Collaboration for the Digital Future

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National Library's new database for Irish research

Since late 2007, KDCS has been working with the National Library's Systems Department to make >180,000 records for Irish manuscripts and periodicals freely searchable online. King's Digital Consultancy Services worked with the Library in planning the project. We also provided XML expertise and technical support throughout, working with the Centre for Computing in the Humanities (CCH) in King's College London.

Read more here...

About KDCS

Consultancy, training and research for the information and digital domain

Our services are used by cultural, heritage, media and corporate clients.

- Digital strategy and digitisation
- Funding and sustainability
- Stakeholder analysis
- Feasibility and pilot studies
- Tendering and procurement
- Charging models and commercialisation
- Change management
- Systems and infrastructure
- Workflow
DIGITAL HUMANITIES

INSPIRING RESEARCH, TRANSFORMING SCHOLARSHIP

RESEARCH

INNOVATION

FEATURED PROJECT
HENRY III FINE ROLLS
Discovering
Annotating
Comparing
Referring
Sampling
Illustrating
Representing
Comparing

Scholarship

From John Unsworth’s Scholarly Primitives
Digital Scholarship

- Many uses
- Many audiences
- Many sources
- New methods
- Scholarship 1st Tech 2nd
- Inter-disciplinary
Create once, use many times

For example, access letters by Byron from:

- a search engine result
- a webpage about Byron’s writing
- interactive exhibition consoles
- a timeline of Byron’s life
- a narrative account of Byron’s life
- a scholarly paper
- a teaching aid in a school
- with an automatic translation into non-English
- using automatic reading software
- an index
- links from other resources and sites
- etc…
In the Attention Economy there is a deficit of attention: the ability to attend to information in this information overload.

We will thus compete:

- for attention,
- for eyeballs on our research and resources,
- for time and energy from our communities.
New areas of research enabled

“Old Bailey Online reaches out to communities, such as family historians, who are keen to find a personal history, reflected in a national story, and in the process re-enforces the workings of a civil society. Digital resources both create a new audience, and reconfigure our analysis to favour the individual.”

Professor Tim Hitchcock, University of Hertfordshire

“Digitised resources allow me to discover the hidden lives of disabled people, who have not traditionally left records of their lives. I have found disability was discussed by many writers in the Eighteenth Century and that disabled men and women played an important role in the social life of the time.”

Dr David Turner, Swansea University
Bringing collections out of the dark
Anæmis Sanctus Dominus

et humanitatis redemísti

Pleasit et terra

san na

cel sa

Deus nostrorum éminé dominus Redimere para sæculi
The Jane Austen’s Fiction Manuscripts Digital Edition offers unprecedented opportunities for new scholarship, particularly in exploring the creative laboratory of her novels, so far an underexamined area of Austen studies. It also makes the manuscript sources freely available to the wider public.

Professor Kathryn Sutherland, Oxford University

Early English Books Online itself has transformed research into early English literature. It has democratised the research process by extending this facility to individuals and institutions without easy access to specialist libraries.

Dr Sarah Carpenter, University of Edinburgh
Bestowing economic & research benefits

“The knowledge and expertise gained through our investment in people and innovation allows the UK to maintain a technological leading edge, build a strong economy and improve quality of life for its citizens”

Excellence with Impact, Research Councils
“The Freeze Frame archive is invaluable in charting changes in the polar regions. Making the material available to all will help with further research into scientific studies around global warming and climate change.”

Pen Hadow, Polar Explorer
A brief word on teaching

“Now I enter the classroom and I think, most of the content that I have to deliver and a whole lot more, is floating around the students right now. What I need to do is inspire them and give them the tools to harness that information and the skills of other people to do the things they want to get done. And that transforms the way you approach the classroom.”

Dr Michael Wesch, Kansas State University
How to consider the components

- Multiple audiences & crossing subject boundaries
- New research approaches enabled
- Aiding effective, efficient research
- Sustainable scholarship & relationships
The project proposal

Specifies

- the need
- the proposed solution
- the result of the solution
- the market need and the audience needs
- the activities to be carried out
- the way they will be accomplished
- the number and type of staff needed
- the management of the project
- the required equipment and facilities
- the cost
- the starting and completion dates
Sustainability Planning

What is sustainability?

Big Picture:

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

For projects sustainability is:

A product or process that can be maintained over a long period of time, especially after grant monies disappear, that is beneficial to stakeholders & the host institution.
Sustainability Planning

What to sustain?

- Products
- Services
- Processes
- Expertise and knowledge
- People

To sustain any of these requires focus and clear objectives.

It also requires a cool head to decide what to not sustain!
The DCC Curation Lifecycle Model

CONCEPTUALISE

CREATE OR RECEIVE

TRANSFORM

CURATE

PRESERVATION PLANNING

DESCRIPTION

DATA (Digital Objects or Databases)

REPRESENTATION

INFORMATION

COMMUNITY WATCH & PARTICIPATION

PRESERVE

PRESERVATION ACTION

STORE

ACCESS, USE & REUSE

MIGRATE

APPRAISE & SELECT

INGEST

REAPPRAISE

DISPOSE
Some top tips for successful projects
The Project Manager's Dilemma

In reality, most projects can have no more than TWO of these!
1st Top Tip for Success

Planning and communication are essential!

“Planning is an unnatural process. It is much nicer to just get on with the job: failure then comes as a complete surprise instead of being preceded by a period of worry and doubt.”

Sir John Harvey-Jones

Technology project fail because:

- 32% - inadequate project management & control
- 20% - lack of communication
- 17% - failure to define objectives
- 17% - lack of familiarity with project scope & complexity
- 14% - incorrect technology & project size

Figures courtesy of KPMG
2nd Top Tip for Success

Employ a great project manager!

- Great collaborative projects are “owned” by everyone
- The project manager just owns all the projects problems
- Do you want to be that person?
3rd Top Tip for Success

Generate trust and honour your partners!

- Binding agreements
- Mutual benefit
- Mean what you say
- Don’t be mean
- Value and protect the relationship
- Listen to each other
4th Top Tip for Success

Remember your infrastructure!

- Infrastructure survey: can your goals be achieved with the technology available?
- Ensure it is sustainable and you have a digital preservation strategy
- Ensure early scheduling of equipment delivery
- Remember: IT staff cannot guarantee success, but they can definitely deliver failure
5th Top Tip for Success

Read the F’ing Manual! (RTFM)

- Quote from a technology magazine:
  Product Manuals: “introduce you to religion through a series of parables. Possibly. We haven’t read them, as we are men.”

- A huge amount of failure and mis-communication can be avoided by reading the manuals or documentation
6th Top Tip for Success

Have a vision!

- Think: can you describe the complete project?
- Be holistic! Think about the lifecycle and all the stakeholders needs
- Define solid objectives, goals and deliverables.
- Why you? - the “Hollywood pitch”!
A real example!

*Inspiring art, inspiring lives:*

*Discovering the roots of inspiration for a Century of British art by sharing online the lives and works of artists from Tate Archive.*
7th Top Tip for Success

Celebrate success!

- Projects sometimes feel like a battle for survival
- When you succeed, remember to celebrate!
- Having fun is one of the most important factors in a successful collaboration
More Questions

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