

# Collections management: share the experience @ York

University of York  
library 7 July 2015

Ruth Elder  
Collections Management Specialist  
University of York Library  
ruth.elder@york.ac.uk

## Context

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



Credit: paul.shields@york.ac.uk

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

## Aims and objectives

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

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

## The day

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Feedback

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

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

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

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

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

*'Excellent event – thank you'*

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

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

## Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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