Improving acquisition of Digital Archival Collections
Call for participation

Jisc is looking to design a new service to support Higher Education (HE) institutions to develop a more strategic approach to the acquisition of digital archival collections. We are inviting up to 12 HE libraries to participate in a pilot to help us identify, specify, and quantify information and data which supports a more informed decision-making process.

Participating institutions will be expected to provide sample library data, attend two face-2-face workshops and up to three webinars, and provide input into the design of the service.

We would like to work with a maximum of two representatives per institution with responsibility for e-resources management and acquisition, both at a senior and practitioner level. Through this work, institutions will have the chance to shape the development of new services, ensure they deliver value and meet their requirements.

The pilot will run between March and June.

Jisc will award each institution a small grant of £2000 to cover staff time and standard travel expenses in relation to this project.

If you are interested, please fill in the application form attached to this email or, if you came across the call on Jisc's Content and Digitisation blog, please download and return it to **Peter.findlay@jisc.ac.uk** by midday on **Friday 24 February 2017**

Background to Jisc

Jisc is the UK higher, further education and skills sectors' not-for-profit organisation for digital services and solutions.

We operate shared digital infrastructure and services, negotiate sector-wide deals with IT vendors and commercial publishers and provide trusted advice and practical assistance for universities, colleges and learning providers.

Background to the project

There is plenty of evidence showing that digital collections of primary source material have a positive impact on research, teaching and learning, as testified in the recent Jisc-ProQuest study on the **Impact of digital collections**[1]. They complement more traditional resources such as journals and books, and have become a fundamental part of the scholarly communication lifecycle. Every year, libraries make significant investments in digital archives from their budgets. Our research suggests that institutions need information to support improved strategic oversight or to have more evidence on which to base their decisions.

Jisc has been investigating new services aimed at supporting institutions to achieve a more coordinated and cost-effective approach to the purchasing of digital archival collections and data sets to support research, teaching and learning. The project has so far undertaken face-to-face interviews, discussions with publishers and workshops with librarians to uncover and analyse the key issues in the acquisition of such collections and have mapped a typical workflow. Background research has also been undertaken to evaluate content services provided by other organisations and also to explore possible business models. We have established, through the interviews and workshops, that it would be helpful to tackle issues in the following areas:

» Benchmarking/institutional profiling with regard to provision of digital collections — this is of value because libraries can evaluate the quality of their own content offering against those of other institutions

» Cost transparency on publishers' products and market intelligence — this is of value because it ensures they are getting the best possible deals and can plan and budget more effectively

» Aggregated usage metrics — this is of value because it helps to evidence the impact of collections on teaching, learning and research internally and for the purposes of the TEF and REF

» Negotiation and licensing support — this is of value because it allows libraries to tailor access to the needs of their users and enables shared agreements to reduce costs

» promotion of institutional collections[2] — this is of value because libraries have invested in digitisation and want to see their collections used to increase their visibility to enable positive impact on their students

These areas essentially make up the value proposition for us to develop a new service to tackle the issues articulated in this call.

A relationship will naturally exist with other Jisc initiatives such as with Jisc Collections and our work to **transform Jisc's library support services**. To aid conceptualisation of the service we have given it the working title **AC+**. This aids us in thinking about where it might fit with your workflows. We have also conceptualised a typical workflow, see Appendix A.

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1 https://digitisation.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2016/04/15/impacts-of-digital-collections/
2 This brings together various Value Propositions which were developed early in the project.

Governance

We have established an advisory function for the project to provide strategic and practitioner oversight. The Digital Archival Collections group, chaired by Joanna Ball, Head of Library Content Delivery & Digital Strategy at the University of Sussex, has been set up as a subgroup of Jisc Collections Content Strategy Group (JCCSG).

Defining a Digital Archival Collection

By digital archival collection we mean primary source collections, typically archival material and special collections acquired by institutions mainly as one-off purchases. Image collections and time-based historical media (video and audio) collections are also included. This definition excludes book and journal collections (except where back-files or special book collections are concerned).

What this pilot is about

This call relates to some of the elements of the value proposition, mainly focusing on benchmarking, financial information on acquisition of digital archival collections and information on institutions' wish lists to support a potential marketplace.

However, we will also solicit feedback from participating institutions on the other elements of the value proposition (see below: Related elements) to inform related work that is taking place in parallel to this pilot. We are also hoping that new issue might emerge for which we can seek solutions eg are there collections which are completely inaccessible to HE institutions and what are the barriers to accessing these?

Areas of investigation

1.   Benchmarking/profiling data (purchased collections)

Our consultation with libraries so far has confirmed that institutions would find it helpful to establish a benchmark to allow them to compare collections which they have purchased with those purchased by other institutions.

We will invite participating libraries to provide a list of collections which they have purchased in recent times or, if such a list does not exist for an institution, we would want to explore the impediments to the purchasing of collections. This data will then be aggregated and presented back to pilot institutions according to a range of criteria. These criteria will be determined by the pilot libraries eg Jisc band/similar type of institution, geographical location; subject specialism etc. The aim is to agree a useful data prototype, and to work out how it should be aggregated and made available back to libraries.

To establish such a benchmark we first need to identify a key information set to describe collections in a consistent manner, eg title, description, media etc (metadata). Participating institutions will be invited to attend a workshop to develop such a description and establish its utility.
We also need to identify where such benchmarking information will best inform the purchasing workflow.

Once the key information set has been established, we will also explore how that information can best be shared. The information may ultimately also feed into a collection marketplace where information about existing collections, new collections and institutional digitised collections will be made available to the sector.

Some questions we would like to answer:
  » Which digital archival collections has an institution acquired in the last 3/5 years?
  » Which digital archival collections are under consideration for acquisition in the next year or if it is possible over a longer timeframe?
  » How long does it normally take to acquire a collection (from identification to actual purchase)?
  » Once acquired what is the ongoing assessment process as to the utility of the collection?
  » Is a subscription to a collection, which attracts ongoing access fees, ever dropped (decommissioned)?
  » Which details, for collections purchased, can be identified as commonly useful to facilitate a standardised key information set?
  » In what kind of format might the data be provided?
  » In addition to knowledge about which collections are held by which institutions is there additional information which would be useful?

Anticipated outcomes/outputs
  » A prototype of what an aggregated list of collections would look like and how it would be presented back to institutions in order to be useful
  » Information about the acquisition of collections
  » An agreed key information set

2.   Financial information on acquisition of digital collections/spend data
This is about identifying key financial information and understanding general purchasing habits. There are considerable complexities involved in acquiring such collections, yet decisions often need to be made very quickly, particularly at year end. Vendors provide a variety of pricing structures for the initial purchase determined by less than clear criteria. There is a further complexity around ongoing platform fees.

We will invite participating institutions to provide us with some financial data relating to the their purchasing of digital collections over the last 3-5 years, in order to compare across institutions, analyse it and gain a better understanding of the current pricing landscape.

The pilot will ultimately seek to aggregate information from every institution and to identify mechanism for harvesting such data on an ongoing basis. It is anticipated that participating institutions will support the process of establishing the data elements but also the mechanisms for data harvesting
Some questions we would like to answer:

» Approximately how much has the institution spent on digital archival collections in the last 3-5 years?
» What do these collections typically cost?
» Can we gain transparency as to annual ongoing platform fees (recurrent costs)?
» Price paid vs list price; was a discount applied or was the collection bundled?
» Indicative % of spend on library content acquisition that goes towards digital collections?
» Can we identify useful indicators for the impact of collections on teaching, learning and research?

Anticipated outcomes/outputs
» A better understanding of expenditure patterns on such collections from pilot institutions
» Pricing information for collections; in effect a list price
» An estimation of potential discounts against Jisc Collections bands
» Intelligence to help us shape a wider survey of the sector

3.   Wish-list and marketplace

In order to develop a market place of collections that would support more transparent and efficient acquisition process (eg group-based purchasing) we would like to aggregate institutional wish-lists in order to have a consistent and visible set of collections which the sector would be interested in purchasing.

Ultimately, this could become a fully-fledged marketplace for the brokering of collections in which we can invite publishers to propose collections for the community to make pledges to purchase. Once a collections has gathered a critical mass of pledges the cost of that collection may be purchased at a discounted price against the list price. A pilot to test this approach with a small number of publishers will run in parallel to this pilot.

While new collections will come to market over time, our sense from the work so far is that the market for digital archival collections of primary source material is relatively small and bounded. We envisage therefore that it is possible to gain a reasonably accurate list encompassing the totality of collections on offer.

Some questions we would like to answer:
» Which collections is an institution considering purchasing (#1, #2, #3)

» What is the methodology for building such market place wish-list: through a select group and then through as wide a number of institutions as possible?

Anticipated outcomes/outputs
» A clear description of the methodology for putting a list together
» Aggregated wish-lists to demonstrate how they can be aggregated and analysed
» Data and qualitative information
» An actual nomination of collections for Jisc to negotiate via a platform (eg an adapted Jisc Elevator)

Related elements

There is work being undertaken outside of this call but it needs to be informed by your feedback and we will want to engage you with commenting on outputs from that strand.

Aggregated usage metrics: this is about identifying a consistent way of reporting on the use of these kind of collections. We will handle this through conversations with publishers but we would like to have your input about how this data would best be provided back to you and what kind of analysis/reporting requirements there might be for it.

By market intelligence we mean availability of collections (the publisher offer) and we hope this will give us a clear indication of the extent of the total market and ultimately we will provide information which makes the availably of collections much clearer. Again we may ask for feedback on this element of the work.

We will test negotiations and agreements with publishers to see if we can make an actual working agreement between the sector and publishers for one or more collections which are purchased through a consortium or group-based model. This will allow us to test the mechanisms for enabling the sector to participate in selecting collections for which they would like to see an agreement materialise (see the whish-list element above).

We ultimately hope that this work will improve sector/publisher relations around the acquisition of collections.

Finally, there is the issue of promoting an institution's own collections which essentially will happen once we have defined a consistent means of describing collections and have identified a platform for sharing that information.

Desired outcomes from this call

It is hoped that Jisc will be in a much better position to develop a service with associated business case and business model to ensure viability and sustainability. Along the way, there will be an exploration of the ideal platform for providing intelligence back to the sector or, if we need to split functions, a variety of platforms. Alternatively, we might add an element to an existing service, should that prove to be the best solution. Your input will be invaluable in shaping the direction that Jisc takes and ensuring it meets the needs of our members.

Level of commitment

» Jisc will act as the coordinating agency
» Between 10 and 15 institutions will be asked to participate in investigating the various elements for which we seek data; this is to allow us to managed the process and we will scale up once we have understood more about the issues we wish to address

» One person (a collections librarian) needs to be designated by each institution to act as the project lead.
» A senior manager should also provide input by reviewing outputs and attending workshops/participating in webinars in order to provide a strategic perspective on the acquisition of such collections.
» This person will coordinate efforts of colleagues to gather the relevant information and will submit it to Jisc
» Jisc and a specialist in data management will analyse submitted data and harmonise it to make it consistent
» Institutional leads will be consulted on how the data will ultimately be provided via a service and ensure it is mapped to existing library workflows (see appendix A for a generic workflow captured during the research stage of this project)
» It is envisaged that there will be two face-to-face workshops, most likely at Jisc's offices in London and/or Manchester and a couple of webinars to agree approaches to data aggregation and for feedback
» The processes will take approximately 12 weeks
» The anticipated time commitment is two days to attend workshops, time to participate in some webinars and to assemble data and review of outputs.
» Feedback on the approach to aggregation and reporting will also require some time commitment but this will be considered as an in-kind contribution from the participating institutions.

What Jisc will provide

» The support of the Digital Portfolio Manager to support all processes
» A workflow-planning webinar and a near end webinar to set up the process and share the findings and learning
» Two face-to-face workshops (venue to be decided) to establish the key information set
» Support from a data specialist

Deliverables and timetable

1) Commitment to partake and brief proposal of which kinds of information you can provide by 1 February 2017 (see appendix B for a draft time table (please note that dates may change according to need)
2) Data will largely be supplied in the CSV format
3) Attendance at two face-to-face workshops (one on 4 April and one in May) and participation in three webinars. One of these will be a kick-off webinar and this is scheduled for 16 March (please note that these dates are subject to change)
4) Feedback on deliverables and one-to-one conversations with the Jisc team about the elements under the call but also the elements which make up the parallel strand
5) Feedback on a draft report (to be compiled by the consultant and Jisc) detailing the various elements described above in readiness for the development of a Jisc business case for a further phase of work after July 2017 (Alpha)

Eligibility

This call is aimed at institutions in the HE sector which seek improvement in the information the use to support the acquisition of digital archival collections. The institutions we seek will be both large and small, focussed on research or on teaching. We seek a broad discipline range and diverse student demographics. We seek to include a wide a range of institutions in order to reflect the variation of HEIs across the UK. This may mean we have to choose between HEIs with similar aims.
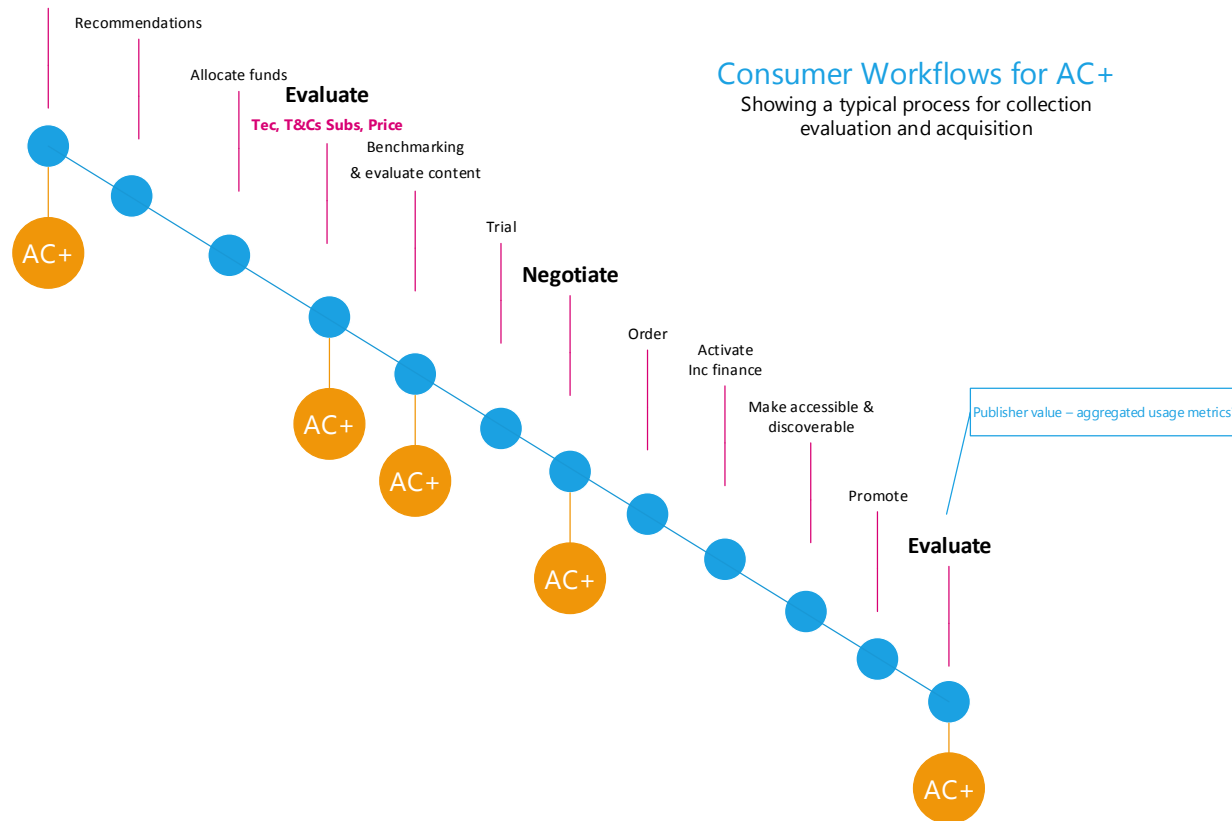
We will pay careful attention to the statements made about the issue arising from purchasing such collections, your institution's commitment to acquiring such collections and the potential impact on the institution's ability to do so in the future. So please make you strategic objectives for acquiring such collections clear on the application form.

Evaluation of your proposal

- Provision of sufficient collection information - 20%
- Provision of sufficient strategic information about you plans for acquiring digital archival collections - 60%
- Time commitment of two members of staff, one senior manager and one person with responsibility for day-to-day acquisition matters - 20%

Jisc

Appendix A – a generic library workflow indicating where a Jisc service might apply

What is available

Recommendations

Allocate funds

Evaluate

Tec, T&Cs Subs, Price

Benchmarking
& evaluate content

Trial

Negotiate

Order

Activate
Inc finance

Make accessible &
discoverable

Promote

Evaluate

AC+
AC+
AC+
AC+
AC+

Consumer Workflows for AC+
Showing a typical process for collection
evaluation and acquisition

Publisher value – aggregated usage metrics?

Appendix B - Project Timeline (this call relates to phase 1)