

User Advisory Group Minutes

Title: User Advisory Group
Date of Meeting: 16 December 2014
Location: The National Archives

Attendees:

Staff

Jeff James (JJ) - Chief Executive and Keeper (item 1 only)
Mary Gledhill (MG) – Commercial Director (Chair)
Caroline Ottaway-Searle (COS) – Director of Public Services and Human Resource
Lee Oliver (LMO) - Head of Public Services Development
Emma Bayne (EB) – Head of Systems Development (item 3 only)
Helen Pye-Smith (HPS) – Head of Library and Deployment Services (item 5 only)
Caroline Pegden (CP) - IMP Programme Manager (item 3 only)
Alex Green (AG) – Digital Preservation Services Manager (item 3 only)
Sarah Leggett (SL) – Marketing Manager (item 6 only)
Foluke Abiona (FA) – Customer Intelligence Officer
Jon Ryder-Oliver (JRO) – Contracts Assistant (Minutes)

Delegates

Professor Grace Ioppolo (GI) – Academic Users
Graham Woolgar (GW) – Onsite Personal Interest Users
Susan Moore (SM) – Map Room Users
Margaret O’Sullivan (MO’S) - County/External Archives
Rosemary Morgan (RM) – Independent Researchers
Else Churchill (EC) - Family History Societies
Jo Pugh (JP) – Student Users
Howard Llewellyn (HL) – Diversity and Inclusion
Martin Farr (MF) – Academic Users
Anne Samson (AS) – Onsite Personal Interest Users
Nell Darby (ND) – Online Users
Kristina Bedford (KB) – Map Room Users
Carol Beardmore (CB) – County/External Archives
David Shiels (DS) - Early Careers Academic research

Apologies

Jacqui Kirk (JK) – Independent Researchers
Nigel Browne-Davies (NB-D) - Diversity and Inclusion

Item		Action
1.	Separate confidential minute	
2.	Minutes, Matters arising and general updates	
2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4 2.5 2.6 2.7 2.8 2.9 2.10	<p>(Item 2.2 09/14) MG confirmed that a London Gazette representative will attend in January.</p> <p>(Item 3.2 09/14) MG handed out a set of notes on refining searches. GW pointed out that the minutes from the previous meeting did not accurately reflect what he actually wants to know. GW to provide a written question to which TNA can respond.</p> <p>(Item 3.6 09/14) CP would be giving an oral and paper presentation later in this meeting.</p> <p>(Item 5.5 09/14) The geographical distribution in a normal month equates to approximately 66% UK users, 12% USA, 4% each for Australia and the Netherlands, 2% Canada. This can vary in specific circumstances, for example there was a peak of 93% UK users following a recent appearance by TNA staff on breakfast television.</p> <p>(Item 5.8 09/14) LMO does not have an answer yet.</p> <p>(Item 5.9 09/14) LMO said that this issue is resolved, having gone live last month.</p> <p>(Item 5.14 09/14) MG circulated a written update on the Royal Naval cards project. They will not now be published this financial year, the revised date for publication will be July 2015.</p> <p>GW asked who will be hosting the service. MG replied that this would be TNA. MG further explained that some cards had not been scanned, but we will make best efforts to get this rectified before launch.</p> <p>(Item 6.4 09/14) MG stated that 12pm would remain the start time for now.</p> <p>(Item 8.4 09/14) LMO stated this this had now been done and that the advanced orders page had been modified.</p> <p>(Item 10.5 09/14) MG stated that GI and TNA had worked together on a Shakespeare Study Day, and that an update would be given on our Shakespeare anniversary plans at either the March or June UAG meeting.</p>	GW
3.	Digital Transfer Project: Cataloguing born-digital records	
3.1	CP introduced the digital transfer project. By 2016/17, TNA will be required to accession born digital records from government on a large scale. TNA has been doing a pilot project with several government departments, assessing their and our capacities and capabilities to enable us to work out how best to scale up our infrastructure and processes over the coming years. Further tools for digital	

	<p>sensitivity review will also be required.</p> <p>The pilots with the Welsh Government, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the UK Supreme Court have shown that TNA must be ready to deal with a variety of formats and sizes of documents.</p> <p>CP defined 'born digital', and explained that metadata is contextual information on each document, e.g. size, author, date produced and date last modified. The minimum metadata TNA will require from departments is: File name; File path; Date; Copyright; Checksum; Closure information; and whether the document is a folder or file. Additional metadata may be provided but does increase the cost of preservation.</p>	
3.2	<p>MO'S asked who collects the metadata.</p> <p>AG replied that the government department collects it, but TNA embeds it.</p>	
3.3	<p>HL asked about the responsibility of government departments in deciding what is given to TNA.</p> <p>CP replied that our IMP consultants advise departments on appraisal and selection. TNA's role is to support departments in this process.</p>	
3.4	<p>CP demonstrated how digital records would appear in Discovery. The reference will end in a 'Z'. The description will be the file name; the file path will also appear. A date field will appear on the next version of Discovery. Some of the contextual information will not appear on Discovery.</p>	
3.5	<p>HL wondered about the challenges of digital preservation.</p> <p>AG explained that our systems have been designed to ensure the integrity of the record, even if it has to be migrated to newer technologies in the long term.</p>	
3.6	<p>AS asked whether emails are included in transfers.</p> <p>CP confirmed that emails are public records and will be appraised. TNA is considering the approaches of other institutions, e.g. the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) which retains entire email accounts from the most senior officials.</p>	
3.7	<p>SM asked what percentage of records would be retained.</p> <p>AG said that it may be higher than the current c.5%, perhaps as high as 10% but we are not sure yet – this is one of the things that the pilots are designed to test.</p>	
3.8	<p>GW asked how the system copes with different programs, such as databases or Lotus Notes.</p> <p>AG replied that TNA is researching different formats and how to convert them. The idea is to take the original and then see how best to present it. For databases, TNA usually takes the dataset and then works out how best to present the data. TNA has not yet been asked to preserve a Geographical Information System, but would consider the approach if and when this arises.</p>	
3.9	<p>HL asked whether TNA had been granted additional funding for this.</p> <p>MG and AG replied that we had not.</p>	

<p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p> <p>3.12</p> <p>3.13</p> <p>3.14</p>	<p>MF asked what the Intellectual Property implications are.</p> <p>CP replied that the government department has to tell TNA about copyright.</p> <p>GI asked what the length of closure would be.</p> <p>CP replied that these would be the same as for paper records, as set by the Lord Chancellor.</p> <p>AS thought there might be a greater risk of digital records being 'lost' or deleted.</p> <p>AG stated that IMP would be ensuring that documents were looked after correctly. It is hard to quantify the different risks associated with digital or paper records. TNA is aware of the risks and is working to reduce them.</p> <p>GW wondered whether there is temptation to 'get rid of' records to save space.</p> <p>CP confirmed TNA is considering the challenges with departments, e.g. automatic deletion of emails, and how to preserve digital information assets.</p> <p>HL thought that it might be easier to dispose of digital records than paper.</p> <p>AG denied this, stating that digital files can be recovered, unlike when paper is destroyed.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Delegate submitted items</p>	
<p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>Access to PROB 6, Splitting of PROB 10 and extended use of cybercafé</p> <p>LMO explained that PROB 10 is a sister series to PROB 11, which was TNA's first in-house digitisation project. PROB 6 has not been digitised because the films are not very good, and the original would need a significant investment in conservation to make them ready.</p> <p>HL pointed out that the indexes are sporadic; can the data be ordered by county?</p> <p>LMO said he would find out.</p> <p>On the splitting of PROB 10, LMO explained that there is a gap in PROB 11 due to the Interregnum. The PROB 10's for that period available online as digital microfilms. It is on the list for the splitting program (which has been running for 18 months) but no date for completion of the work on this series can be given yet. It will probably be split in the same way as PROB 11 and could be merged once done.</p> <p>Regarding the cybercafé, extending the hours would necessitate extending the opening hours of the building. The cybercafé itself is under review as it is prone to abuse, and more people are bringing their own devices anyway.</p> <p>Discussion re: Open data and digitisation</p> <p>MG explained that universities can buy an institutional subscription to Discovery which enables their students and academics to access our records without having to pay per download. The standard download fee of £3.30 is based on cost</p>	

	<p>recovery but can be waived under certain circumstances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. where the digitisation is funded by a third party who makes free access a condition of the project and resource it accordingly 2. where the files are particularly large resulting in a poor user experience – we are working to reduce the instances in which this occurs 3. where the download is a finding aid 4. for press events and New Year releases (for one month only) <p>We are not able to independently choose to make documents free for specific users as that would be unfair to other users who would be required to cover the cost through increased download fees.</p>	
4.4	<p>ND stated that universities can subscribe and that with an i.d. and password can often be accessed remotely.</p>	
4.5	<p>CB pointed out that universities are under the same financial pressure as TNA, and that academics are being pushed towards making their data open while TNA seems exempt.</p>	
4.6	<p>JP wondered whether the model was sustainable, insisting that TNA's hands are not tied and that more could be done, citing the example of BL who consider matters on a case-by-case basis. JP thought that Foreign Office index cards for example could be crowd sourced and opened.</p> <p>MG reiterated that the system must be fair to all users, and pointed out that making more material available for free would in practice mean that less could be digitised as we have finite budgets.</p>	
4.7	<p>CB asked for how long external partners have rights over content.</p> <p>MG replied that, usually, partners have a 10 year licence. If they have digitised the images they benefit from a primacy period, before the images can be sold elsewhere or put on TNA's site.</p>	
4.8	<p>JP pointed out that not all content held on partner sites (particularly the academic partners) has a link from Discovery.</p> <p>MG said that she shared this concern and we are working on plans to provide these links where possible. It is a bigger challenge to link to our academic partners (compared to genealogy partners) as they are less likely to have digitised whole series and therefore the relationship between their site and Discovery is more complicated.</p>	
4.9	<p>RM asked if there are unofficial sites publishing content from TNA.</p> <p>LMO said that we are aware of this happening in some cases.</p>	
	<p>RN Record Cards - number ranges for digitisation</p>	
4.10	<p>GW asked whether the missed cards would be digitised by July.</p> <p>MG replied that we are working on ways to deliver this if possible, but would not necessarily want to delay the publication of the rest of the series.</p> <p>GW commented that in his view there should be no question of delaying the launch of the RN Record Cards further, as the launch had now been delayed 16 months beyond the date originally quoted. He said he felt that the latest delay</p>	

should allow for the missed cards to be digitised and the complete set to be published in July.

Schedule of document transfers to TNA from departments in 2015

4.11 GW stated that, at the User Forum in January last year, notice was given of new transfers for 2014, but it was hard to find information on them. He asked whether a report similar to the digitisation update could be given on forthcoming transfers.

LMO advised that information on transfers is in the Annual Report.

GW requested a quarterly report, similar to the digitisation report, of documents transferred to TNA, detailed by series and piece numbers.

LMO stated that this is not easy, and that the notice given in January 2014 was anticipated highlights only. He will look into it, but it must be understood that TNA receives records from 250 transferring bodies.

GW wondered who is accountable for these matters.

MG replied that it would be the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Council, which meets quarterly.

MG said that given the additional work involved in providing reports at series and piece number level to UAG, we would need evidence of a 'user need' for such advance information. UAG's role relates to the service provided to archive users and it is not responsible for holding TNA or government departments accountable for the records transfer process. We would not want to duplicate the activities of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Council.

GW said that IMP must have plans for what documents it expects to take in from departments. Julia Jones demonstrated this by elucidating the so-called 'highlights' of transfers expected in 2014 at the January 2014 User Forum. He said what he is asking for is some transparency as to what those plans are for 2015.

MG reminded UAG that Discovery includes the functionality for users to identify which new records have been transferred.

Extraordinary User Forum

4.12 TNA has agreed to hold an 'Extraordinary User Forum' in February. The Forum will concentrate on the processing of documents before they come to TNA.

GW asked whether the Extraordinary User Forum could have additional publicity.

LMO advised that we would be asking for pre-submitted questions, on topics of interest such as transfer, selection, closure periods etc. allowing time for responses to be researched prior to the forum. We will publicise the event on the User Forum web page in the New Year and UAG members are welcome to link to or share the page with their communities.

Recent news about other organisations

4.13 RM asked about collections in the IWM Library. AS said that she believed they included archive material.

MG agreed to mention this to colleagues in the Archive Sector Development team.

4.14	<p>RM asked about the London Probate Office closure.</p> <p>LMO replied that TNA had found out at the same time as everyone else.</p> <p>RM asked whether the books could not be housed at TNA.</p> <p>MG said we would not normally take in materials that are not public records.</p> <p>EC said that the finding aids are unique and have been scanned, and should be available under free open licence. She was under the impression that TNA had been contacted about the books but did not know who at TNA had been involved.</p> <p>MG said that she will make enquiries to find out who at TNA might have been contacted, although it would still be unlikely that TNA step in.</p>	
5.	Revised Library Collection Development Policy	
5.1	<p>HPS gave a presentation on the Collection Development Policy, which was circulated in advance; the current policy is out of date. The policy helps to decide what is collected and does not reflect current practice, e.g. on donated material. Very little has been written about TNA's library (history, etc). HPS has consulted with colleagues around TNA and received feedback from public users, especially on omissions. The new policy will hopefully be published at the end of January 2015 on the Fol area of the TNA website.</p>	
5.2	<p>GI wondered how much teaching goes on at TNA and whether professors or lecturers give presentations.</p> <p>HPS replied that this is a new area being developed at TNA, e.g. a new MA. Members of TNA staff do teach, and the Education department work with school groups from primary age to university students and teachers.</p>	
5.3	<p>HL asked where the library is located.</p> <p>HPS replied that it is in the first floor reading room.</p>	
5.4	<p>SM expressed frustration with the number of websites which are blocked by TNA's system, particularly when trying to access sites which fill gaps in the library's content.</p> <p>LMO answered that there are legitimate sites caught up in the anti-abuse policy, but that if these were reported, the technology team was happy to 'unblock' them.</p>	
5.5	<p>HPS suggested putting some e-books into the e-library.</p>	
5.6	<p>AS asked whether TNA could be specific about what types of books TNA would like to be donated. IWM receive donations and people are sometimes unhappy if their donations end up elsewhere.</p>	
6.	First World War 100 update	

6.1	<p>SL gave a presentation on the First World War 100 (FWW100) project, providing a handout with a highlights summary. She took the meeting through some of the figures indicating the success so far of FWW100.</p> <p>SL estimates about 2,000 people visited TNA's stand at Who Do You Think You Are Live in February 2014, mostly seeking advice on finding relatives.</p> <p>The My Tommy's War blog, written by TNA staff sharing their research experiences, has been successful, receiving very good feedback.</p> <p>A map function has been added entitled First World War – A Global View. AS praised the Global View map but noted it is not mirrored in Discovery.</p> <p>MG said we will try to say more on crowdsourcing at the March meeting as JK had submitted a question but then sent apologies for the current meeting.</p> <p>Looking ahead to next year, ADM 240 and ADM 340 have been digitised and should be published in early 2015. The next batch of WO 95 should be available in April 2015. There will be a programme of outreach events around the theme of India, and new archive content around Australia. There will also be a presentation and performance entitled War, Women and Poetry. There will be a beta version of the name index from Operation War Diary.</p> <p>MG said that the centenary has produced a significant opportunity for TNA to reach new users, including many who had never considered doing family history before.</p> <p>RM said that it was very encouraging to see new generations becoming interested.</p>	
7.	Any other business	
8.	Next meeting: Tuesday 17 March 2015, 12:00 – 14:30	