HIDDEN COLLECTIONS

Report of the findings of the RLUK Retrospective Cataloguing Survey in association with The London Library
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An illustration from Alice Lang’s ‘Ivan and Esther: a tale of Jewish life in Russia’ (London: Religious Tract Society, [1892?]), from the M.S. Anderson Collection of Writings on Russia Printed between 1525 and 1917, Senate House Library, University of London.

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Wife of a Mandarin of the Third Rank, c.1820 (Crawford Chinese Collection)

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Executive Summary

This report shares the findings of a survey into “hidden collections” carried out by Research Libraries UK and the London Library in 2010.

The aim of the survey was to gather evidence about the ongoing need for retrospective cataloguing of UK collections, following on from the 2007 RIN report ‘Uncovering Hidden Resources survey.’

It is now published in interim form, pending any further work to widen the scope to archives and manuscripts, as part of RLUK’s Unique and Distinctive Collections project.

77 responses were made to the survey (representing 75 separate institutions), including from 38 academic, seven public and 32 specialist libraries (including museums and subscription libraries, and the National Library of Scotland).

Key Findings

- Hidden collections remain an immense problem for UK libraries. Over 13 million volumes are uncatalogued in the libraries that responded, 18.5% of the total number of volumes held by those libraries. Over 4 million more (in a smaller number of libraries) have unsatisfactory catalogue records.

- Some sectors have more hidden collections than others. Museums, public libraries and independent libraries have a higher proportion of collections which are invisible online. However, while research libraries have better coverage of printed collections, their hidden archival collections often remain vast.

- Modern material is being added to the backlogs. The presence of 21st century materials in the backlogs suggests that some libraries are unable to keep up even with current acquisitions.

- Foreign language material and formats which require particular skills and expertise (maps, music, archives) are heavily represented.

- There are serious problems in collating and comparing metrics for materials other than printed books.

- Librarians are aware of the problem and are actively trying to tackle the backlogs; over 60% have retrospective cataloguing projects under way. However, the scale of the problem is often beyond individual institutions. Respondents support an online register of retrospective cataloguing and are interested in exploring national initiatives and technical solutions to bring this about.

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1 Helen Greenwood, et al, Uncovering Hidden Resources: Progress in extending the coverage of online catalogues, Research Information Network, 2007
http://rinarchive.jisc-collections.ac.uk/our-work/using-and-accessing-information-resources/uncovering-hidden-resources-extending-coverage-on

2 All percentage figures in the survey are based on these 77 responses representing 100%.
Introduction

This report shares the findings of a 2010 survey into “hidden collections” carried out by Research Libraries UK (RLUK) and the London Library, with the technical and marketing assistance of Mimas.

RLUK is a consortium of research-led libraries in the UK and Ireland, which has successfully initiated new ideas, plans, projects and services in the area of cataloguing and bibliographic control, including Copac, the Archives Hub and the RLUK database.

The London Library is an extraordinary literary institution, which operates as an independent subscription library open to all. Their involvement was induced by the difficulties they experienced. This led the Library’s Head of Retrospective Cataloguing, Dunia García-Ontiveros, to explore the wider national picture and to work with RLUK in creating this survey.³

Aims of the Survey

The survey aimed to gather evidence for the further need to support and fund retrospective cataloguing in the UK, across library sectors. The introduction sent to participants (see Appendix A) described it as “an important, national, review of where we are in the UK in relation to 'hidden' collections and moves to ensure that collections are exposed to a much greater audience.”

In 2004 RLUK released a summary of the volume of material requiring retro-conversion and retrospective cataloguing within its member libraries. In 2007 the Research Information Network (RIN) published a large-scale survey of the state of UK retrospective cataloguing in their report “Uncovering Hidden Resources”, which incorporated a major literature review and surveyed researchers as well as librarians. This present survey seeks to update and augment the evidence gathered in the RIN survey.

RLUK also wished to explore how it could best realise the benefits of its immense database of catalogue records: what was the potential demand from libraries to use these records for their uncatalogued materials and how could this be translated into greater awareness and use of collections?

The survey also sought the views of librarians on the establishing of a National Register of retrospective cataloguing, in the context of advances in the area of resource discovery and in RLUK’s ongoing involvement in the movement to open up library-related data for free re-use.

Given that just these interests generated over 100 questions, many more than the RIN survey, the present instrument could not explore all aspects of the hidden collections problem in the UK. It did not include user demand for access to such material, library policies on access to uncatalogued material or the use of “minimal processing” techniques to speed up archival cataloguing. Fortunately the OCLC/RLUK survey of special collections in the UK (discussed in the section below on the Unique and Distinctive Collections Project) covers these other “managerial” issues, offering a fuller picture of the situation.

Methodology

The survey form

The survey was devised by the partners with input from the members of the retro@jiscmail.ac.uk discussion list and from people involved with the RIN survey (listed in the Acknowledgments). The survey form was set up and maintained by Mimas and made available to participants from July to September 2010 via the SurveyGizmo website. It was promoted as widely as possible via informal networks, mailing lists, groups and individual contacts, as listed in the Acknowledgements.

The full survey form can be seen in Appendix B of this report. It covered:

1. The responder (job title), their institution (including library sector).
2. Details of their collections (size, subject, formats, dates, visibility).
3. Retrospective conversion/cataloguing needs (size, subject, formats, dates, visibility).
4. Record enhancement needs (size, subject, formats, dates, visibility).
5. Status, methods and funding of projects past, present and planned to carry out the work mentioned.
6. Further comments and suggestions, including views on the online register.
7. Extra questions from Copac and RLUK.

Questions were a combination of yes/no, tick box options and free-text.

The survey did not attempt to define terms used such as special collections or retrospective cataloguing, but relied on a common professional understanding of such matters.

One response was received as an email, and other respondents supplemented the questionnaire with emails and links to websites. The survey interpretation confines itself to the structured data captured via the form.

Issues in interpreting the survey data

We experienced difficulty in interpreting the data in some cases. This may have been due to a lack of clarity in the questions allowing varying interpretations by participants. Figures from different respondents may therefore not be truly comparable.

The most significant issues:

1. Use of free-text questions. This put the onus on respondents to interpret what we wanted to know and appears to have led to underreporting of data (witness commentary on Question 13). However it did yield interesting comments and allowed very diverse libraries and collections to be covered.

2. It was sometimes unclear to respondents whether we were asking about general and/or special collections and whether our concern was printed books or all kinds of materials (the size questions asked for numbers of volumes and titles, normally associated with printed books, but the format questions allowed for other material types). Respondents therefore interpreted in their own way e.g. some omitted archival collections altogether from their replies, some referred to them for some questions but not others.

3. The section on projects did not allow for the complexity of multiple projects. A structure that enabled respondents to reply separately for each project might have yielded more detail on the workings of retro projects.
The survey and the Unique and Distinctive Collections project

This survey was not published in 2010 because RLUK decided to consider broadening this work to include a separate and more focused survey of archival and manuscript materials, as well as continuing to analyse the findings of the report to identify new areas of activity in the bibliographic sphere.

In 2012, RLUK and the London Library decided to issue these results as an interim publication, to make this valuable data available while it still has currency. This is in the context of RLUK’s Unique and Distinctive Collections (UDC) project, which is investigating how RLUK members and other libraries can make the most of their collections in challenging times. The UDC project will report its main findings in the first part of 2013. UDCs, whether in special collections or general library stock, are particularly labour-intensive to catalogue and hence more likely to remain un- or under-catalogued. The project therefore draws extensively on the survey data and will take forward its findings. As part of the project work, the project manager, Alison Cullingford, has helped prepare this report for publication.4

The UDC project strand also incorporates the OCLC/RLUK survey of special collections in the UK, which will include a section on cataloguing of all kinds of special material and will complement the findings of this survey. The OCLC survey report is due to be published in 2012.5

Acknowledgments

Thanks must go to the Mimas team, particularly Lisa Jeskins, for setting up the online survey, to Ann Chapman from UKOLN for help and advice as well as copies of the Full Disclosure questionnaires and the idea of an online National Register, to Sally Curry from RIN for help in shaping the survey, and to the many people who helped to ‘spread the word’ about the survey: Ed Potten (Secretary, HLF), Gudrun Warren (Hon Secretary, CLAA), Mark Purcell (National Trust), John Tuck, (Chair, M25 Digital Developments Working Group), Carol Barstow (Association of Independent Libraries), Keith Manley (Institute of Historical Research), Maria Cotera (former co-owner of Retro@jiscmail.ac.uk),

CILIP’s Cataloguing and Indexing Group blog and CILIP’s Gazette

Members of Jiscmail lists: Arlis-link, Lis-cigs, Epug-uki-cat, Acss-learned-socs.

Members of the LIS-INSPIRE list.

Renaissance Hub.

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4 For further information about the UDC project and its publications http://rlukuniqueanddistinctive.wordpress.com

5 http://www.rluk.ac.uk/content/oclc-research-and-rluk-survey-special-collections-and-archives-research-libraries-within-uk-
Charles Surface, 1865

Albumen print photograph by Henry Cooper Jnr of a figure dressed in eighteenth century costume as Charles Surface (a leading character in the play by Sheridan "The School for Scandal"). Although it is a staged photograph there is spontaneity in the figure's smile. This photograph won an Amateur Photographic Association prize in 1865.

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Survey findings

Respondents (Question 1-7)

Details of the respondent and their institution (Questions 1-5)

77 participants completed the survey. They represented 75 separate institutions (listed in Appendix C) as some of the larger institutions submitted separate responses to cover different parts of their collections.

The job titles of those who responded varied widely, depending on the type of institution and its staffing structures. They also reflected the roles of staff to whom retro-cataloguing is of most concern. In smaller institutions the Librarian or Archivist replied, in larger institutions we heard from cataloguers and their managers, heads of acquisitions or other departments, deputy librarians and library directors.

Respondents by region (Question 5)

There were 77 responses (100%) to this question. Libraries from all over the UK (and one from the Republic of Ireland) were represented. London libraries made up over a third of the responses.

Respondents by type/sector of library (Questions 6-7)

These questions had 79 responses (100%). Two extra responses appeared because one respondent had ticked three options to describe their unique organisation.
The respondents were spread across the sectors, with almost every sector represented to some extent, with the exception of school and government libraries. University libraries, perhaps predictably, are dominant (31 respondents, 39%), reflecting the scale on which such libraries operate.

The seven respondents who selected ‘other academic library’ included two university colleges, a national educational charity, a research library administered by an independent trust, a university debating society, a conservatoire and a research centre within a university.

The nine respondents who selected ‘other’ represented four registered charities, one national library, one university college library funded by the college rather than the university and three libraries funded in varying degrees by government departments and a national development agency.

Participants were not asked about membership of RLUK, but a comparison with the members list revealed that 15 (19%) were part of the consortium: 13 university libraries, one museum and one national library.

**Details of collections (Questions 8-16)**

**Size of collections (Question 8-9)**

The size of overall collections held by respondents was explored by asking about volumes and titles separately as both have a bearing on the amount of work involved in cataloguing.

66 (86%) respondents supplied figures for number of volumes. Only 26 (34%) supplied figures for number of titles. 18 (23%) gave both figures.

![Question 8: Number of volumes](chart)

The numbers of volumes varies enormously, from 13 million to only 10 volumes. The combined total of volumes from libraries that gave figures is 75,293,463.
The figures given for number of titles varied less: respondents tended to be middle-sized libraries. Holdings ranged from over 1,700,000 to 17,000. The combined total of titles from libraries that gave figures is 8,853,141.

Scope of collections (Questions 10-15)
Main subjects (Question 10)

Question 10 asked for main subjects of collections. As a free-text question, it elicited detailed responses. 75 (98%) replied.

Many libraries such as the public libraries and university libraries collect in all subject areas, leading to replies such as “all academic disciplines”, “general”, “all subject areas represented”.

Others are highly specialised e.g. “Psychiatry, psychology and related fields”, “Veterinary science”, “Poetry – 20th century onwards”. For the above chart, these responses have been split into arts and humanities, science and social science.

Several such as public libraries have a local remit e.g. the “largest and most comprehensive reference collection on Devon and its region”.

[Bar chart for Question 9: Number of titles]

[Pie chart for Question 10: Subjects of collections]
Formats of collections (Questions 11)

Question 11 asked about formats of collections, offering a list of examples including archival collections and ephemera. 74 (96%) replied.

*Objects include original works of art, textiles, coins, medals, globes, etc.

The results showed that practically every library that responded held a variety of formats. As this was a free-text question, it is likely that some libraries underreported particular formats, for example, electronic resources (this is more apparent in the responses to later questions). This question may have sown confusion as questions 8 and 9 imply printed books and other materials managed as items, whereas this question included archives, which are measured in different ways.

Date range (Question 12)

74 libraries (96%) replied to this free-text question.

In collating the responses, it is clear that although collections span 2500 BC to the present, the bulk of collections reported are post 16th century, perhaps inevitable given the greater volume of such material.
Visibility on web OPAC (Questions 13-15)

75 (97%) replied to question 13 (two replied both ‘yes’ and ‘no’: we treated these as ‘yes’).

The libraries that replied ‘no’ held smaller collections. The largest held 300,000 and the rest had collections that ranged from 40,000 to 10 volumes. They included four subscription libraries and a national educational charity, a research library administered by an independent trust, a registered library and an ecclesiastical library.

Libraries that responded ‘yes’ were asked to list which collections were visible on a web OPAC by format (question 14): all replied.

Naturally books are most commonly found on web OPACS, which are the public manifestation of library management systems designed for books. The way this question was phrased made it difficult to tease out how visible other formats may be, for example archives may be catalogued on a CALM system or on the Archives Hub but not on the library management system, hence they may be visible to the public via the web, but not literally via a web OPAC.
This table compares the list of formats visible on Web OPACS to the list above of formats actually held (question 11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formats</th>
<th>Visible on web OPAC</th>
<th>Held by libraries (Q11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books and other print material</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival material</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuscripts</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound recordings</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other *</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheet music</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps and charts</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephemera</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs and slides</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>44 (photos) 11 (slides)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly some libraries have formats that they did not mention in reply to the earlier question. This is interesting as it suggests underreporting to question 11 (possibly the use of free-text being a factor). Formats added in free-text in question 15 by the 24 libraries that selected 'other':

**Question 15: Libraries with other formats visible on web OPAC**

![Bar chart showing various formats and the number of libraries with each format visible on web OPAC.](chart.png)
Special collections: size and scope (Question 16)

Question 16 invited libraries holding special collections to describe them. A free-text question, it did not attempt to define the term, allowing libraries to use their own management definition.

68 (88%) replied. Two respondents were libraries whose entire collections were special collections. Some respondents provided links to their websites or sent emails to give further information. Others used the free-text to provide detailed descriptions. At the time of the survey one collection had been awarded Designated status and another was in the process of applying (Designated collections are probably underreported – we are aware of other Designated collections held by respondents that were not mentioned in their replies).

This is a breakdown of the data that was easily obtainable from the free-text replies. We have not attempted to collate information from the websites or individual emails. This is clearly only the tip of the iceberg but it does give some idea of the riches held by libraries in all sectors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of material</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discrete collections and archives</td>
<td>3,877</td>
<td>Collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rare books</td>
<td>933,695</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuscripts</td>
<td>3,085,644</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxes containing MSS</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>Boxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival documents</td>
<td>1,221,300</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival boxes</td>
<td>1,313</td>
<td>Boxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamphlets</td>
<td>100,600</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>1,020,000</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed sheet music</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>502,500</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>212,950</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microforms</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephemera</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear metres</td>
<td>3,085</td>
<td>Metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound recordings</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here we hit the serious issue of metrics for special collections as libraries counted their collections in different ways. A question that had specified the measurements to be used (generally linear or cubic metres for archives, for example) would have generated more comparable data.

The special collections held by the respondents cover a stunning range of subjects and dates. We have attempted to collate these where respondents provided details.

6 From the MLA website accessed 2010 (now managed by the Arts Council) “To be Designated, a collection must be outstanding in terms of its evidential, aesthetic, scientific, historical, cultural, literary or economic importance. It must demonstrate richness and variety and, where appropriate, the uniqueness or rarity of individual items or groups of items.”
Retrospective conversion/cataloguing needs (Questions 17-46)

The survey sought information about the visibility of the collections described in the previous section. Respondents were asked about “items/material for which there are no online cataloguing records”, excluding “newly purchased material which is being queued for cataloguing in the normal way”. This covers materials that have never been catalogued and others for which cards or other legacy formats are the only access points. Whether catalogued or not, material which is not visible online is becoming increasingly invisible as user expectations change.

Size of hidden collections (Questions 17-20)

Firstly we tried to quantify these hidden collections, seeking actual numbers of volumes/titles and the percentage they represent of the library’s stock.

62 (81%) respondents replied to question 17 with figures regarding the number of volumes in their collections awaiting retrospective cataloguing or conversion. The combined total is 13,855,448, which is almost 18.5% of the total number of volumes held by the libraries surveyed.
35 (45%) libraries replied to question 18 with a figure for the percentage of hidden volumes compared to collections (some with estimates or caveats).

Question 18: % of volumes in need of retro-cataloguing

The libraries represented in the 10% or less categories were academic institutions and a national library, while those with over 80% were museums and various small independent institutions.

We also asked about the number of titles awaiting cataloguing in question 19: 43 (56%) respondents offered figures, which totalled 9,428,578 titles. It is not possible to compare this figure to the total number of titles held by these libraries (question 9) as only 26 respondents gave us the total number of titles in their collections.

Question 19: Number of titles in need of cataloguing
27 (35%) replied to question 20 with details of the percentage of titles awaiting retro-cataloguing.

The replies to these four questions reveal that:

a) the backlog is immense, both numerically and as a percentage of library holdings

b) the relative size of the backlog varies greatly from one library to another.

For all four questions, the libraries with nearly 100% catalogued were the large research libraries and similar institutions, while those with very few collections visible were museums and various kinds of independent libraries. It is easy to see why this might be. Retro-cataloguing initiatives such as Follett and RSLP funding were mainly offered to and taken up by universities and national libraries. Other likely factors could include institutional priorities, IT infrastructure, and fundraising capacity. However, other responses, in free-text replies, suggest that this disparity between sectors is probably confined to printed books. Other materials such as archival collections remain uncatalogued even in the HE research library sector.

Scope of hidden collections (Questions 21-23)

Question 21 asked for free-text details about the main subjects of collections awaiting retro-cataloguing or conversion. 53 (69%) replied, often in great detail.
As far as it can be reasonably established, it appears that backlogs are made up of material for which demand is perceived to be lower and/or which require specialist cataloguing skills, such as collections in foreign languages and non-Latin scripts, rare books, manuscripts, archives and grey literature.

Question 22 asked about formats of these collections, again as a free-text question, with 58 (75%) responses.

Other formats mentioned include printed music/scores, music manuscripts, sound recordings, microforms, illustrations, slides, CDs and DVDs, and objects.

The range of formats in the backlogs is diverse but books predominate (this may reflect the fact that some libraries are underreporting their non-book collections, given the dominance of book-based questions).

Question 23 asked for date range of hidden collections, in free-text. 70 (91%) replied.
This data reveals two interesting facts about hidden collections:

- Many very old and presumably rare materials are still hidden.
- The presence of 21st century materials in this list shows that libraries do not have the necessary resources to catalogue new acquisitions, resulting in a growing backlog.

**Visibility of hidden collections by format (Questions 24-46)**

In this series of questions, participants were asked to provide a breakdown of the composition of their hidden collections by format, and to give details of how, if at all, these were listed at present. 75 (97%) replied to at least some of these questions, although only 52 attempted to give percentages.

**Formats making up the backlogs of hidden collections (Q25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of backlog</th>
<th>Books &amp; printed materials</th>
<th>Archival materials</th>
<th>Manuscripts</th>
<th>Photographs &amp; slides</th>
<th>Ephemera</th>
<th>Films</th>
<th>Illustrations</th>
<th>Maps &amp; charts</th>
<th>Sheet music</th>
<th>Sound recordings</th>
<th>Other*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-99%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents who selected ‘other’ were counting manuscript maps, digital materials, microforms, legal documents and letters, multi-format archival collections, multi-format official publications, press cuttings, prints, software and objects.

**Details of existing catalogues of hidden collections (Q24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Books &amp; printed materials</th>
<th>Archival materials</th>
<th>Manuscripts</th>
<th>Photographs &amp; slides</th>
<th>Ephemera</th>
<th>Films</th>
<th>Illustrations</th>
<th>Maps &amp; charts</th>
<th>Sheet music</th>
<th>Sound recordings</th>
<th>Other*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printed catalogue only</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card catalogue only</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microfilmed cards only</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncatalogued</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A combination of the above</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Handlists, typescript lists, etc.
Record enhancement needs (Questions 47-76)

Historic practices in retro-conversion (e.g. rapid conversion from recorded details rather than book-in-hand cataloguing) leave a legacy of “minimal or inaccurate” catalogue records. These may be visible to potential users but may be misleading. This section sought more information about such materials.

Size of collections in need of enhancement (Questions 47-50)

Questions 47-50 followed the pattern of questions 17-20 in trying to understand the size of collections in need of enhancement.

38 (49%) respondents replied to question 47 with figures for the number of volumes in their collections in need of enhancement. Four others replied but could not quantify. The combined total was 4,425,714, which is almost 6% of the total number of volumes held by the libraries surveyed.

16 (21%) libraries replied to question 48 with a figure for the percentage of volumes in need of enhancement compared to collections (some with estimates or caveats).
Question 49 asked for the number of titles requiring record enhancement. 25 (32%) respondents replied, plus two that were unable to quantify. The total number of titles reported was 1,068,917.

19 (25%) replied to question 50 with a percentage of titles with records in need of enhancement compared to total titles: one other could not quantify this.
Scope of collections in need of record enhancement (Questions 51-53)

Question 51 asked for free-text details about the main subjects of collections with records in need of enhancement. 27 (35%) replied. One reported none, omitted from this chart.

The subjects distinct from main collections were in humanities and social science areas.

Question 52 asked about formats of collections in need of record enhancement, again in free-text. 40 (52%) replied. In eight cases the formats of the collections requiring record enhancement did not differ from the formats of the rest of the collections. Results for the other 32:

- Books: 22% (15 libraries)
- Archival material: 12% (8 libraries)
- Ephemera: 8% (6 libraries)
- Photographs: 25% (17 libraries)
- Manuscripts: 2% (1 library)
- Pamphlets: 30% (21 libraries)
- Film: 15% (10 libraries)
- Printed sheet music: 15% (10 libraries)
- Sound recordings: 12% (8 libraries)
- Artworks: 2% (1 library)
- Artefacts: 0% (0 libraries)
- Slides: 15% (10 libraries)
- Lantern slides: 8% (6 libraries)
- DVDs: 0% (0 libraries)
- Vinyl records: 0% (0 libraries)
- Floppy disks: 0% (0 libraries)
- Maps: 15% (10 libraries)
- Prints: 12% (8 libraries)
40 (52%) respondents provided information to question 53, again in free-text, which asked for dates of collections in need of record enhancement.

As we noted in question 23, the problem is growing with a substantial number of libraries declaring that even some of their newest acquisitions may be inadequately catalogued.

**Visibility of these collections by format (Questions 54-76)**

In this series of questions, participants were asked to provide a breakdown of the composition of their records in need of enhancement by format, and to give details of how these are catalogued at present. 45 (58%) libraries responded to at least some of these questions, 29 offered percentages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formats needing record enhancement (Questions 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of backlog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Special collections (Questions 77 and 78)

These free-text questions asked about special collections in need of either retrospective cataloguing or record enhancement, in both cases calling for "name of collection, visibility, number of volumes, number of titles, or percentage, format(s)".

Retrospective cataloguing of special collections (Question 77)

53 (69%) respondents stated that special collections in their libraries were in want of retrospective cataloguing. The following formats were mentioned (numbers added up from those given):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>1127010</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serials</td>
<td>620390</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>303848</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>182000</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival documents</td>
<td>50350</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamphlets</td>
<td>5200</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheet music</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mss volumes</td>
<td>1502</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists’ books</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival boxes</td>
<td>1115</td>
<td>Boxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephemera</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press cuttings</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Boxes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15 (19%) respondents were able to state what percentage of their special collections awaited retrospective cataloguing:

**Question 77: % of special collections in need of retro-cataloguing**

30 (39%) respondents were able to tell us about the visibility of these collections:

**Question 77: Visibility of special collections**

*one of these is partially digitised.*
Record enhancement needs of special collections (Question 78)

Question 78 asked for details of special collections requiring record enhancement, “name of collection, no. of volumes requiring record enhancement, no. of titles requiring record enhancement, or percentage requiring record enhancement”.

25 (32%) libraries responded to this question, six pointing out that they had covered their special collections in the previous answers. Others said they had far too many to list, referring to, for example, 1600 archival collections all of which required upgrades.

The following numbers have been extracted from the comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artists’ books</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuscripts/archives</td>
<td>950,000</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC materials/format not given</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rare books</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early printed books</td>
<td>142,200</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Too few offered percentages to be worth quoting, but the impression gained from the respondents was that in most cases “all” or “most” of their special collections need better records to become more visible.

Projects (Questions 79-89)

This section sought information on “any retrospective cataloguing or conversion projects that you might be involved in”. This enhanced the above evidence about collections in need of such work by showing how libraries were attempting to carry this out. It is worth mentioning that several libraries had several such projects in different stages of completion.

Status of project (Question 79-83)

Question 79 asked respondents to indicate status of any retrospective cataloguing or conversion projects. 65 (84%) replied, several ticking more than one status to indicate multiple projects.
Question 80 asked those who had completed projects for the year of completion. Six (8%) replied, one giving dates for two projects. The years given were 1996/7, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2010 (x2) and 2015 (ongoing project).

Question 81 asked for details of ongoing projects: start and finish dates and how much work had been completed. 33 (43%) replied. The levels of work done varied greatly. Two respondents were unable to offer a precise finish date (“too many variables”) and one believed they would not finish with their current staffing levels.

Question 82 sought further detail about halted projects: start and finish dates, percentage of work completed, and reasons for the halt. Six (8%) replied.

Projects began and halted:
- 1987-2000 (95% completed)
- 1995-2004 (25% completed)
- 1999-2006 (90% completed)
- 2001-2009 (30% completed)
- 2005-2009 (80% completed)
- 2007-2008 (10% completed).

Five were halted either entirely or in part because of lack of funds.

Question 83 asked these libraries whether they expected to resume these projects in the next two years.

Four respondents believed they would resume their projects, three respondents did not believe they would be able to resume their projects.
Methodology used for project (Questions 84-85)

Question 84 asked respondents to indicate methodologies used in projects. 59 (77%) replied, of these 19 reported using more than one methodology. Retrospective cataloguing is noticeably the most popular method.

Question 85 asked for further detail if more than one method used or ‘other’ selected. 16 (21%) replied to this free-text question, providing significant detail on how libraries undertake such work.

A few examples:

“Retrospective cataloguing is used for uncatalogued materials (all formats other than printed books and journals); retrospective conversion is used for printed materials with card catalogue entries. Card catalogue does not conform to AACR2, so some checking with work in hand may be required”.

“Library records are hosted on the Museum's Collections Management System. A new record type was created a year ago to mimic as far as possible MARC21. We are manually converting old records to this new format and data cleaning as we go. New records are created in the new format”.

Butterflies from Dru Drury: Illustrations of natural history. © University of Glasgow Library
Funding sources for project (Question 86-88)

Question 86 asked libraries to indicate source(s) of project funding. 56 (73%) replied, of which 21 used more than one of the sources listed.

Question 87 asked for further detail of external funding sources. 33 (43%) replied. 10 used more than one of the sources listed.

*Question 88 asked those responding ‘other’ to elaborate. All 10 replied, listing one each of a charitable trust, Friends group, JISC, HEFCE, Follett funding, part of DFid funding programme, “still looking for help” and two RSLP.
Total cost of completing project (Question 89)

Question 89 asked for “an estimate for the total cost of completing your project”. 29 (38%) libraries replied, of which 28 gave figures: another could not give a figure at that time. One gave a figure in US dollars (converted at current rate, in 2010).

Conclusions and thoughts (Questions 90-92)

What respondents would like this campaign to achieve? (Question 90)

55 (71%) libraries answered this free-text question. The dominant themes were:

- Above all, funding to complete this type of work.
- Increased awareness of the scale of the problem among policy-makers.
- Visibility: many respondents pointed out that included in their backlogs are collections of enormous significance and value for researchers and they want to bring these collections to light.
- Collaborative working to share knowledge and expertise.
- A national strategy to set priorities across the UK and not just within institutions, to identify and distribute funds.

There were particular pleas from public libraries and small specialist/non mainstream libraries for more support. This is not entirely surprising, since conversely HE libraries have received more formalised support in the past, both external and internal. Other issues raised included advocacy with donors to make the case for cataloguing as a necessary first step before any other work such as preservation or digitisation could take place effectively.
Any other comments or suggestions (Question 91)

25 (32%) libraries commented. The points about funding and visibility of smaller libraries (with the addition of museum libraries) made above were reiterated. Other comments included:

- Practical help and advice in tackling retro projects.
- Digitisation, and a plea to raise awareness of the need for cataloguing to be done in order to make digitisation possible.
- Value of historical collections. It was pointed out that historical collections are of great value to researchers, even within the field of science.
- Use of “minimum level cataloguing” to get through backlogs.
- Had found shared cataloguing initiatives not to be cost-effective: too time-consuming.

On the survey itself, several respondents commented that it seemed biased towards published book collections and that as a result special collections and archives, museums etc. would not be adequately covered, therefore another survey would be beneficial. One respondent also pointed to the National Cataloguing Grants initiative, which has assisted many archives to catalogue important collections.

National Online Register (Question 92)

When asked, “Would you be willing to enter details of the collections in your library requiring retrospective cataloguing/conversion/record enhancement on an online national register?” 71 (92%) respondents answered, with the majority saying ‘yes’. There was no discernible pattern as “yes” and “no” responses covered all sectors and library sizes.

Question 92: Willing to contribute to national register of hidden collections?

- Yes: 89%
- No: 10%
- Probably*: 1%
- *not offered as an option, the response was sent via e-mail
Additional questions from Copac (Questions 93-96)
Software used to store digital records (Questions 93-94)

Question 93 asked what software is being used to store digital records. 51 (66%) replied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archives Hub (central &amp; spoke)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bekon Idealist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALM</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardbox for Windows</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content - DM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPAC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database created in-house</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitool</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Space</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex Libris</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fedora</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koha</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA Access databases</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repository created in-house</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQL databases</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Simulation Ltd</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XML store</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Libraries used more than one type of software:

- Two libraries used LMS and CMS.
- One used CMS and Other databases.
- 14 used LMS and Other databases.
- One library used all three types.

Question 94 asked libraries to specify the “other databases etc.” used, as free-text. All 20 (26%) who had specified this replied, often mentioning several kinds of software and going into technical detail. The software used included open source, proprietary and in house creations, and includes specialist systems for archives, and database or repository software:
Gathering impact statistics (Question 95)

Question 95 asked, “would you be willing to keep statistics to chart the impact of retrospective cataloguing/exposure in an aggregated catalogue?” with 55 (71%) replying and of those, three-quarters said yes.

Identifying other collections (Question 96)

Question 96 asked, “would you be willing to help us identify other collections in these subject areas?”. 54 (70%) replied with three-quarters saying ‘yes’.

Additional questions from RLUK (Questions 97-106)

Relative costs of retro-conversion work (Question 97)

This question was incomplete in the questionnaire, so no meaningful replies could be gathered.
How retro-conversion work carried out (Questions 98-99)

22 (29%) replied to question 98 about methods of retro-conversion work.

**Question 98: Methods of retro-conversion**

![Pie chart showing distribution of methods of retro-conversion](chart)

Question 99 asked for the relative contribution of in-house and outsourcing to the project, if both were used. Six (8%) replied, offering a range of figures: one each for 20/80, 30/70, 49/51, 50/50, 70/30 and 75/25. One library could not give figures because of their multiple complex projects and one used both options but not in the same project.

This section might have produced more useful evidence if the option to reply separately for each project had been given.

Adding catalogued material to Copac (Questions 100-104)

Question 100 asked, “would you be prepared to allow your already catalogued material to be loaded into Copac?” 52 (68%) replied, 81% saying “yes”.

**Question 100: Would you be prepared to allow your already catalogued material to be loaded into COPAC?**

![Pie chart showing distribution of responses to question 100](chart)

Those answering yes were asked in question 101, “would you consider underwriting part of the (one-off) overhead of your upload into Copac if you were able to reduce your cataloguing or retro-conversion costs by having RLUK bibliographic records for free?” 29 (38%) replied: the answers were evenly split.

**Question 101: Prepared to underwrite cost in exchange for free RLUK records?**

![Pie chart showing distribution of responses to question 101](chart)
Question 102 (free-text) asked for details of collections/catalogues that respondents would be happy to have loaded into Copac. 46 (60%) replied.

Question 102: Responses about collections to offer to COPAC

- Specific collections named: 20%
- Records already on COPAC: 41%
- Other comments: 13%
- All: 26%

Other respondents used this free-text question to comment that question 101 would be a matter for senior management and/or require far more information and decision-making.

Questions 103 and 104 sought information about the metadata of catalogue records respondents would be happy to have loaded into Copac with 44 (57%) libraries responding. Many had more than one kind of metadata represented.

Question 103: Metadata

![Bar chart showing metadata schemes used by libraries](chart.png)

- ACR2: 30 libraries
- MARC: 35 libraries
- Dublin Core: 10 libraries
- In-house scheme: 10 libraries
- Other metadata scheme: 10 libraries

Three libraries elaborating on ‘other’ in question 104 mentioned archival metadata i.e. EAD and ISAD(G) 2, three used museum metadata schemes, one used cards, one Heritage LMS and one metadata “based on Dewey”.
Demand for other services based on holdings data (Questions 105-106)

Question 105 asked, “would your institution also find other services based on holdings data of benefit?” 41 (53%) replied, 80% of whom were interested.

Question 105: Would your institution also find other services based on holdings data of benefit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 106 asked respondents to rank suggested services in priority order. 50 (65%) replied, resulting in the following ranking:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Collection analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Scarcity checking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Prioritising preservation activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Prioritising digitisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Relegation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Front page of the Red Army Gazette (Not Dated) © LSE Library
Hidden collections remain an immense problem for UK libraries

Over 13 million volumes are uncatalogued in the libraries that responded, 18.5% of the total number of volumes held by those libraries. Over 4 million more (in a smaller number of libraries who could answer that question) have unsatisfactory catalogue records.

Libraries are therefore housing a huge quantity of material which cannot be earning its keep in terms of use and which is becoming increasingly marginalised as online access becomes ever more the norm.

Some sectors have more hidden collections than others

The scale of hidden collections in the UK varies enormously between library sectors. Museums, public libraries and independent libraries such as subscription libraries or learned societies have a higher proportion of collections which are invisible online: in a few cases, 100% of collections are hidden. Research libraries have benefited from initiatives such as RSLP and Follett funding; other factors such as IT infrastructure, fundraising capacity and institutional priorities may also have assisted such institutions. However, while research libraries have better coverage of printed collections, their hidden archival collections often remain vast e.g. one major university library has 100% of its print collections catalogued online, but 1600 archival collections which have minimal online catalogues.

Modern material is being added to the backlogs

It seems logical that newly acquired material is relevant to the current mission and intended for current users and therefore will jump the queue, pushing existing backlogs further back. However, the presence of 21st century materials in the backlogs suggests that some libraries are unable to keep up even with current acquisitions.

General and special collections in all subject areas and formats are hidden, however there are certain themes

Faced with limited resources, librarians naturally prioritise the cataloguing of materials in demand and which are central to the mission i.e. modern books in general stock. They will also prioritise materials that can be easily catalogued. This means that foreign language material and formats requiring particular skills and expertise (maps, music, archives) are heavily represented.

There are serious problems in collating and comparing metrics

With the possible exception of printed books, where the number of volumes and titles are useful measures, there are serious problems in gathering reliable metrics for most formats. Libraries may measure in linear metres, cubic metres, boxes or by item. The measure which gives the truest picture of the space occupied by physical collections – cubic metres – is unhelpful and offers little assistance with understanding the work involved in reducing a cataloguing backlog.

Librarians are aware of the problem and are taking action where possible

The responses show that these collections are not forgotten by their custodians. Many of the comments thank us for highlighting the problem in this survey and show that they are keen to make these collections visible if they can. Over 60% have retrospective cataloguing projects under way and replies reveal a range of past and future projects using a range of methodologies.
Librarians cannot solve the problem without wider support

Hidden collections have been years in the building and librarians in all sectors are under pressure from increasing demand from users, pressure to do more with less in austere economic times, staff and budget cuts etc. Their comments show that they need help to make the case for this work to stakeholders and funders. Retrospective cataloguing is not seen as exciting compared to say digitisation, but of course it is the essential first step in making collections visible through digitisation. Our respondents are interested in exploring innovations with Copac and in national and collaborative strategies. In particular, they approve of the suggested online register of retrospective cataloguing: 89% of those who responded said “yes”. However, they were not unanimous, highlighting concerns around security of uncatalogued material if publicised in this way.

Next Steps

Ultimately the work contained in this report originated with the community and to a very large degree solutions to the issues raised will need to come from the community. This is especially true given the impact of the post-2008 financial situation and the reorganisation of some of the major bodies with oversight of these areas in the UK, for example, the MLA and JISC. It is likely that the community itself will be expected to be more active in resolving the question of how national services are framed, shaped, deployed and maintained. In that context, the following are not endorsements by RLUK or The London Library, but a suggestion of what could be done to improve our collective understanding and realise the value of the hidden collections across the UK that have been described and analysed by this report.

1 Create a national register of hidden collections. This would be open to all collection holders in the UK as a place to self-describe and update information on their uncatalogued or inadequately catalogued material; this would obviate the need to conduct large-scale surveys of such material that, relying on external impetus or funding, are de facto infrequent and variable in their criteria and aims, making comparisons and therefore synchronous analysis difficult. The register could have inter alia the following functions:

- Describe the extent of uncatalogued material
- Describe the extent of uncatalogued material in broad subject categories
- Depict a sense of institutional priorities for cataloging and digitisation, for example
- Show the extent of catalogues presently not available digitally
- Show the extent of catalogues presently not available on the internet
- Demonstrate the impact of retro-cataloguing/retro-conversion funding
- Indicate the maturity and readiness of the community to engage in collaborative cross media / cross-sectoral digital initiatives

2 In the context of the jointly-led JISC/RLUK Discovery programme, that collection holders adopt a community licence for any bibliographic records created through retro-cataloguing or retro-conversion programmes, so as to populate the incipient Discovery aggregation with freely-reusable metadata, and lobby the JISC to consider funding the creation of such metadata.

3 In the spirit of the views expressed by such as the British Academy, lobby with European partners for the funding of retro-cataloguing and retro-conversion of material in the context of the ongoing legislative decisions regarding the Common Strategic Framework, as the EU moves towards fully ratifying Horizon 2020 (FP8).

7 The writers of the report acknowledge the input here of Patricia Methven, Director of Archives and Information Management, King’s College, London.

8 British Academy, SSH in European Research: paper for the Research, Innovation and Science Commissioner - Social Sciences and Humanities in European Research, 2011, http://www.allea.org/Content/ALLEA/SSH/BA-Paper-for-Research-Commissioner.pdf retrieved at 07/06/12 09:26:32. The European research infrastructure should allow “Cataloguing of journals, monographs and other SSH publications: searchable database of contents, with multilingual input and output” and ensure “standards and meta-data for digitised records and tools for analysing objects within texts, pictures, tones and multi-modal media.”
To explore with JISC and Mimas how Copac can be made more easily integrated into cataloguing workflows, such as through a separate, freely-available cataloguing module targeted at smaller-scale collection holders, to help accelerate, and reduce the barriers to, the creation of online records.

To scope the parameters for a study on the research impact of retro-cataloguing and retro-conversion projects and initiatives, and cost-benefit analyses of not making such hidden collections more readily accessible to researchers.

To advocate, where appropriate minimal levels of cataloguing, the greater use of volunteers and crowd-sourcing in describing hitherto hidden collections.

Raise awareness amongst funders, national agencies and the general public both that vast ‘hidden collections’ remain after the large-scale efforts of the 1990s and that they are not just about legacy but represent an ongoing challenge regarding new knowledge and new acquisitions, affecting access to research and the realisation of public benefit.

Reconceptualise and promote the vision of the ‘National Research Collection’, comprising ideally collection holders from all sectors under which activity around hidden collections, collaborative collection management, and any future work by UKRR on monographs could be discussed and pursued cohesively.

References


Appendix A: Survey Introduction

The RLUK Retrospective Cataloguing Survey in association with the London Library

Dear Respondent,

This is an important, national, review of where we are in the UK in relation to 'hidden' collections and moves to ensure that your collections are exposed to a much greater audience.

The context for this is simple but fundamental. RLUK runs a cataloguing database of some 60 million item-level descriptions, covering some 42 million separate bibliographic entities. As a charitable body, RLUK is looking into how it could best realise the benefits of this resource by opening it up to the community. Therefore, we need to know what the potential demand would be for the resource, and where it could be translated into greater awareness and use of collections across libraries in the UK.

The last summary of the position in the UK of the state of retrospective cataloguing was in 2007, in the report, Uncovering Hidden Resources, published by the Research Information Network. The aim of the present survey however is eventually to establish a National Register of retrospective cataloguing, in the context of advances since then in the area of resource discovery and in the ongoing movement to open up library-related data for free re-use. The recently launched RLUK/JISC Resource Discovery Task Force has stated for example that the bedrock of future resource discovery in the UK will consist of "Providing open and flexible aggregations of metadata about institutional resources". This metadata it is envisaged will come from libraries, museums and archives both within and beyond the HE sector.

Therefore, RLUK has been working with The London Library to produce this survey, it is a joint effort, the outputs of which will be made publicly available. We enjoin you to take part, and add your collections to the register.


The deadline for completion is *01 September, 2010*

The survey covers a range of issues related to the description, cataloging and retroconversion of 'hidden' collections, and will take some 25 minutes to complete.

With many thanks in anticipation,

Mike Mertens, RLUK

Appendix B: The Survey Form

RLUK Retrospective Cataloguing Survey in association with The London Library
Background.
Please use Section 1 to provide us with information about you and your role, your institution and your collections.

About You.
1.) Name

2.) Email

3.) Job title

About Your library.
4.) Name of institution

5.) Address.

6.) Type/Sector (of institution)
[ ] Public library
[ ] University library
[ ] FE College library
[ ] School library
[ ] Other Academic library
[ ] Government department library
[ ] NHS library
[ ] Learned society library
[ ] Museum library
[ ] Ecclesiastical library
[ ] Subscription library
[ ] Professional library
[ ] Country house library
[ ] Other

7.) If you selected 'Other' in the question above please include details of how your library is funded here:

About Your collections.
Size of overall collection.
8.) No. of volumes

9.) and/or no. of titles.
Scope of the collection.
10.) Main subject(s) e.g. medicine, poetry, etc.
__________________________________________________________________________

11.) Format(s) e.g. books and other printed material, archival material, manuscripts, photographs, ephemera, etc.
__________________________________________________________________________

12.) Date range. e.g. 1500-1950, 1820 onwards, etc.
__________________________________________________________________________

13.) Are any of your collections visible on a Web OPAC?  
[ ] Yes  
[ ] No  
14.) If you selected 'Yes' in the question above, please indicate which collections are visible on a Web OPAC, by format:  
[ ] Books and other print material  
[ ] Archival material  
[ ] Manuscripts  
[ ] Photographs & Slides  
[ ] Ephemera  
[ ] Films  
[ ] Illustrations  
[ ] Maps and charts  
[ ] Sheet music  
[ ] Sound recordings  
[ ] Other  
15.) If you selected 'Other' in the question above please give details:
__________________________________________________________________________

Special collections.
16.) If your library holds special collections please describe them here:
__________________________________________________________________________

Retrospective conversion/cataloguing needs

Please use Section 2 to provide us with information about items/material in your collections for which there are no online cataloguing records. (Please exclude newly purchased material which is being queued for cataloguing in the normal way).

Scale of the backlog
17.) No. of volumes awaiting retrospective cataloguing or conversion
__________________________________________________________________________

18.) and/or percentage of overall no. of volumes
__________________________________________________________________________

19.) No. of titles awaiting retrospective cataloguing or conversion
__________________________________________________________________________
20.) and/or percentage overall no. of titles

Scope of the backlog

21.) Main subject(s) of collections awaiting retro-cataloguing or conversion if different from those of the overall collections:

22.) Format(s) of collections awaiting retro-cataloguing or conversion:

23.) Date range of collections awaiting retro-cataloguing or conversion:

Visibility of these collections by format

Please indicate how these collections are catalogued at present. Please tick all that apply and then state or estimate what percentage of the backlog you believe this to be.

24.) Books and other print material
   [ ] Printed catalogue
   [ ] Card catalogue
   [ ] Microfilmed cards
   [ ] Un-catalogued
   [ ] Other
   25.) Percentage of backlog?

26.) Archival material
   [ ] Printed catalogue
   [ ] Card catalogue
   [ ] Microfilmed cards
   [ ] Un-catalogued
   [ ] Other
   27.) Percentage of backlog?

28.) Manuscripts
   [ ] Printed catalogue
   [ ] Card catalogue
   [ ] Microfilmed cards
   [ ] Un-catalogued
   [ ] Other
   29.) Percentage of backlog?
30.) Photographs & Slides
[ ] Printed catalogue
[ ] Card catalogue
[ ] Microfilmed cards
[ ] Un-catalogued
[ ] Other
32.) Percentage of backlog?

32.) Ephemera
[ ] Printed catalogue
[ ] Card catalogue
[ ] Microfilmed cards
[ ] Un-catalogued
[ ] Other
33.) Percentage of backlog?

34.) Films
[ ] Printed catalogue
[ ] Card catalogue
[ ] Microfilmed cards
[ ] Un-catalogued
[ ] Other
35.) Percentage of backlog?

36.) Illustrations
[ ] Printed catalogue
[ ] Card catalogue
[ ] Microfilmed cards
[ ] Un-catalogued
[ ] Other
37.) Percentage of backlog?

38.) Maps and charts
[ ] Printed catalogue
[ ] Card catalogue
[ ] Microfilmed cards
[ ] Un-catalogued
[ ] Other
39.) Percentage of backlog?
40.) Sheet music
[ ] Printed catalogue
[ ] Card catalogue
[ ] Microfilmed cards
[ ] Un-catalogued
[ ] Other
41.) Percentage of backlog?

42.) Sound recordings
[ ] Printed catalogue
[ ] Card catalogue
[ ] Microfilmed cards
[ ] Un-catalogued
[ ] Other
43.) Percentage of backlog?

44.) Other
[ ] Printed catalogue
[ ] Card catalogue
[ ] Microfilmed cards
[ ] Un-catalogued
[ ] Other
45.) Percentage of backlog?

46.) If you have other formats to add, please state what these are here:

Record enhancement needs

Please use Section 3 to provide us with information about items/material in your collections for which there only a minimal or inaccurate online cataloguing records.

Scale

47.) No. of volumes requiring record enhancement.

48.) and/or percentage of overall no. of volumes

49.) No. of titles requiring record enhancement.
50.) and/or percentage overall no. of titles

Scope

51.) Main subject(s) of collections requiring record enhancement if different from those of the overall collections:

52.) Format(s) of collections requiring record enhancement:

53.) Date range of collections requiring record enhancement:

Visibility of collections requiring record enhancement.

Please indicate how these collections are catalogued at present. Please tick all that apply and then state or estimate what percentage of the backlog you believe this to be.

54.) Books and other print material

[ ] Collection level records only
[ ] Brief individual records
[ ] Inaccurate individual records
[ ] Other

55.) Percentage of backlog?

55.) Percentage of backlog?

56.) Archival material

[ ] Collection level records only
[ ] Brief individual records
[ ] Inaccurate individual records
[ ] Other

57.) Percentage of backlog?

58.) Manuscripts

[ ] Collection level records only
[ ] Brief individual records
[ ] Inaccurate individual records
[ ] Other

59.) Percentage of backlog?
60.) Photographs & Slides  
[ ] Collection level records only  
[ ] Brief individual records  
[ ] Inaccurate individual records  
[ ] Other  
61.) Percentage of backlog?  

62.) Ephemera  
[ ] Collection level records only  
[ ] Brief individual records  
[ ] Inaccurate individual records  
[ ] Other  
63.) Percentage of backlog?  

64.) Films  
[ ] Collection level records only  
[ ] Brief individual records  
[ ] Inaccurate individual records  
[ ] Other  
65.) Percentage of backlog?  

66.) Illustrations  
[ ] Collection level records only  
[ ] Brief individual records  
[ ] Inaccurate individual records  
[ ] Other  
67.) Percentage of backlog?  

68.) Maps and charts  
[ ] Collection level records only  
[ ] Brief individual records  
[ ] Inaccurate individual records  
[ ] Other  
69.) Percentage of backlog?
70.) Sheet music
[ ] Collection level records only
[ ] Brief individual records
[ ] Inaccurate individual records
[ ] Other
71.) Percentage of backlog?

____________________________________________

72.) Sound recordings
[ ] Collection level records only
[ ] Brief individual records
[ ] Inaccurate individual records
[ ] Other
73.) Percentage of backlog?

____________________________________________

74.) Other
[ ] Collection level records only
[ ] Brief individual records
[ ] Inaccurate individual records
[ ] Other
75.) Percentage of backlog?

____________________________________________

76.) If you have other formats to add, please state what these are here:

____________________________________________

Special Collections
Please use Section 4 to provide us with information about items/material in your special collections.

77.) If your library holds special collections awaiting retro-cataloguing or conversion please describe them here. Please include: Name of collection, Visibility*, No. of volumes awaiting retro, No. of titles awaiting retro, or Percentage awaiting retro, Format(s) NB. If actual figures are not available please provide an estimate.

____________________________________________

78.) If your library holds special collections requiring record enhancement please describe them here: Please include: Name of collection, No. of volumes requiring record enhancement, No. of titles requiring record enhancement, or Percentage requiring record enhancement, Format(s) NB. If actual figures are not available please provide an estimate.
Projects

Please use Section 5 to provide us with information about any retrospective cataloguing or conversion projects that you might be involved in.

79.) Please indicate the status of your project:

[ ] Complete
[ ] Ongoing
[ ] Halted
[ ] Will begin in the next 2 years
[ ] No immediate plans to begin

If answer is 'No immediate plans to begin', please go directly to Section 6.

80.) If complete, please give year of completion:

________________________________________________________________________

81.) If ongoing, please give:

Year when project began ___
Percentage of the work completed ___
Estimated completion date ___

82.) If halted, please give:

Date when project began ___
Date project halted ___
Percentage of project completed ___
Reason project halted ___

83.) Is the project expected to resume within the next 2 years?

( ) Yes
( ) No

Methodology

84.) Which methodology are you, have you or will you use?

[ ] Retrospective cataloguing
[ ] Retrospective conversion
[ ] Card catalogue digitisation
[ ] Other

85.) If you selected more than one method or 'Other' please give further details:

________________________________________________________________________
Funding.

86.) What are the source(s) of funding for your project? (please select all that apply)

[ ] Library current expenditure
[ ] 'Special' internal funding
[ ] External funding

87.) If external funding is the source, what type of external funding is it? (please select all that apply)

[ ] Private donor
[ ] Grant giving trust or foundation
[ ] Heritage Lottery fund
[ ] Other

88.) If you selected 'Other', please specify here:

____________________________________________

89.) If possible give an estimate for the total cost of completing your project (£):

____________________________________________

Conclusions

Please use Section 6 to provide us with your conclusions and thoughts about the campaign.

90.) What would you like this campaign to achieve?

____________________________________________

91.) Any other comments or suggestions?

____________________________________________

92.) Would you be willing to enter details of the collections in your library requiring retrospective cataloguing/conversion/record enhancement on an online national register?*

( ) Yes
( ) No

Copac and RLUK

Please use Section 7 to provide us with more information about Copac and RLUK.

Additional questions for Copac.

93.) If you have digital records, what software are you using to store them?

[ ] LMS
[ ] CMS
[ ] Other database, etc.
94.) If you have selected 'Other database, etc.' please specify name and supplier.

95.) Would you be willing to keep statistics to chart the impact of retrospective cataloguing/exposure in an aggregated catalogue?

( ) Yes
( ) No

96.) Would you be willing to help us identify other collections in these subject areas?

( ) Yes
( ) No

Additional questions for RLUK.

97.) If you are doing retro-conversion work, please quantify the relative cost of the work in terms of:

***Question incomplete in original survey***

98.) If you have completed a retro-conversion project, how was the work in your project accomplished:

[ ] In-house
[ ] Outsourced to external supplier

99.) If your project was a combination of both, please give relative size of contribution to the project of each of these methods:

100.) Would you be prepared to allow your already catalogued material to be loaded into Copac?

( ) Yes
( ) No

101.) If yes, would you consider underwriting part of the (one-off) overhead of your upload into Copac if you were able to reduce your cataloguing or retro conversion costs by having RLUK bibliographic records for free?

( ) Yes
( ) No

102.) Please give details of the catalogue(s) [or collections] you would be happy to have uploaded into Copac:

103.) What format are they held in?

[ ] AACR2
[ ] MARC
[ ] Dublin Core
[ ] In-house system
[ ] Other metadata schemes

104.) If you selected 'Other metadata schemes' please specify which here:
105.) Would your institution also find other services based on holdings data of benefit?

( ) Yes

( ) No

106.) Please rank the following options:

_______Collection analysis
_______Relegation
_______Scarcity checking
_______Prioritizing digitisation
_______Prioritizing preservation activity

Thank You!

Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us.
Appendix C: Participating institutions

Bishopsgate Library  
Bodleian Libraries.  
Bradford Local Studies Library  
Bristol Libraries  
British Library for Development Studies  
Bromley House Library  
Cafcass (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service)  
Cambridge University Library  
Cardiff University  
College of St Hild and St Bede  
Courtauld Institute of Art - book library  
Department of Theatre & Performance, V&A Museum  
Dr Williams’s Library  
Ely Cathedral  
Exeter Central Library  
Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution  
Hillcroft College  
Horniman Museum & Gardens  
Hull City Libraries  
Jesus College, Oxford  
Lancaster University Library  
Leeds Library and Information Service  
Leeds University Library  
Liverpool John Moores University  
London Metropolitan University Special Collections  
London School of Economics Library  
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine  
London Transport Museum  
Manchester Central Library  
Middlesex University  
National Art Library  
National Library of Scotland  
National Portrait Gallery (Heinz Archive & Library)  
Natural History Museum  
Newcastle University  
Norwich Cathedral  
Oxford Union Society  
Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust  
Plymouth Proprietary Library  
Poetry Library  
Queens' College, Cambridge  
RCVS Trust  
Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance  
Royal Asiatic Society  
Royal College of Music  
Royal Holloway, University of London  
Ruskin Library and Research Centre  
Scott Polar Research Institute  
Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive  
Tate Library  
The Friars  
The University of Manchester Library  
The London Library  
The National Gallery  
The National Trust  
The Portico Library  
The Queen's College, Oxford  
The Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet  
Trinity College Library  
Trinity Hall, Cambridge  
University of Buckingham  
University of Edinburgh  
University of Glasgow Library  
University of Huddersfield  
University of Nottingham  
University of Sussex  
University of the Arts London  
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff  
University of Warwick  
University of Worcester  
Vaughan Williams Memorial Library  
Westcountry Studies Library  
Worcester Cathedral  
York Minster Library  
Zoological Society of London