work of intellectual content giving particulars about its composition and publication.

Bibliographic record. A record that contains the bibliographic description. It can exist in different formats. The bibliographic record in a card catalogue is a single card.

Cataloguing rules (or code). A set of rules for guidance of cataloguers so as to ensure uniformity in record creation and amendment.

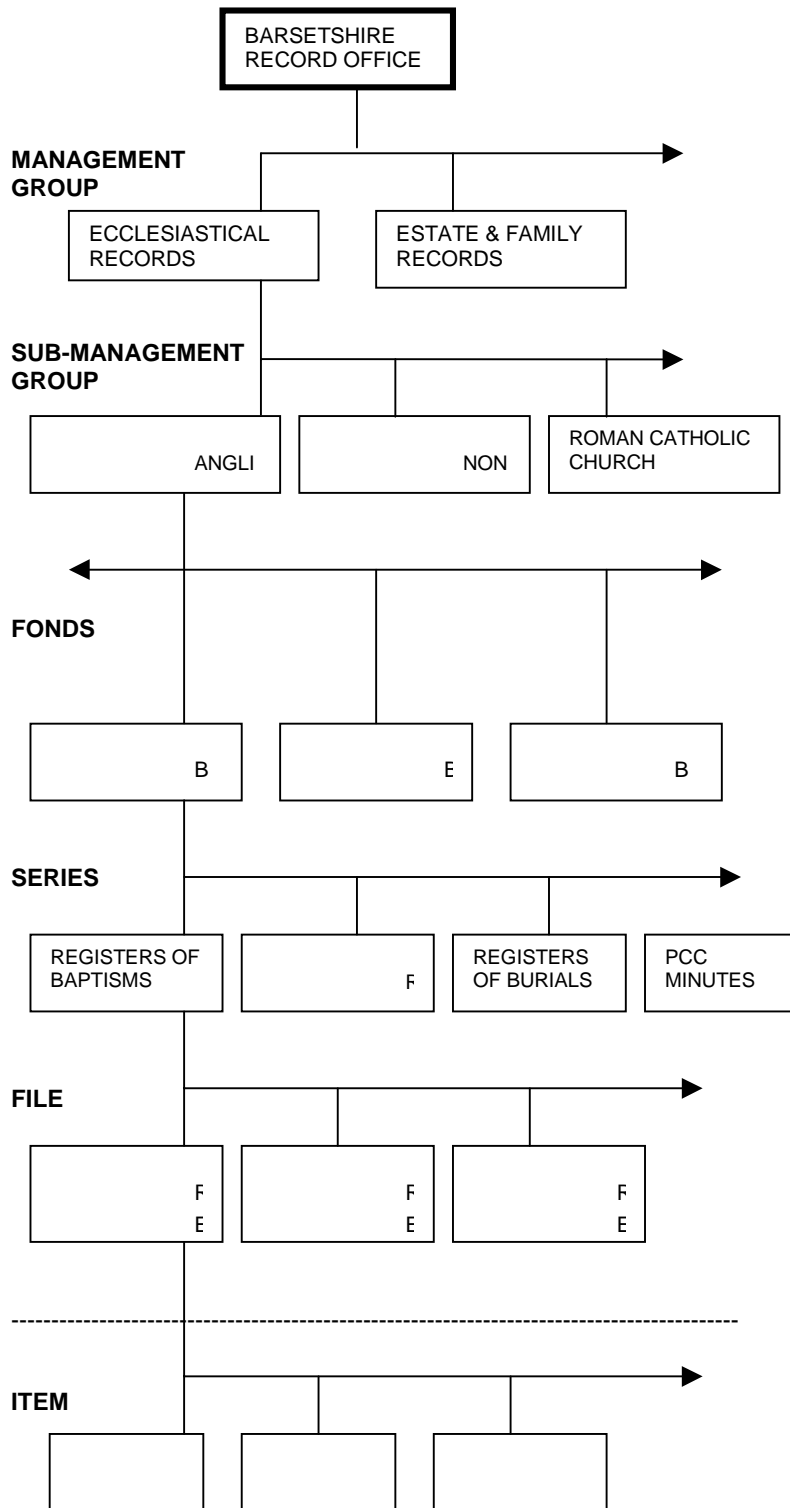
Collection. A number of books and/or other items on one subject or of one kind or collected by one person or organisation. A group of materials that are often separately located within the library. The size of collections can vary from a few items to several thousand items.

Library. A collection of materials which have intellectual content. In the past most, if not all, the materials were printed materials and manuscripts. Libraries today are likely to contain varying numbers of items in other physical formats, including electronic formats.

Title. A single edition of a published work. This term is used when describing the content of a collection. Since a title may be represented by more than one copy, a library or a collection will contain more volumes than titles.

Volume. A single physical item. This term is used when describing the size of a collection in terms of physical objects. The term *item* may also be used in this context.

ARCHIVAL REPOSITORY



Levels of description within an archival repository

Appendix F

PROJECTS SINCE 1997

These details have been collected as part of the study by asking the members of the library and archives communities to supply the study team with details. With such a self-selecting set of projects this does not cover all projects currently in progress. For the above reasons, this list is indicative, not comprehensive. In particular it is noted that no details have been supplied for public libraries. While it is known that there are some such projects (some public libraries have been successful in bidding for Heritage Lottery Fund money), it probably also reflects the comparative lack of resources in this sector for such work.

Further surveys

CURL A feasibility study to investigate how a national programme of retrospective conversion of catalogue records could contribute to broadening the nation's heritage of printed books. The study will aim to achieve the maximum potential transferability of the project architecture to other sectors of the UK archive and library community concerned with the documentary heritage. July 1998 to March 1999. Web: <http://www.curl.ac.uk/db_project.htm>.

Needs Assessment Survey of Heritage Materials and Collections

Commissioned by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Library Association for LASER to survey heritage material held in local authority public libraries in England. Findings from the survey will contribute to the HLF Strategic Plan and form the basis for policy and priority formulation in the HLF. In addition to books and manuscripts, the survey encompassed a wide range of media including art prints, sound recordings, film, microform and artefacts. However, newspapers, modern electronic/digital media and surrogates were not surveyed. June to December 1998. Web: <<http://viscount.org.uk/heritage>>.

EARL: Special Collections Initiative This surveyed EARL members' special collections in 1996. Lists and descriptions of these special collections are available in the EARL website: <<http://www.earl.org.uk/services>>.

Multi-Institutional Projects

Cathedral Libraries Project Coordinated by the Cathedral Libraries and Archives Association (CLAA). The aims of the project were: (a) to achieve the cataloguing of those books in cathedral libraries published up to 1800 then uncatalogued, using machine-readable records wherever possible, (b) to convert existing manual records for cathedral libraries into machine-readable records, (c) to convert existing machine-readable records into a common format, and (d) to promote the sharing of machine-readable records between cathedral libraries in order to achieve economies of scale and to provide wider access

A catalogue is now in print for material up to 1700 but work still has to be done for books published between 1701 and 1800.

EngSTC The English Short Title Catalogue is a retrospective cataloguing project, that aims to provide a comprehensive bibliography for English publications in the period 1701-1800, to list the whereabouts of surviving copies, and to note the existence of facsimiles. In 1987 it was decided to extend coverage to include material from the earliest printing in England (c.1473). It is based on the collections of 1,600 institutions worldwide. Begun in 1977, work is still in progress. It is available as a CD-ROM.

The Chetham's Library and Lambeth Palace Library projects (both

detailed below under Institutional Conversions) are two examples of libraries that have contributed to the EngSTC, had their material matched or catalogued and have later downloaded the relevant records for local use.

CERL Hand Press Book Database The database comprises records in UNIMARC describing titles up to about 1830 coming from different sources and is a multinational database. The database was conceived in 1992 and uses UNIMARC format; it is hosted on RLIN in USMARC. Records are derived from a number of sources and can now be submitted in USMARC as well as UNIMARC. Begun in 1992, work is still in progress.

Institutional Conversions

British Waterways Archive canal records (deposited by British Waterways) are held in 15 different repositories throughout the UK, in museums as well as record offices. A bid to the HLF to retroconvert the catalogues and transfer the catalogues onto the Internet so that eventually searchers can find information on canal history regardless of where the information is held has been approved. The 3-year project is divided into phase 1, evaluate the problem and plan the framework (1 year), and phase 2, implementation (2 years).

Cambridge University Library American microform series project. Two series are covered by this project – Early American Imprints and Wright American Fiction – to include records for these in the online main catalogue. Largely completed by end of July 1998. A small amount of residual work remains (approx. 4 weeks work), for which part of the original budget was set aside.

Cambridge University Library Conversion of the guardbook catalogue, covering all ‘primary academic material’ published between 1501 and 1978. Progress is dependent on the number of clerical assistants employed.

Cambridge, St. Catherine’s College St. Catherine’s has a printed catalogue (18th century) of the rare book holdings, an early 20th century shelf list and a card catalogue produced in the 1970s. The project covers the books in the basement bookstore, being largely the 18th century bequest of Bishop Sherlock, plus bequests of the Addenbrooke and Neale collections (mostly medical) and other accessions up to the late 19th century. There are around 25,000 volumes representing (probably) 15,000 titles.

Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College *Part A.* The undergraduate (Richard Powell) collection, comprising approximately 25,000 printed items and a small collection of AV material. Four-year conversion of the existing card catalogue and complete reclassification of the stock to Bliss (2nd edition) just completed. *Part B.* The Muniment Room collections (historic library and college archives) are separately administered by the archivist, although there is extensive cooperation with the library. Over 5 years this is 75% completed.

Chetham’s Library, Manchester Chetham’s Library, founded 1653 (the oldest public library in the English-speaking world) is an academic research library with a collection of printed books of 100,000 plus vols. A new electronic catalogue of the rare book holdings is being created.

Dundee University Archives Retroconversion of all manual catalogues. The project, which also involves other aspects of increasing access, will take 4 years (so not all the 4 years has been spent on retroconversion). Web: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/Archives/>

EMRLS (East Midlands Regional Library System) A bid has been

made to the New Opportunities Fund to get a selection of the region's uncatalogued reserves and special collections catalogued. Anticipated timescale 1998 to 2003.

Essex Record Office All existing catalogues will be converted during a 3-year project (1996 to 1999) This is approximately the equivalent of 80,000 pages of A4. Conversion consists of 3 parts: (1) annotating existing hard copy to enable consistent conversion (in-house); (2) keying-in (an agency); (3) loading the basic text thus produced into the public access module of the Record Office's SEAX computerised cataloguing and indexing system (in-house).

Kent at Canterbury, University of. Centre for Study of Cartoons and Caricatures On-line A unique archive of 85,000 plus pieces of original cartoon artwork. Some 25,000 items so far catalogued onto a computerised database that retrieves both catalogue information and the cartoon image. The remainder are at various stages of cataloguing which is done as and when money is obtained. There is also a supporting library of 5,000 plus items (around 2,000 books plus pamphlets and AV materials) which is uncatalogued.

Web: <<http://libservb.ukc.ac.uk/cartoons/>>.

Gwynedd Archives Service The aim is to convert 7,500 pages of A4 catalogues, most already roughly scanned by OCR but needing editing. Lists will be available on the Gwynedd home page in due course. CALM2000 is being considered to carry this and for use as ongoing listing tool. Aim over 5 years is to convert all 31,000 pages of list to electronic format. The project started in November 1998 and is ongoing.

Hackney Archives Department Images/Maps digital catalogue (Hackney on Disk) now comprising about 12,000 entries of which 10,000 are complete with images. Project has taken place in 3 phases. ADLIB software was acquired at no charge in exchange for demonstration and market support, etc. (ADLIB has no long-term funding against it at present.) Archives: use of ADLIB software in preliminary stages with some lists converted by manual editing. Books: use of ADLIB software with manual entry of c.800 titles plus sermons collection of c.850 titles. Sermons collection work funded originally by British Library. Project started May 1995 and staff post funded to March 2000.

Heythrop College Library, University of London There are a total of some 250,000 volumes in the library, of which just over 40,000 are catalogued on the automated system (Innopac). The project will aim to add substantially to the percentage of holdings that are catalogued on the computer. The project will be done in-house, with two cataloguers working full-time on the project using the Innovative automated system, including its Z39.50 server to import records. There is also a fairly large rare book collection, which it is hoped to catalogue at least partly online, with cataloguers making use of the ESTC. Project will last for 5 years starting in early 1999.

Lambeth Palace Library Currently half-way through the conversion of its catalogue of printed books, funded by public appeal. Phase One covered the installation of hardware (Dynix) and software and the initiation of online cataloguing of new accessions. Phase Two covers the conversion of the existing catalogue to machine-readable form in-house by additional temporary staff. Since the launch of this project, the library has also taken into its care the early collections from Sion Hill College (some 35,000 volumes plus some 30,000 pamphlets) and, at present, does not have the means to computerise these catalogues. The

conversion of the library's catalogues of manuscripts and archives represent a further, long-term project, also beyond current resources. Begun in 1994, with no estimated end date.

Leeds, University of. Brotherton Library An ongoing project to add the open access stock of the University Library to the OPAC. Started with the Medical & Dental Library, moved on to the Science & Engineering Library plus the Student Library, and the team is now working on Arts & Social Sciences materials. Initially the project was specially funded by the university, but for the last 6 years or so has had to be funded from normal library resources. The team is engaged on both the upgrading of circulation-level records and the creation of full records. Extensive use is made of the CURL, RLIN and OCLC databases – so the amount of original record creation is low. All the Arts & Social Science books and journals are being included. As the library is also embarking on significant stock-editing, the size of the final task for the Retro team is not certain. The ability to sustain the size of the team is also uncertain – so a date for completion cannot be predicted with any confidence. The project started in 1985.

Leeds, University of. Brotherton Library Retrospective conversion for the Special Collections printed material. This material is mainly published pre-1800 and mainly, though not exclusively, Arts & Social Science material, with a significant proportion of non-English works. As there was uncertainty over the number of titles involved (somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000) it is not expected that the task will be completed when the money runs out. Timescale: April 1995 to April 2000.

Linen Hall Library Part of a grant from HLF will go towards a major cataloguing and conservation project.

London School of Economics BLPES One-year catalogue conversion project to convert card catalogue records to online records in the library's Unicorn system. Work includes quality checks on records converted by a contractor, and downloading records from external databases for existing card records and adding local data.

London, University of. Warburg Institute Between 1995 and 1997 about 200,000 items were converted, including separately catalogued offprints of scholarly articles. The project used OCLC to match records, Saztec to key offprint records, and then in-house cataloguing for books not matched (about 25,000 and still in progress).

Napier University Library Edward Clark Collection: approximately 5,000 printed items on the history of printing and featuring examples of the development of techniques of reproducing illustrations, fine bindings, type specimens and private press books. Converting the 3-volume published book catalogue to machine-readable format and cataloguing accessions added to the collection since the publication of the 3rd volume of the printed catalogue in 1980. Cataloguing was undertaken to UKMARC and AACR level 3 with additional information added according to US and UK rare books cataloguing guidelines. Part of a 3-year project incorporating conservation and rehousing of the collection 1995/96 to 1997/98, extended to a further year to complete the conservation and rehousing work. Web: <http://www.napier.ac.uk/> then to library pages giving information on the collection and the project.

National Art Library The NAL contains up to 2m items in total, many of which are still listed only in various older catalogues. The library is now engaged on a project to computerise the older sequences. An increasing proportion of the material is now listed online but the

project, started in 1998 will not be completed until the year 2003.

North & East Devon Health Authority Retrospectively catalogue a range of materials including books, grey literature and statistical publications in the library of N&EDHA. Expected to take around 8 months in 1999.

Northamptonshire Record Office Currently putting together a bid for the retroconversion of card catalogues. These are the catalogues for some of the major collections which were deposited or given to the office between 1920 and 1960. They are all collections of national importance and ones for which there is little information held at national level. They are unique catalogues, were it not for the microfilm copy of them that is held for security.

Oxford, University of. Bodleian Library Interim card catalogue conversion. Records for material published broadly between 1985-88. Estimated number of records around 180,000. Nine temporary staff appointed November 1992 plus secondments. In May 1993, 1 more appointment to work on the German and Slavonic materials. Use of OLIS, Saztec, CURL, RLIN and OCLC. Original cataloguing from item in hand for remainder. Timescale: 1992 to December 1995.

Oxford, University of. Bodleian Library Post-1920 catalogue. A guardbook catalogue of 685 volumes totalling around 1.65 million records. Printed items published between 1920 and 1984/85. Items in oriental languages and special formats (e.g. music scores) not included. Project started 1994 and ended summer 1998. Contracted out to OCLC. Around 70% of the catalogue matched on the OCLC database. The remainder were keyboarded by OCLC. The Cyrillic holdings were not transliterated and were therefore excluded from the OCLC project. These records (around 50,000) are being converted in-house, scheduled for completion in July 1999.

Oxford, University of. Bodleian Library Several other conversions are currently under way at Oxford, mainly with HEFC NFF money: Taylor Institution pre-1970 card catalogue, Taylor Institution Slavonic card catalogue, Ashmolean Museum Library, several specialised collections, Early printed books outside the Bodleian (a college library project), Middle East Centre, etc.

Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art Cataloguing 10,000 books and exhibition catalogues and 3,000 auction catalogues. The project involved re-arranging and classifying the stock, cataloguing it onto the Heritage Library Management System using BNB disks for 1950 to the present (c.40%) and cataloguing from scratch (c.60%). Lasted about 18 months (begun mid-1997) and now finished apart from 'tidying up' records.

Public Record Office Conversion of catalogue of 350,000 pages of lists, covering 6 million records. This project was begun in 1993.

Queen's University Belfast Cataloguing material on architecture, planning and environmental studies in Ireland. This project was begun in 1993.

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow The library is undertaking a 'somewhat ad-hoc' retrospective conversion. The library has a card catalogue (approximately 30,000 to 35,000 records) with an author file and a subject file and is transferring this data to their automated system, ALICE. So far some 4,000 records have been transferred (up to C in the author file). Data transfer is carried out by a student, employed for 4 hours per week. The project is ongoing having started in October 1996.

Royal Horticultural Society Conversion of the catalogue is part of a larger project in which the library is reorganised physically, increases access to the collection and digitises some of the more important and most fragile books and all of its pictures. The project includes recataloguing the collection in digital form over 4 years, accessible via the Internet, with much fuller details and cross-references. The current card system is 'neither complete or consistent'.

Royal Society of Arts The RSA was awarded a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in July 1997 to catalogue and conserve its archive, an internationally significant resource. Three new archive strongrooms are being created with room for 50 years' growth of the collection, and building work is now nearing completion. The RSA is cataloguing the archive using a computer database, CALM2000 plus for Archives. Conforming to the latest national and international archival standards, the catalogue will become available via the Internet some time in 1999. Conservation work has begun on the series of 14 heavily used 'guardbooks' (covering the period 1754-1780) and further conservation tasks will continue over the next 2 years. The project is expected to take 5 years and be completed in time for the Society's 250th anniversary in 2004.

School of Slavonic and East European Studies (*will merge with University College in summer 1999*) In process of converting card catalogue. Conversion of records using OCLC for all monographs in all languages on Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland plus all non-Cyrillic items on Russia and the former Soviet Union is now complete. Conversion of Cyrillic items on Russia in-house in process but there is a massive amount still to do. Hoping to collaborate with other libraries in the Slavonic field for RSLP funding.

Science Fiction Collection, Liverpool University Now working on retrospective conversion.

Tate Gallery There are a total of around 200,000 records to be converted to UKMARC for books, exhibition catalogues, collection catalogues, serials and archival materials. Present phase expected to run to end of 1999, at which point c.100,000 records will have been converted. Next phase dependent on further funding, but with a probable duration of 1 year.

York, University of. J.B. Morrell Library A 1 year project will carry out the following tasks: (a) retrospective card cataloguing from a department concerned primarily with historical research, (b) cataloguing and classifying a backlog of monographs and periodical items from the same department, (c) cataloguing and classifying about 600 books bequeathed to the library by a former linguistics professor, (d) adding around 1700 analyticals for record society collections, (e) adding records for a few government publications and large reference works, and (f) further retrospective card cataloguing for a gift collection.

Wales, University of. Swansea Library Grant funding was used in 1995-96 to catalogue uncatalogued parts of the South Wales Coalfield Collection and to convert the printed guides to the South Wales Coalfield Archive to electronic form. The retroconversion element was not completed (funded at less than amount bid for and some underestimation of records numbers) and so the website therefore covers only manuscript records received 1983-93, photographs, audio and video tapes and banners. The majority of the archive material, which is listed in the printed guides, has only been partly converted and a large collection of pamphlets remains accessible only by card index.

A collaborative bid to the RSLP is being prepared to create an online resource to archive and printed materials relating to the South Wales Coalfield which would cover holdings outside the HE sector. This would contain an element of retroconversion. A full description of the collection and the online catalogue can be seen on the website <<http://www.swan.ac.uk/swcc/>> and also at the website <<http://www.swan.ac.uk/lis/archives/>>.

Warwick, University Library. Modern Records Centre The Modern Records Centre is carrying out the retrospective conversion of two finding aids. They are for the two collections: Papers of the Trades Union Congress (1960-70 and additional files 1920-60) and Papers of the International Transport Workers Federation. The conversion is of (1) a word-processed file, and (2) an old typescript file to EAD. Converted files were due to be received in September 1998 but is now delayed as there seem to be difficulties with the variety of material submitted.

West Yorkshire Archive Service (Archive Listings Access Project) The project aims to convert c.20,000 collection-level entries from a DOS based database (CAIRS IMS) to CALM 2000 Plus for Archives. This will be followed by the addition of 6 detailed catalogues (one from each of the region's offices – Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield and the Yorkshire Archeological Society). This stage of the project will involve conversion of existing catalogues and some original cataloguing. The project will last 30 months beginning early 1999.

Wiener Library A programme to refurbish the book store, computerise the catalogue and improve educational facilities was announced in January 1999.

Wimbledon School of Art Is currently converting its card catalogue to its Sirsi Unicorn system.

Dublin, Trinity College Stella retrospective conversion project

Dublin, University College A 3-year project, 1997-2000, converting records for c.200,000 items, covering main site, special collections and 3 branch libraries. This project is using OCLC, with a very high hit-rate, and OCLC are keying in those not found on their database.

USA (*Response from Council on Library and Information Resources*) In 1978, when the Library of Congress announced its plan to close the card catalogue and to begin a new union catalogue in electronic form, nearly every other US research library did the same. Most tried to operate with dual catalogues for several years, but in the early 1990s, with more talk about digital libraries, many of the research libraries realised they could not make genuine progress toward their goals until they converted the 'closed' card catalogues to electronic form. Most of the major research libraries have already done this. There are therefore no programmes for retrospective conversion. (There was no response on the situation for public libraries.)

Appendix G

PRIORITY AREAS FOR LIBRARIES

The telephone consultations included a question on the areas where there is greatest need for retrospective conversion. While not a systematic investigation, they indicate the gaps perceived.

Non-print media Maps, music and films (though this latter category is often better covered). Also the newer electronic and AV formats. For some of these often not even current cataloguing is done.

Special materials Music and drama performance sets – might have a record of sorts and not notified to region or might not even have a record at all. Periodicals.

Older material Scholarly/learned older material. Nineteenth century material (and, within this, specific subjects and local history). Pre-1800 material.

Archives and manuscripts. Archives in SW region. Manuscripts generally, Art and Design noted specifically.

Foreign language materials Welsh language, Oriental collections. Slavonic and East European languages.

Grey literature Art and design – auction and exhibition catalogues. Health libraries – reports. Some grey literature is split between libraries and archives.

Regional and ILL concerns English locally printed materials. Regional Library Systems old sheaf and card catalogues. Old manual file of Union Catalogue of Books for Document Supply Centre. Northern Ireland is handicapped by having only 2 universities and academics have problems getting hold of items. A retrospective programme could lessen this disadvantage by allowing them to find out what is held elsewhere.

Local authority Reserve stocks of public libraries. Special collections. Reference materials, serials and newspapers. Northern Ireland public libraries still at very early stages of automation and level of machine-readable records is likely to be low. Local history/studies.

Collections of national importance Stock of small and research societies and archives in the natural history area.

Other types of non-mainstream material. British local history

Appendix H

SUMMARY OF UKOLN/NCA WORKSHOPS ON RETROSPECTIVE CONVERSION

(The text for this appendix is based on the reports made on the workshops by the workshop facilitator Chris Kirk, Consultant, K.C. Switch Enterprises.)

These workshops were held as part of the consultation exercise in the UKOLN and NCA study to recommend a national programme for retrospective catalogue conversion in the UK. The primary objective of the workshops was to consult specialists and policy makers in the archive and library communities to identify the key issues that would need to be addressed in a national programme, and consider the make up and positioning of any organising body overseeing this programme.

A progressive approach was taken with the 3 workshops, each of these building on the work covered in the preceding workshop sessions, but, at some stage in all of these, attendees were questioned as to whether they felt a national strategy was necessary and were asked to suggest potential candidates for the organising body. There was strong overall consensus that a national strategy was required, but less focused consensus on a suitable candidate for the organising body.

All workshops consisted of a combination of breakout and open sessions. In the breakouts, attendees were split into groups and asked to consider the topic under discussion for around 30-40 minutes, and then each of the groups gave a 5-10 minute presentation of their findings to the workshop. In open sessions, the topic under discussion was considered by the whole workshop. Initial breakout sessions were not always specifically aligned with the requirements for the Pathfinder report, but were planned to give groups a chance to discuss associated issues with colleagues to help understand the wider problems faced by the different disciplines (library/archive/museum). These sessions were then used to develop responses on specific issues related to the Pathfinder report.

Birmingham Central Library 26 February 1999

Session 1 objectives were (1) to define the success criteria for this project and how these would be measured, and (2) to list the obstacles and risks the project is likely to encounter. Session 2 objectives were to identify the key objectives of a coordinating body and possible candidates, listing their strengths and weaknesses. Session 3 used open questions to generate discussion: (1) what do we want out of a strategy? (2) what standards will need to be taken heed of/followed? (3) how do we set the priorities for a national conversion programme?

Centre Point, London 2 March 1999

Session 1 objectives were to list in priority order prime considerations in planning a retrospective conversion, and to consider whether these considerations change with an increase/decrease in size of conversion or if the conversion is for a library or archive. Session 2 objectives were (1) to identify the key objectives of a coordinating body and possible candidates, listing their strengths and weaknesses. Session 3 considered conversion priority options.

National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh 4 March 1999

Session 1 considered the key objectives for a coordinating body suggested by the other two workshops, ranking them as high, medium or low priority, and noted some additional objectives. Session 2 looked at where the new coordinating body would ideally be positioned, given the objectives set in Session 1.

Success criteria for a national strategy

A successful project would need to deal with concrete deliverables not aspirational statements. The UKOLN/NCA report should propose specific means and deliverables that were identified and, where possible, costed. The project should deal with standards issues, propose priorities, define programme components and specify criteria for access. There should be a limited scale of activity only proposing what is achievable and setting goals and timetable to make a difference (but recognising funding needs). It should embrace libraries and archives (archives have felt marginalised in the past) and appeal to values of the archive/library/museum communities and coordinate establishing common national authority files. It should identify and work to establish the critical mass required to sustain a national network. The suggested means of measuring the success of the project were (a) user feedback, (b) online satisfaction surveys, and (c) the degree to which completion of retrospective conversion has been achieved. Thus an 'evaluation of achievement' is required to regularly justify ongoing funding for the body and/or programme.

Decision making in an unsettled political scene is difficult, there could be institutional/national priorities conflicts, possible regional dimensions with regard to Regional Library Systems and the Regional Development Agencies, the possibility of getting bogged down with potential layers of bureaucracy and the uncertainty of the remit for the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLAC). The current confusing variety of funding opportunities in a competitive framework needs to have a strategic framework as a higher layer.

There is competition with museums, who are not included in this initiative, for some funding and possible duplication of effort with them. On the availability of qualified personnel there is a probable need for training (bursaries, perhaps) and centres of excellence. On standards there are compatibility problems between library/archive, they probably need to be centrally defined by coordinating body, and systems and authority files standards need to be considered as well as record standards. Institutions may have both archival and library conversion needs.

Obstacles and risks

First there is the size of problem and the accuracy of estimates of data to capture (much of the archive material is uncatalogued). The project might propose procedures that miss significant resources and a scoping study might miss material. On duplication of effort there is uncertainty as to how much duplication exists and there may be problems of re-use of commercial records. It must avoid minimising need for retrospective cataloguing by focusing too much on retrospective catalogue conversion, thereby exacerbating the divisions in these processes – especially with regard to archives.

The strategy

What do we want out of a strategy? It should establish timescales for the whole approach, create momentum for a big push and raise the profile of cataloguing. Set within a 5-year project, during estimated initial 2-year audit it would review technical standards, lobby for funding, carry out PR, and give IT advice and then carry out projects. It should exert influence on existing initiatives.

Semantic inter-operability and subject access in relation to data made available over a network were raised as particular growing problems that need attention now. After discussion it was felt, however, that these are not specifically 'retrospective catalogue conversion' problems, but

more general problems associated with mixed quality and sources of data being accessed by users through networks. It was felt this should receive separate funding.

What does the strategy need? It needs political support and funding. As cataloguing and retrospective catalogue conversion are not seen as 'sexy' activities, it needs to demonstrate benefits and see where the collections fit the requirements. It needs to ensure continued funding of existing conversions is not sacrificed for new work – such as union catalogues which are especially suited for recording locations, offering easy access, and aiding cooperation. It needs to look at the possible costs and what other resources might be required. (Philip Bryant estimated £8m to- £10m for libraries in 1997 and *Archives On-Line* estimated c.£38.5m for archives in 1998.) Anticipate that funding from HEFC, DfEE, etc. will continue, but some of it may be directed to or fed through a retrospective conversion coordinating body. In the future MLAC may just possibly be a new funding source.

The prime considerations, when planning a retrospective catalogue conversion, are seen to be the need for the management team to believe in necessity of a project and the need to relate to the organisation's mission. There needs to be an analysis of the collection to determine in-house priorities, the importance of the collection within a national context, and the uniqueness of resource. Decisions must be made on the priority of access versus preservation, the overall size of projects, at what the level the conversion is to occur (collection, catalogue, item, etc.), and what are the relative proportions of retrospective catalogue conversion to retrospective cataloguing. There are problems regarding the convergence of presentation of data for libraries and archives at collection level. Where possible projects should aim to develop a resource other people can use (looking at what are others are doing, and ensuring compatibility with existing standards). Projects should look for sources of records (BL Catalogue Bridge, CURL, ESTC and other union catalogues) to avoid duplicating effort. Consideration must be given to (a) the drawbacks of existing catalogues, (b) the need for editing (prior to conversion, during conversion, and when weeding a collection), (c) the setting up of common authority files, authority control and quality control and (d) tying in with digitisation projects. Projects also need to take into account the requirement for staff with skills in IT, cataloguing and archive description, and subject disciplines and their likely availability.

These considerations may vary between archives and libraries and may change over time. Traditionally, archivists were felt to have acted as mediators in interpreting collection finding aids which has slowed the adoption of standards and development of computer records. Typically, in libraries the item-level description has been the important issue for users, whereas it has been the collection-level for initial queries in archives. There was a feeling that libraries would have to differentiate collections in the future, so the collection level would become increasingly important. Organisations will therefore need to prepare to form part of a larger database/unit/catalogue and to identify relevant standards, cataloguing software and expertise needed.

The size of a conversion influences technology requirements. Small-scale projects are perhaps more feasible within institutions and small projects can develop into larger ones (any project may mushroom). Breaking down larger projects into smaller units can change priorities. The ability to share records or find partners can change priorities, but the relative uniqueness of archive data makes this less relevant to archives. The needs of users and their demand on collections can change priorities. A general point was made that derived cataloguing does not work in the archival world

Setting up consortia bids may be done best regionally with the likely benefit of increased resource sharing. It was noted that search methods may identify small groups of items serendipitously and these may be missed by some of the above approaches. It was suggested that libraries typically have large numbers of small collections whereas archives exhibit extensive variations in size.

Priorities

There are various options for setting priorities for a national conversion programme. This could be thematic for libraries and collection-based for archives or it could have a regional basis. It could be based on suitability for conversion (quality of manual records, etc.) or by format. It could focus on either rareness/uniqueness (make little known items known as fast as possible) or most common/multi-copies (highest re-use of record) and availability of machine-readable records. (There is a difference between a unique collection and collections with some unique items.) Priority could be given to converting records for what you want digitised. Another option is to prioritise by funding commitment and factoring by size of project (e.g. 25% of funds for projects below £100,000, 75% for those above). Priorities could be set by historical importance, value to target audience (including possible expansion of target audience), and follow a national register of libraries and archives, or simply be opportunistic and related to funding initiatives. NCA paper to HLF recommends 30% of bid funding should go to retrospective catalogue conversion projects. It could also use rating of local/regional/national significance but there can be tension between local priorities and requirements and the national view and funding streams. It could draw on existing mappings of collections, plus additional mappings to find new areas to balance completing existing projects. Need to ensure consideration of both owned and deposited material. If only subject prioritising is used, this could marginalise some collections.

Standards

Consideration was given to the existing and potential standards that should be followed or taken heed of and the following standards identified.

- ***Format***

Libraries. ISO 2709, UK/US MARC, ISBD, Dublin Core, Metadata

Archives. EAD, ISAD(G), Metadata

- ***Cataloguing***

Libraries. AACR2 (Level?, Minimum standard)

Archives. NCA rules on creation of name entries, none on content - likely to receive attention in next few years, thesaurus & subject control

- ***Authority files***

Libraries. BLNAL, AAAF, LCSH

Archives. ISAAR (CPF)

- ***Item/Collection***

Libraries Now item level, in future also collection level

Archives. Now collection level + item level, moving to multi-level

Both library and archival conversions need standards, but the sense of priority of standards is different. Archive conversions need to recognise work carried out by libraries on authority standards. If felt to be necessary to compromise on lower standard at start, and upgrading if financing source dictates, need to ensure that initial standards are extendable to allow future upgrading of systems and data. Recommendations on standards need to take account of required level

of conversion, collection vs. item issues, cataloguing to minimal vs. full level, and the level required by potential users – how good does it need to be?

The following additional issues will need to be taken into account: character sets, transliteration, non-Roman scripts, ethnic languages (Anglo-Saxon), Oriental languages, UNICODE and special requirements for specific institutions.

Key objectives of a coordinating body

The groups were asked to identify key objectives of coordinating body. On **political activity**, it should raise the profile of the whole issue and liaise with and advise government at national and regional level. It would need to operate with many existing organisations, maximise benefit from public investment, ensure consistency, harmonise advice and bring bodies together for forum to decide issues. It should also carry out market research and PR. It should promote both cross-domain partnerships (libraries, archives and museums), cross-sectoral partnerships (higher education, local authority, special and independent, etc.) and cross-boundary partnerships (regions, UK and Europe). On **funding** issues it should where possible channel existing funding and work on unlocking funds by assisting organisations in bids and looking for external funding, and facilitating consortia bids. In the area of **standards**, it was felt it should monitor and advise on bibliographic (including authority control and thesaurus standards) and technical standards and promote best practice (give seal of approval/kitemark). On **technical issues** it should be linking conversion to digitisation and establishing service delivery targets. There may be a need to facilitate additional funding for small units for equipment and software. It should **create a national overview** and conduct an audit of activity, coordinate existing activities, and try to reduce duplication/overlap of projects. Within this it should prioritise what is done and when. It ought to be concerned with **training and resources**. This would cover both the development of qualified people and act as a ‘clearing-house’ or ‘central intelligence agency’ so that anyone considering such a project has contact details for existing projects and perhaps for service suppliers. It should look at creating/promoting centres of excellence especially to help under-resourced organisations. It should be looking at the needs of users in both access and searching requirements.

During the discussion on key objectives, various characteristics for the new body were suggested: leadership, lobbying skills, advocacy and clout for bringing funding structures together. In considering the above we have to be clear why we need to do it and how it is going to help our users as well as correcting the public perception ‘that it’s already there’. There needs to be a global goal with smaller sub-targets, building on work already done and to consider issues with collections and access to other areas. We must ensure that projects that have started are not penalised by funds going only to new areas and need to take account of areas which might get left out, or be low priority and consider heritage, education, research, culture, leisure and ethnic minorities issues. We should be using the web as a route for sharing and looking at the model of the Scottish National Network for developing a network.

Key objectives ranking

- Political activity (liaison with/advice to government, create national overview, coordinate existing activities, forum with other bodies to decide issues, acting as a ‘central intelligence agency’). **High/very high priority**. Note: It was thought that the establishment of the new Parliament in Scotland and Assembly in Wales might result in some confusion on responsibility.

- Promote cross-domain and cross-sectoral partnerships. **High priority**. Essential for effectiveness. Need to ‘beat into people’ importance of partnership and breaking down barriers.
- Funding – find external funding, unlock funds, assist organisations in bids, channel for existing funding, help establish consortia/partnerships. **High priority**. Coordination of multiplicity of funding sources. Needs to simplify funding issues for individual institutions. Could function as ‘clearing-house’.
- Monitor and advise on bibliographic and technical standards, ensuring consistency and considering resourcing implications.
- Promote best practice by seal of approval/kitemark, audit of activity, harmonise advice, maximise benefit from public investment, create/promote centres of excellence especially to help the under-resourced.

Felt that these last two should be merged as a single objective. **High priority**. Important to establish standards first! Condition of grant. May need to address non-standard existing datasets.

- Market research and PR, raise profile of whole issue, seek support at national, regional and local level. **Medium priority**. Incorporate into political activity above – existing networks will advertise themselves.
- Prioritisation, audit of collections, decide what is done and when. **Medium priority** for one group and **lowest priority** for the other. Not only local but also regional and national prioritisation needs to be considered, but message to government is ‘its all important’.
- Address technical issues, especially in funding to support small units, linking conversion to digitisation and establishing service delivery targets. **Low priority**. Many technical difficulties are being resolved, e.g. by Z39.50. Many ‘technical issues’ are really political/funding issues.
- Training and resources and development of qualified people
- Needs of users: what sort of access and searching is required?

Possible candidates

The general feeling was that the coordinating body should be cross-sectoral and not have a perceived negative history but currently no single organisation fits this bill. MLAC is - but its remit is not yet clear and it does not cover whole of the UK. If MLAC is the best option, it needs to put retrospective catalogue conversion into its remit at start, perhaps use a focus/working/steering/advisory group(s) covering libraries, archives and museums. It could devolve some work down to regions/subject groups, needs to bring HE sector into initiative, and needs technical expertise. Remits for some other bodies (DCMS, BL) it was felt do not cover archives adequately. Other possibilities suggested were LIC, LINC, BL, CURL, RSLP, NCA, HLF, FIL, CONARLS, ACALG (some of these in combination) or BL/PRO combination with federal structure. We need to consider what the government will want from it and bear in mind the role of regions. The Birmingham workshop suggested a solution in (1) medium-term funding – agree a programme for 5 years and an ‘interim structure’ – and (2) DCMS ‘czar’ leading from top – an initiative, rather than a body, with stakeholders

There could be a new agency on the NPO model but workshop groups were split on advisability of this (NPO is a small unit under the British Library, but funded by UK copyright libraries). This would give a focus and have no conflicting distinctions but adds to the number of organisations. It was felt that it might be sensible to give any new body a ‘home’ (e.g. BL, RSLP, eLib) with a coordinator, or possibly to

establish a jointly funded 'retro-action office'. It would need to have the potential to inspire confidence and there are risks that it might be authority deficit, have mixed/conflicting objectives and be difficult to get a number of organisations to commit to additional funding to support the new body.

There was uncertainty as to whether new body should be on the 'policy' or 'funding' side and a need to decide the extent to which this would be a steering group or working group. There was a feeling that it would be useful to find out what is happening elsewhere. Issues to bear in mind were listed: Is a body needed? Should it be a voice at DCMS? The simple message is the need for money! Should the body have a finite life or should it be ongoing? A major objective is to bring people together, but should this be committee or partnership or conduit? How do representatives from variety of institutions and bodies of disciplines fit in? It needs to make a coherent picture of jigsaw. It could have role of JISC in higher education or BL's advice to Heritage Lottery Fund.

A possible structure is:

Government

MLAC

Retrospective conversion coordinating body – steering/advisory group

Programme

Director

Projects

Appendix I

'UNDER DEVELOPMENT' CONFERENCE

10th MAY 1999 at BL CONFERENCE CENTRE, ST. PANCRAS

The conference was well attended by delegates representing all areas of the library and archive domains, with more than 140 people accepting places. Delegates were sent a copy of the recommendations prior to the conference in order to inform the discussion in sessions 2 and 3. The level of delegation participation in discussion was high and very positive in tone and the conference welcomed and supported the general principles as set out in the recommendations.

Session Summaries

These have been compiled from the notes of the rapporteurs and additional notes made by Margaret Haines and Ann Chapman.

Session 1: What needs to be done?

Speakers: Nicholas Kingsley and Ann Chapman

This presentation reviewed the case for a national strategy for retrospective catalogue conversion. The size of the problem has been identified and the consequences of not tackling it recognised. Work in this area complements several current government initiatives and now is the right time to initiate a strategy. A national programme would bring benefits in identifying priorities, making most effective use of existing funding, and promoting collaborative effort, including cross-domain projects. The ideal way forward (government recognition and allocated funding) is not an option straight away, but the impetus must not be lost. Therefore a bottom up approach is suggested for the initial phases.

At this point delegates divided into 3 breakout groups for the next 2 sessions in which the recommendations for the national programme (session 2) and the coordinating focus and funding (session 3) were presented and then discussed.

Session 2: The Strategy

Breakout Group A: Presenter: Ann Chapman

Chair: Frances Hendrix, Rapporteur: Hazel Dakers

This was an enthusiastic group, fully representative of all sectors and geographic regions. There was unanimous support for the broad thrust of the strategy but there was a need to widen the Pathfinding Group to increase archives representation, include museums, small libraries, business, science and other groups. Some groups can offer to carry out tasks if not give funding. On promotion, there is a need to look outwards, by trying to find a means of making the theme attractive to the wider public and finding a 'name' to champion the cause, and a need to look inwards, especially targeting institutions' own top management – they need convincing at least as much as government. Consideration should be given to user needs, looking outwards again rather than from the viewpoint of the librarian or archivist. This will also help promotion. There is probably a need for both central and distributed focus to the programme. Standards, whether or not full AACR, and interoperability are both essential. A skills audit is needed since cataloguing is no longer popular at library schools, and many do not practice it in the workplace. Prioritisation is needed and a decision made as to whether to emphasise the unique or the common items. A business case is needed to show the economic benefit in the initiative. Digitisation competes for funds but it also often involves an element of retrospective catalogue conversion. It would be a useful next step to invite some individuals to discuss certain of these themes with the

Pathfinding Group.

Breakout Group B: Presenter: Lorcan Dempsey

Chair: Geoff Smith, Rapporteur: Tim Owen

A national coordinated approach is essential. Discussion addressed issues of standards, priorities and access. Funding ran through all strands of discussion.

On standards it was noted that the availability and use of public funding makes standards essential. Standards need to be decided in terms of existing practice; minimum standards are in place but need enforcing. Retrospective conversion of sub-standard records is more expensive than retrospective cataloguing. Costs are difficult to assess. With copy-specific data there are different issues for libraries and archives.

Under priorities, there was a need to look at how to establish the importance of collections; do we list whole collections or only bits of national significance? NPO pilot survey tool for standard surveying of collections is working on software which it is hoped will be available by October 1999. The coordination of priority setting is essential, but funding programmes and units will have own priorities and values.

This group felt that access issues need to be built into the programme more, and is not addressed directly in Phases 1 and 2.

The final message from the group was: 'When do we cross the threshold and get started?' They also noted that an executive is needed as first priority for funding, as we cannot continue to rely on the Pathfinding Group, and we must keep people informed.

Breakout Group C: Presenter: Nicholas Kingsley

Chair: Margaret Haines, Rapporteur: David Thomas

A top down approach is as important as bottom up and could be a prestige project for MLAC. Strong endorsement from library and archive community is needed and an evangelical approach with MPs, MEPs, trustees, senior researchers – we need to find supporters for the project. It must map onto government priorities, e.g. lifelong learning and modernising government, and there should be a more socially inclusive approach and focus on issues such as access for disabled and ethnic minorities. A strong strategic plan and detailed project plan is needed with a focus on measuring success. Museums should be included (but need to decide whether as holders of libraries/archives or as object-holding organisations) as should the education and independent libraries/archives sectors. There is a skills shortage in cataloguing, and project management. A comprehensive approach is required, not cherry picking, though some cherries might be needed initially.

Session 3: The Coordinating Focus and Funding

Breakout Group A: Presenter: Ann Chapman

Chair: David Pearson, Rapporteur: Ronald Milne

Assuming MLAC acceptance of the remit, the Pathfinding Group should continue to operate post-April 2000 to allow MLAC time to settle in. We need to know more about the geographical remit of MLAC. The museums and wider archives sector should be included. Doing something now is important and quick wins and a business plan are needed. There was a suggestion for 'flying squads' that could work on 1 project and then move on to another. It was felt to be important to 'transform culture into economic prosperity', to tailor objectives to those of funders, to get the users on side and to know our champions.

Breakout Group B: Presenter: Lorcan Dempsey

Chair: Chris Bailey, Rapporteur: Sarah Ormes

The delegates agreed with the recommendations but made the following points. The Pathfinding Group needs to reconsider its membership, and look at including museums and private libraries, and change its name.

At present the strategy is too centralised and the regional systems should not be forgotten in this. There should be funding for an executive, and selling the idea to the professions, to users and potential champions (catch a minister someone suggested). We need to cascade good standards to the wider profession. We not only have to make it happen but must also show the outcomes and benefits to users.

Breakout Group C: Presenter: Nicholas Kingsley

Chair: Graham Jefcoate, Rapporteur: Stephanie Kenna

If the remit is accepted by MLAC, a lower level body will need to do the work, so should we consider MLAC for the strategic level and the Newsplan model with regional structures for implementation of strategy? Even with an MLAC remit, the Pathfinding Group will need to operate after April 2000 to provide continuity. The group needs to include all sectors in its membership. Funding will come from a mixture of sources and the group should propose a programme of phased funding according to national strategy and then coordinate group bids for funding.

Plenary Session: Chair: David Bradbury

Reports by the rapporteurs from the breakout groups were presented. In the following discussion there was strong and unanimous general support from the floor for the strategy and that we need to make progress with the initiative as soon as possible. A number of delegates spoke to support the strategy from the viewpoint of their particular area, and these included representatives of the following groups and associations: the Library Association, the LA Cataloguing and Indexing Group, the Historic Libraries Forum, the Association of Independent Libraries, the Society of Archivists, the Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government, LINC, SCONUL, LASER, Share the Vision, and SCRAN.

Appendix J

RETROSPECTIVE CONVERSION INFORMATION ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

By Michael Day, Research Officer, UKOLN

Introduction

This document is the result of some initial web searches for information concerning retrospective conversion. The information on the web appears to fall into a number of distinct categories

1. Publicity material. The commercial organisations that offer retrospective conversion services use the web to provide information about their services. Some of these organisations – e.g. OCLC and MARCIVE – provide more detailed information on individual projects or relevant press releases. Examples of these sites include:

Access Colorado Library & Information Network (ACLIN)	http://www.aclin.org/
A-G Canada	http://www.ag-canada.com/
Auto-Graphics	http://www.auto-graphics.com/
Catalog Card Company	http://www.catalogcard.com/
Gateway Software Corporation	http://www.gscweb.com/
Library of Congress (no longer active)	http://lcweb.loc.gov/cds/selmarl.html
MARCIVE	http://www.marcive.com/
OCLC	http://www.oclc.org/
Saztec	http://www.saztec.com/

2. Strategic documents and catalogue introductions. Larger libraries or cooperative organisations often mention retrospective conversion requirements or initiatives as part of annual reports or other 'high-level' documents. Short pieces describing the content of library catalogues often contain mention of retrospective conversion projects.
3. More detailed descriptions of individual projects. Some organisations (chiefly libraries or organisations like the ARL) provide more detailed information concerning particular initiatives or projects.

The rest of this report will list and briefly describe some of these web pages.

USE OF WEB SEARCH SERVICES

Date	Search Service	Search Term	No. of hits
04-Feb-1999	AltaVista	'retrospective conversion'	2,802
04-Feb-1999	HotBot	'retrospective conversion'	1,800
21-Apr-1999	AltaVista	'retrospective conversion'	3,042
21-Apr-1999	AltaVista	'retrocon'	348
21-Apr-1999	HotBot	'retrospective conversion'	1,850
21-Apr-1999	Lycos	'retrospective conversion'	

RETROSPECTIVE CONVERSION: UK context

Higher education libraries

Bodleian Library, Oxford

Post-1920 Cyrillic holdings

Description: A project to convert all post-1949/50 Cyrillic script records in post-1920 guardbook catalogue (1920-88).

Number of Records: approx. 45,000 to 50,000

Funding: HEFCE, from 1995/96. Phase 1 completed in October 1998 (33,705 records converted). Phase 2 in progress. Completion by July 1999.

<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/hef-proj/cyrillic.htm>

Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL)

The CURL Database project

http://www.curl.ac.uk/db_project.htm

University of Wales Aberystwyth

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/~spm/>

RETROSPECTIVE CONVERSION: *international context*

Europe

BIBLIOTECA

Bibliographic Texts Compositional Analysis

OCR – Project ended 1995.

<http://www.echo.lu/libraries/en/projects/biblio.html>

<http://www.ucm.es/info/VerbaLogica/biblio.htm>

FACIT

Fast Automatic Conversion with Integrated Tools: OCR/ICR in retroconversion of catalogues – automatic error detection/correction and formatting.

Project finished 1996.

<http://www.echo.lu/libraries/en/projects/facit.html>

<http://www.komm.ruc.dk/FACIT/>

MORE

MARC Optical Recognition

OCR – Project ended 1994.

<http://www.echo.lu/libraries/en/projects/more.html>

Germany

Nordrhein-Westfalen

Retrospective conversion of Zentralkatalog (information in German).

‘Retrospektive Konversion des ‘Katalogs vor 1800’ (K I) im

Zentralkatalog NRW’

<http://www.hbz-nrw.de/hbz/proj/retrokon.htm>

<http://www.hbz-nrw.de/hbz/proj/retrok2.htm>

Belgium

VUBIS-Antwerpen retrospective conversion

<http://143.169.20.1/MAN/OPACE/t5.html>

United States

ALCTS Technical Services Directors of Large Research Libraries Discussion Group

Report (1999) covers many different issues, but gives a short review of retrospective conversion activities at a number of large US research libraries.

<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~ulcjh/bh199rr.html>

Association of College and Research Libraries, Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, Bibliographic Standards Committee

Survey: Retrospective Conversion (RECON) of Rare Materials. (April – May 1998)

<http://www.lib.byu.edu/~catalog/people/rlm/bsc/survey98.htm>

Association of Research Libraries

Online National Register Of Microform Masters

<http://www.arl.org/preserv/nrmm.html>

See also:

Jutta Reed-Scott, 'Recon Project for Preservation Microfilm Masters Completed' *ARL News*, 196, February 1998.

<http://www.arl.org/newsltr/196/nrmm.html>

Indiana University Bloomington Libraries

<http://www.indiana.edu/~libiocm/retro-backgrnd.html>

<http://www.indiana.edu/~libiocm/retro-progress.html>

IOCM: Retrospective Conversion Manual

<http://www.indiana.edu/~libiocm/retro/tableofc.html>

LITA Retrospective Conversion Interest Group

'The Retrospective Conversion LITA/ALCTS Joint Interest Group provides information to those preparing for, or involved in, the process of retrospective conversion, with emphasis on the most current details available on technology and programming changes or advances.'

<http://www.lita.org/igs/Retro/retrocon.htm>

Online Computer Library Center (OCLC)

Retrospective Conversion Guidelines for Libraries

<http://www.oclc.org/oclc/promo/6075retr/6075ret1.htm>

New Mexico State University Library

Retrospective Conversion Procedures at the NMSU Library

<http://lib.nmsu.edu/depts/bibsvs/recon.html>

University of Iowa

Government Documents Retrospective Conversion Projects: A Survey, June 1998.

<http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/govpubs/survey.htm>

Yale University Library

<http://www.library.yale.edu/recon/scope.htm>

Brazil

Universidade de São Paulo

Conversão Retrospectiva de Catalogação de Registros Bibliográficos do Banco Dedalus : Uma Experiência do Sibi/Usp (in Portuguese), by Krzyzanowski *et al.*

<http://www.oclc.org/oclc/lac/port/971028b.htm>

New Zealand

Victoria University of Wellington

Retrospective Conversion Project

<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/library/departments/recon.html>

Search services used

Search service	URL
AltaVista	http://www.altavista.com/
HotBot	http://www.hotbot.com/
Lycos	http://www.lycos.com/

Appendix K

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British Archives: The Way Forward
National Council on Archives [forthcoming, 1999]

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National Council on Archives, 1998

Parry, David
Virtually New: Creating the Digital Collection.
A review of digitisation projects in local authority libraries and archives prepared by Information North for the Library and Information Commission.
Library and Information Commission, 1998