





The National Archives

**The Red Lists Project
User Forum**

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Background

- The “Red” Series lists are c.16,000 paper series level catalogues which were superseded by the online Catalogue. Red Lists for the main exclude MLDRR sources
- They contain some information that was not keyed into the online Catalogue when it was created in 1999
- Other information is also missing from the paper lists, such as:
 - Additional descriptive information which was created when popular records were put online (e.g. WO 363, WO 364)
 - Piece description errors which have been amended online only
 - Exceptionally large catalogue accessions (e.g. BT 372 > 500,000 entries)
 - Catalogue projects from 2000 (e.g. FO 737, DO 131, AIR 79)
- Red lists have not been added to at all since March 2011

What we have done so far.....

- Set up a Project Team in May 2012 including Records Specialists and technical staff working on Discovery
- Reported through the Modernising Public Services Programme Board and User Advisory Group
- Extensively surveyed usage of the Red Lists in March, May, June and August 2012
- Identified a set of key eligibility criteria relating to surrogacy, complexity and usage
- Developed a proposed methodology for the gradual removal of selected Red Lists, whilst also allowing for a period of feedback and reflection

What the Surveys have told us

The majority of Red List users are....

- TNA users of 5+ years
- Regular and frequent visitors to TNA
- 'Trackers' in their research habits – that is, use the same few groups of records regularly for their research, and know the structure of the finding aids
- Aware that the Red Lists are no longer updated/added to
- Browsers of Red Lists and are often not aware of the browse functionality of the Catalogue/Discovery
- Often browsing complex and large series, with hierarchical sub-series levels
- Concerned that large series data gets lost or difficult to retrieve online

I do use the online catalogue sometimes but I find it difficult to find my way around on the screen. If I already know the series, it's easier to go and look at the paper catalogues. I can't see how to browse online

If you are looking for a definite thing the online catalogue is fine but otherwise the computer is too logical. It only answers the question you ask. If you browse the paper, interesting stuff catches your eye

I'm researching a merchant vessel but am quite far in to this piece of research. Therefore when I search online by keyword I often get nothing that's of relevance. On this occasion I did actually find something online that was useful but I couldn't browse from that point so I went to the paper to do that. You can see at a glance with the paper but you can't really browse online.

Proposed eligibility criteria (Phase 1)

Remove paper series where...

- The descriptions have been subsequently enriched by fuller online descriptions as a result of digitisation and/or catalogue enhancement
- The total number of piece descriptions is fewer than 100 (<10 pages in paper list)

AND

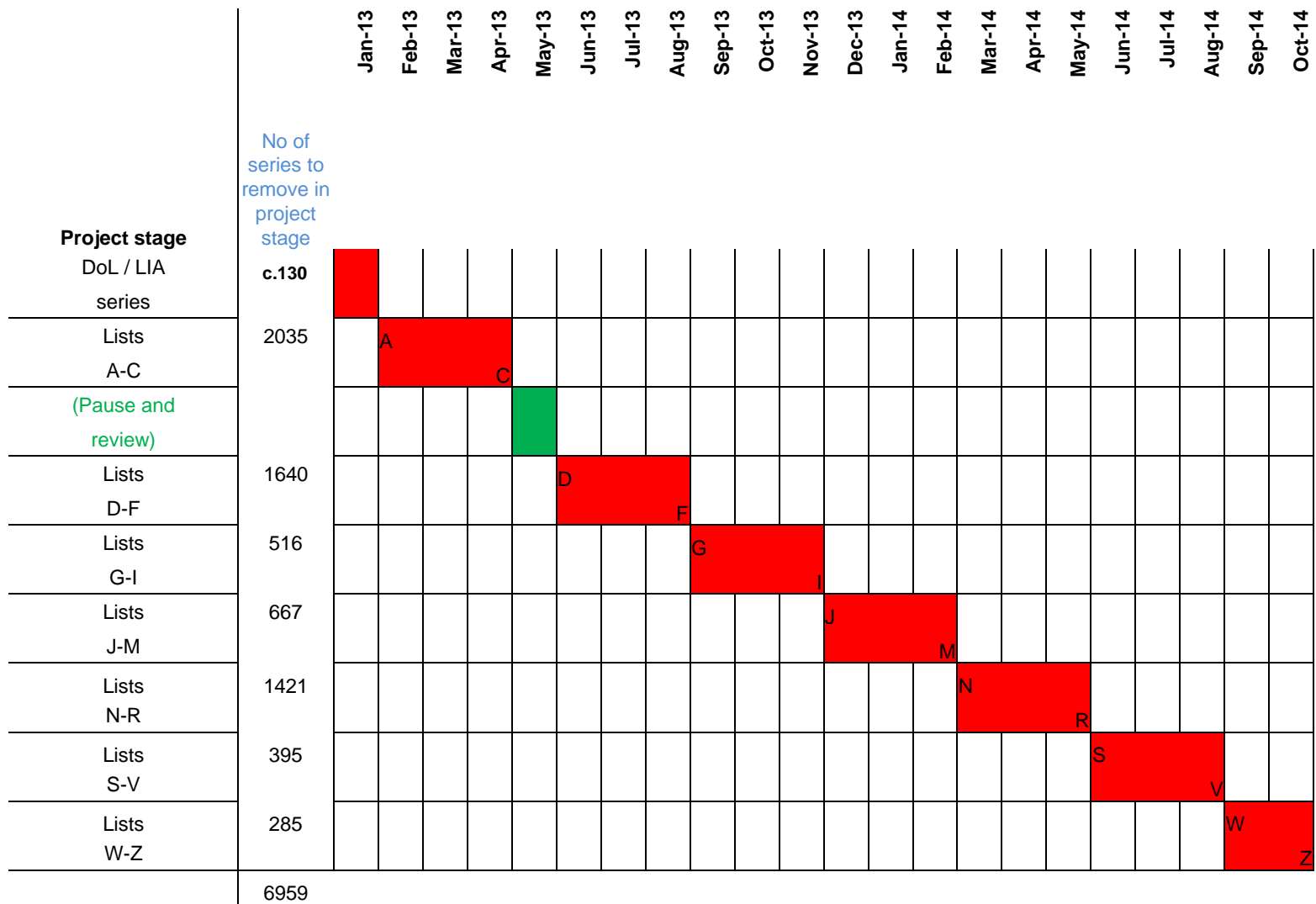
- There have been fewer than 20 productions in one calendar year; the inference being that the lists would also be of low/no use

114 series consulted
during survey

32 series (28%)
= less than 100
pieces

25
series
(22%)

39 series (34%)
= less than 20
productions



Other Issues

- No paper list will be destroyed – there will be a mechanism for retrieval, as there is with microfilm removed from open access
- Introductory notes: there is a project underway to put into Discovery introductory notes currently not in the Catalogue – mainly MLDRR ex-Chancery Lane series
- We will put a dummy sheet in place of a list that we are removing, directing users to our catalogue
- We will pause and review the process in May 2013, reporting back to UAG
- We will continue to work closely with Records Specialist as we remove lists
- We will continue to remove supplementary finding aids as and when that information is put online
- We will bring forward further proposals for future phases in Autumn 2013 by which time we'll have had time to evaluate the success of Phase 1

Questions?