

Forging our digital future together

Collaboration as the key to making 'digital' work

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To cover

- Look at born-digital archives as an example area where collaboration may play a part
 - What makes it work?
 - What gets in the way?
- Look at where collaboration has been successful – why?
- Collaboration in progress – two case studies
- Questions (for you!)
- Discussion

Collaboration to do what?

Deliver services

Born-digital archives

The Field of Dreams (as seen from Hull)

- (Re-) creating archive tools and systems for the digital world
- Born-digital records not as a subset of archives – but as the current and future reality of archives
- Needs to work beyond any single archive office
- Creating a shared direction of travel and exploring how to get there (collaboratively)

Collaboration – to be or not to be?

- Waiting for someone else to open Pandora's box and find an answer



Collaboration in action (archives)

Archive collaboration works well for:

- ‘Types’ of archive (e.g., literary, political, business)
- Use-cases (e.g., education, digitization)
- Discovery (e.g., Archives Hub)
- Definable consortia (e.g., AIM25, A&RC Wales, ArchivesSpace?)

Hull History Centre:

- 3 services (LS Library, City Archives & University Archives)
- Working to service targets and HHC targets simultaneously

Barriers to collaboration

Inertia

- Waiting for the perfect tool, funding call or “the answer”
- “It’s complicated”, or the challenge is too large
- Ownership of content needs sorting out

Cost and capacity

- Limited capacity/skills within an individual archive office
- Doing “something” means stop doing something else

Running out of steam

- Collaborations get so far...

The AIMS Project

An inter-Institutional Model for Stewardship funded by The Andrew W. Mellon foundation

Each partner employed a digital archivist for 18 months (2010-11) to process born-digital material in their collections

Started with traditional archival theory/principles; identify **commonality** - not looking to create a single solution



AIMS Project – Lessons learned

What worked?

- Doing something practical
 - Makes a huge difference; move on from desktop research
- Make friends in ICT
 - Move away from “archives” problem to an institutional one
- Talking to other archives
 - Helps put your experiences in perspective

What didn't work?

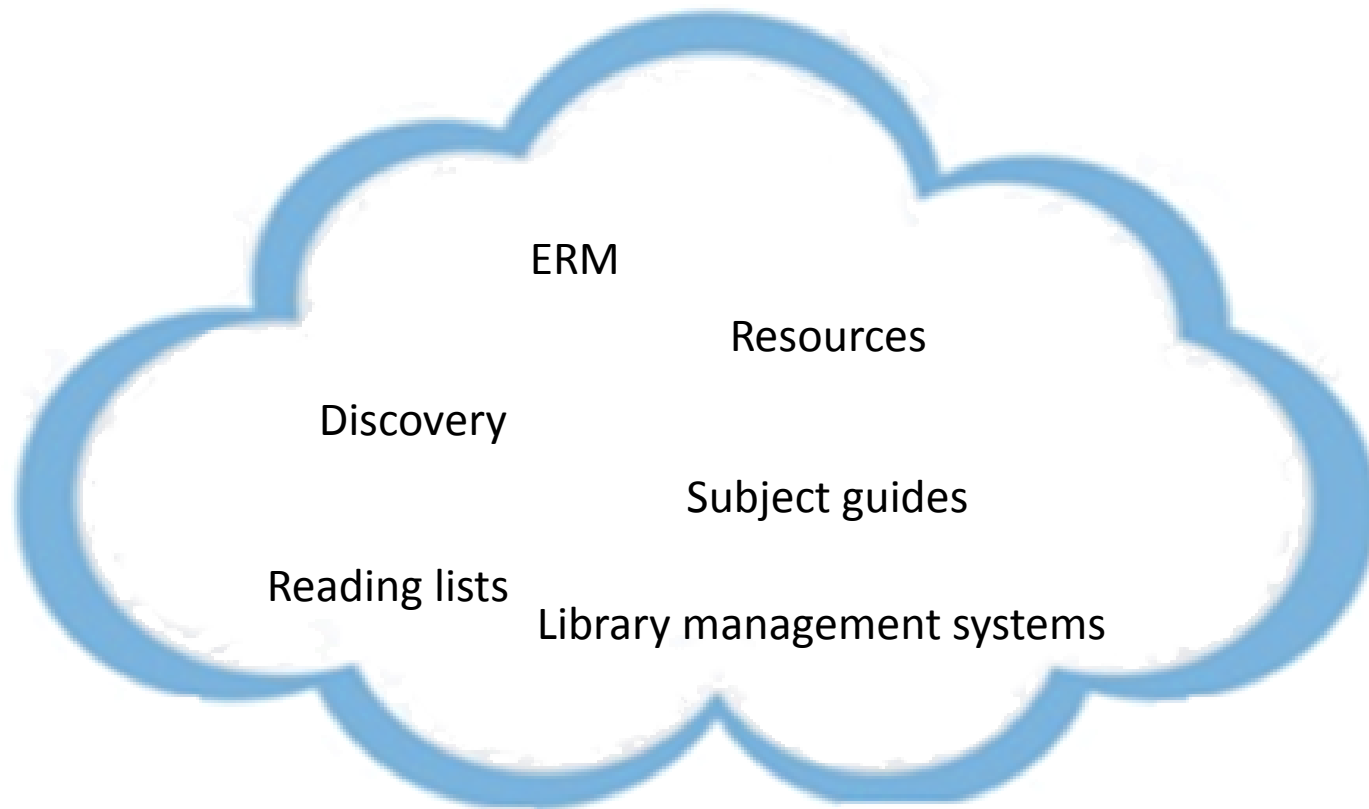
- Differences in approach emerged suggesting different future paths
- Inertia on planning follow-up project to implement findings

Making collaboration work

Collaboration in action (examples)

- CURL
 - Produced COPAC union catalogue
- Data centres
 - MIMAS/EDINA
 - NB. Archives Hub at MIMAS
- SDLC – Scottish Digital Library Consortium
 - Service provider to Scottish Universities
- Digital Curation Centre
 - International coming together to explore curation issues

Shift to the network level



Network benefits

Economic benefit
- Scaling up delivery

Practical benefit
- Delivering more
value locally



Born-digital archive /
digital repository

Technical benefit
- Concentrated development

Jisc Spotlight on the Digital

- Focus on digitised collections and their management/accessibility over time
- Highlighted need for
 - Institutional capacity building
 - Benefit of working with network level services, e.g., aggregators
 - Network level foresight and oversight of collection management and delivery

Network level activity to support local services

- Two case studies
 - Hydra
 - Northern Collaboration

Hydra

- A collaborative project between:
 - University of Hull
 - University of Virginia
 - Stanford University
 - Fedora Commons/DuraSpace
 - MediaShelf LLC
- Unfunded (in itself)
 - Activity based on identification of a common need
- Aim to work towards a reusable framework for multipurpose, multifunction, multi-institutional repository-enabled solutions
 - Local solutions built on common base - Hydra
- Timeframe - 2008-11 (but now extended indefinitely)





Fundamental Assumption #1

No single system can provide the full range of repository-based solutions for a given institution's needs,

...yet sustainable solutions require a common repository infrastructure.

Fundamental Assumption #2

No single institution can resource the development of a full range of solutions on its own,

...yet each needs the flexibility to tailor solutions to local demands and workflows.

Hydra partnerships



- From the beginning key aims have been and are:
 - to enable others to join the partnership as and when they wished (Now up to 27 partners)
 - to establish a framework for sustaining a Hydra community as much as any technical outputs that emerge
 - Establishing a semi-legal basis for contribution and partnership

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”

(African proverb)

Eight strategic priorities

1. Solution bundles
2. Turnkey applications
3. Vendor ecosystem
4. Training
5. Documentation
6. Code sharing
7. Community ties
8. Grow the User base

Also exploring cohesion across current developments

Northern Collaboration

- A grouping of 28 English University libraries
 - ‘North’ – Sheffield and up
 - SCONUL regional sub-group
- Exploring areas where we can be more effective working together
 - E.g., borrowing/visiting, e-books, customer service models
- Moving to the network level doesn’t mean having to rely on outsourced staff
 - Existing staff can be more than the sum of their parts by collaborating
- Exchange of experience / defined projects

Sharing Repository Services Working Group

- Created to explore how we could enhance our repository services through mutual effort
- Getting collaboration going
 - Call put out through Northern Collaboration Directors
 - Interested institutions met three times in first half of 2014
 - Developed list of areas to focus collaboration around
 - Now developing ideas through Programme Board
- Key has been to focus on areas of direct benefit to staff and services, without duplicating efforts elsewhere

Areas to collaborate on now

- Advocacy / Content marketing & promotion
- Discoverability of content
 - Content licensing
 - Impact measures
- Strategy / policy development
- Training
- Preservation
- Storage

Areas to ponder

- Maybe
 - Hardware
 - Already done for hosted solutions
 - Content re-use and embedding
 - Media specific
 - Cataloguing/description
 - Media specific
 - Quality assurance
 - Scaling up required
- Not now
 - Software
 - Search interface
 - Brand/design
 - All still establishing local service
 - Statistics
 - IRUS-UK doing this

Over to you...

Making collaboration work?

- What can enable us to collaborate?
- What are we afraid of / what worries us about collaborating?
- What are we prepared to give up in order to collaborate?
- What is your digital curation collaboration wishlist?

And finally...

Finding next steps

- Propose to set up a Google Group (or equivalent – ideas welcome) to discuss ideas of collaboration further
- Get in touch if interested
- c.awre@hull.ac.uk

Thank you