# Implementing resource discovery techniques at UCL Library Services and UCL Institute of Education Library and Archives

## Promoting use of The Education Times Collection

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Case Study
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In partnership with Jisc

## Background

University College London (UCL) Library Services has almost 2 million items and access to over 35,000 journals in a combination of print and electronic format covering the sixty or so subjects which are taught in the College.  UCL Library Services consists of eighteen site libraries.

The role of UCL Library Services is to support learning, teaching and research in the global university that is UCL. Members of staff in UCL Library Services support this outreach through their professionalism and their dedication to offering information services of the highest quality.

The Newsam Library and Archives are based at the UCL Institute of Education (IOE), a world-leading school for education and social science.  The Newsam Library and Archives is the best education library in Europe and supports the work of the IOE as one of its Professional Departments. It holds Europe's largest collection of books and journals on education. The archive contains 150 deposited collections ranging in date from 1797 to the present day, as well as the Institute's own records dating from its creation in 1902. Our collections cover all levels of education from pre-school and school through to further, higher, teacher and adult education, in formal, informal and experimental settings. They provide a rich resource for the history of education and educationists both in this country and abroad.

## What were the problems/issues your institution is trying to solve?

Across UCL Library Services, work is taking place to integrate existing digital collections into the Digital Collections repository. We have strong capacity in asset management and curation, but discoverability, especially for non-UCL users, remains weak.

The Institute of Education (IOE) joined UCL in December 2014. Work to integrate the UCL IOE Library and Archives into UCL Library Services has begun, but will be a long process. Particular attention will be paid to how to integrate the UCL IOE Library and Archives' digitised collections in such a way that makes them discoverable to a wider public but still benefits their specific target audiences.
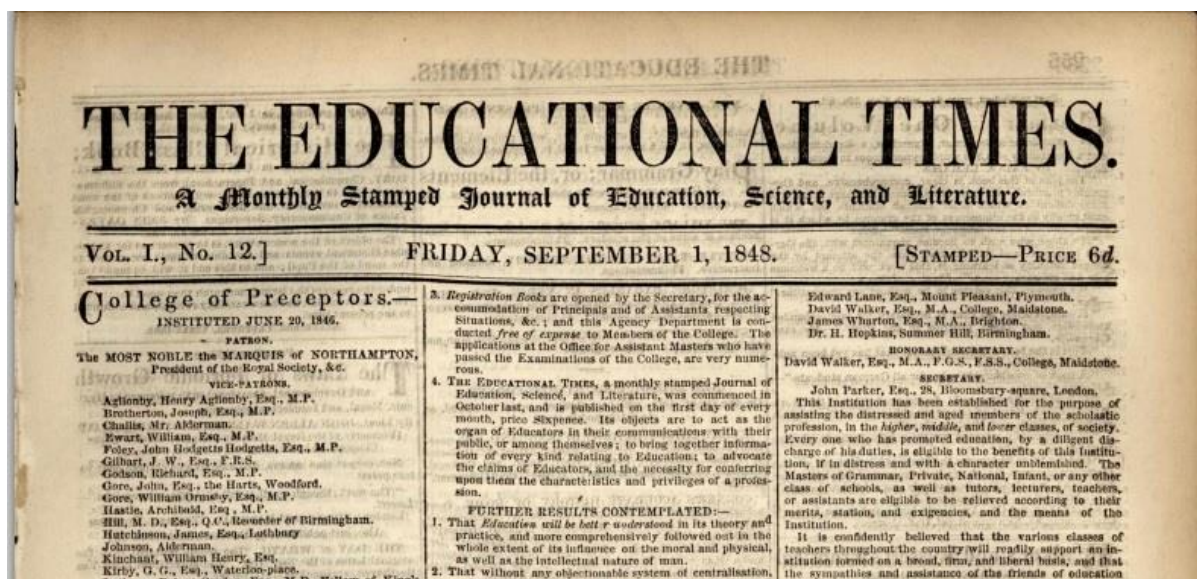
The Educational Times, Vol 1, Issue 12, September 1848.

In planning this case study we decided to focus on a collection held in the IOE collections that are currently being digitised. The Educational Times, the journal of the College of Preceptors, 1849-1923, is a popular collection for academics from UK & overseas HEIs researching a wide range of subjects in education – for example, curriculum, examinations, education standards, teacher professionalism, and school architecture. Issues also contain information on teachers and students who have passed examinations, making it an important resource for anyone researching individuals. The wealth of information on local education and schools means it could be used to create an addition to the IOE's existing school teaching resources on the 'history of your school' (KS2&3).

There are 75 volumes, each containing 12 issues, in the collection. Twenty eight volumes of the Educational Times are currently digitised.  The whole collection will be digitised and made available as text-searchable PDFs, with descriptive (Dublin Core), technical and change-history metadata. The collection will be indexed for searching, and browsable by date and by issue.

The fact that the collection is at a relatively early stage of digitisation means that it is suitable to be experimented with. Because there is currently a lot of activity around it, it can serve as a springboard to begin engaging with existing networks of users.

The first four issues of the Educational Times appearing in DigiTool search results.

UCL Library Services uses the Ex Libris DigiTool repository platform to provide access to digital collections, alongside Primo (the main discovery portal) and Aleph for the catalogue. The UCL IOE Library and Archives has hitherto used an EPrints installation as a repository but are currently exploring the possibility of using the Digital Collections repository as its platform for digitised content, though work so far has focused on the creation of digital content rather than discoverability. In UCL Library Services there is limited capacity to develop systems to improve discoverability, and limited technical capacity outside of digital curation; this case study has provided a great opportunity for us to work through these issues.

## How did the training components help?

Some of the training components were particularly helpful in allowing us to plan the case study and in providing guidance in how to proceed. In particular:

The Jisc Spotlight on the Digital online guide helped us to formulate the terms of this case study by helping us to break the issue of discoverability into discrete parts, and allowing us to plan our work.

The questionnaire provided in the first workshop on the use of digital materials in teaching and research was useful in encouraging us to think through our basic requirements for the

collection, and how it might be presented in a way that suits the different audiences who might benefit from access to it.

The second workshop on search engine optimisation helped us to assess the quality of the repository in terms of how discoverable its content is in Google searches. Given that the nature of the repository platform means that items will not appear in Google search, this led us to focus on improving collection pages. The workshop provided good advice in terms of how to prepare collection pages to make them amenable to searching, especially with Schema.org tags.

The materials on working with researchers have been the most useful for helping us to plan our immediate next steps, and helped us to begin to improve our relationships with existing and potential users of the Educational Times.

The information on tracking and monitoring the use of a collection was also useful. It provided us with specific methodologies for approaching user analysis, such as the Balanced Value Impact Model, which might be used to understand how our digital resources are impacting the specific communities we are aiming to serve. Given that the digital resources will be trialled on new platforms, such as DigiTool, it allows us to articulate the benefits or drawbacks of this process with specific regard to the users.

## What did you implement to address the issues(s)?

We found that the most significant and immediate outcome from the training was that we were encouraged to begin looking outside of our own repository platform and catalogues to promote the collection. The typical patterns of user behaviour presented in the first webinar – that the majority of users did not use library sites to find content, and that Google was overwhelmingly the preferred route to content, led us to consider focusing on SEO. At the same time, we had to consider the possibility that SEO work would have limited impact for the discovery of specific items, so we turned towards encouraging word-of-mouth promotion of the Educational Times.

We started with a review of our current capacity to promote the discoverability of the collections, in three areas: discoverability through the Library website and catalogues, discoverability through Google and other pathways outside of the library site, and word of mouth and promotion through interested parties – academics, archivists and subject librarians particularly.

Simply moving the Educational Times collection from its current home in the IOE EPrints repository to the DigiTool repository might have some impact, in making it discoverable through the repository search and browse interfaces, and in allowing indexed text searching. It may also be possible to make the collection available for harvesting, for example for JSTOR.

However, we noted as we set out that the majority of those searching for content overwhelmingly tend to use Google and not institutional searches. We recognised that given the structure of the repository, there is limited scope for improving Google exposure for individual items, while the collection pages could be improved for SEO. The most impact would come from actions that help to promote the collection through existing networks and working relationships.

Following the advice laid out in the Spotlight on the Digital online guide, we decided to carry out the following specific actions:

Create and evaluate a strategy for making the repository collections more discoverable through search engines. We would focus on discoverability for collections as a whole, rather than individual items.

Create and evaluate a strategy for promotion amongst existing networks. We aim to create collection champions, whose input will contribute to the Case Study, and engage with our academic liaison librarians and existing users of the collection to promote the resources to a wider audience.

Test the creation of 'talking heads' podcasts with a range of users to publicise the potential for using the resources for teaching, research and learning, in order to spur the promotion of the collection amongst networks.

By collaborating with existing users of the archive, establish a procedure for better collaboration with our users to promote digital resources in the long-term. Working intensively on these collections will enable us to develop, evaluate and share a strategy for improving resource discovery for other digitised collections

## What was the outcome?

Given the short timeframe of the project, these activities are mostly at the planning stage at the time of writing, though we have begun to produce some of the promotional material. A number of outcomes have emerged from the project so far:

**A search engine optimisation plan for the collection.** This currently takes the form of a set of actions which we will carry out in preparing the Educational Times collection for release. Our aim is to follow these relatively simple steps for the Educational Times collection and evaluate their impact on the use of the collection.

We will take action to improve the chances of the collection being found in Google searches by doing the following:

Move the Educational Times collection page from within the repository platform into UCL's content management system, CMS, in order to allow it to be crawled more effectively.

Ensure that the page has well-formulated headers and footers, with Schema.org tags.

Investigate the possibilities for improving the use of Google Analytics for collection pages.

Investigate producing a sitemap for the collection.

**A strategy for promoting the collection amongst existing networks.** For the Educational Times collection, we decided to involve different users by creating a series of 'talking heads' videos, in which users explain their interest in the collection and how it might be used. In planning this activity, we took guidance from the section of the Spotlight guide on 'Creating Collection Champions'. At the time of writing, one of these videos has been filmed and two more are scheduled.

The videos will be made available through the Library's YouTube channel. Their usage will be tracked through YouTube and Google Analytics, as per the advice from the workshop on Google and Search Engine Optimisation.

The first video features Mark Freeman, a senior lecturer in education at the Institute of Education. He discusses the content of the Educational Times and how it might be used in teaching, and refers to two particular articles in one issue of the journal to illustrate his points. The aim of this video is to give users a quick introduction to the materials, without at this point focusing on the fact that they are digitised and available online. Future videos will focus on a student's experience of using the collection, and an archivist's perspective.



Mark Freeman discussing a volume of the Educational Times.

We have also planned to disseminate the videos, and the digitisation of the collection in general. We will:

Encourage the participants to circulate the videos (embedded in the collection pages) to their colleagues, and if appropriate use them in their teaching or research activities.

Disseminate the videos through UCL Library Services' usual social media channels, using campaigns and trackbacks to follow referrals to the collection. The videos will be hosted on the Library's YouTube channel, and will be promoted through the Twitter feeds @UCLLibraries, @UCLDigital and @IOE_Archives as they are released, and the collection will be highlighted as part of the Library's normal promotional activity.

Use the materials to promote the collection through UCL's staff and student newsletters.

Identify appropriate subject librarians with whom to share the materials.

**An evaluation plan.** The actions that we are carrying out with the Educational Times were chosen in order that they could be generalised to apply to all our collections, though we recognise that there might not always be such an impetus to promote a collection if it is not currently funded or actively involved in teaching or research.

As the collection in DigiTool begins to be used, we will monitor its usage. Following the advice from the SEO and analytics workshop and the Getting Found report, we will use the information we collect through Google Analytics and the repository's inbuilt statistics package, BIRT, to understand how we might compare collections and take appropriate action to promote them effectively to the right audiences.

**A general improvement in discussions around the collection**. In the course of the project we have been discussing the issues it has raised with colleagues, both in order to better understand them ourselves and in order to promote the project and build interest in the project. It has been a very positive way to encourage collaboration between UCL Library Services and the UCL IOE Library and Archives as we begin to integrate our services. This will feed into the ongoing merger working groups that will continue to meet over the next six months or so.