

Contextual Wrappers 2: University Museum & User Surveys Report:

Introduction

As part of its consultation and dissemination and engagement activities, the Contextual Wrappers 2 project consulted with a range of University Museum professionals and University Museum users through online surveys during January 2012. The surveys were promoted via the University Museums Group; University Museums in Scotland and the Egyptology, Portraits and Theatre subject specialist networks. This report summarises the findings from the surveys.

University Museum Survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/umstaff>

Respondents:

- Excellent response from 64 people in all, representing approximately 85% of University Museums with Accredited, Designated or Recognised collections.
- Respondents were mostly collection managers (over 60%) and also included senior managers
- Respondents represented many subjects, especially from the Arts, Archaeology & the Sciences.
- Not all respondents answered every question, so response numbers are indicated below

Collections Records:

- Over 80% of respondents sub-divided their museum collection in terms of broad subject, theme or provenance areas (52 respondents)
- Of these, over 80% have collection-records they share with users and c20% of those have digital collection-records for **all** of their collections; with c70% having at least some digital collection records. (45 respondents)
- The most popular systems used to record collection records were: MS Office products, CALM, KE-EMU, Adlib, in-house databases and Index+ (37 respondents)
- Of these, c60% were known to be able to export collection records (43 respondents)
- Over 90% thought collection-records could play an important role in Resource Discovery, especially if such records directly linked to item records where available (36 respondents)
- Approx 60% thought finding collection records from more than one source mattered little or not at all. Only 17% thought it would matter a lot. (36 respondents)

Summary finding re Collection Records: *Most respondents sub-divided their collections by subject, theme or provenance and digital records of these 'collections and sub-collections' are mostly available in commonly used Collections Management or Office systems, from which the records could be exported for aggregation / resource discovery.*

These types of collection records were also seen to have a key role for Resource Discovery, even if from a variety of sources, thus fitting well with the 'contextual wrappers approach'.

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Item/Object Records:

- Over 95% of respondents also have digital item records, with most of these being in Adlib, KE-EMU & MS Office systems (47 respondents)
- Approx 33% have **all** their items catalogued digitally (44 respondents)
- Approx 40% have between 50-75% of their items catalogued digitally (44 respondents)
- The rest have 25% or less items catalogued digitally (44 respondents)

Digital Images and other media:

- 50% had digital images for less than 25% of their items (44 respondents)
- Only 2.3% had digital images for all of their item-records (44 respondents)
- 29 respondents also had some Audio-Visual resources and 6 also had some 3D digital models

Summary finding re item records and media: Respondents had a very large volume of digital item-records available, in common Collection Management systems, ripe for resource discovery, but with large amounts of digitisation of objects still to be done.

Controlled Vocabularies:

- Approx 40% indicated they used a controlled vocabulary for their collection or item records (24 responses)
- Most controlled vocabularies were internally produced term / authority lists.
- 3rd party vocabularies used by more than one museum included: AAT; TGN & ULAN from Getty
- Other 3rd party ones used included: UNESCO; ICONCLASS; Hombastal Sachs –Classification of Musical Instruments; British Museum Materials Thesaurus
- The Getty Vocab were also considered the most desirable by those not currently using any. (7 respondents)
- There was one comment questioning the value of the wide-application of controlled vocabularies vis a vie its distraction from content-creation and its limited enhancement of the user experience.
- c45% thought it could be useful to apply a 'high level' subject vocabulary to all University Museum **collection records**, whilst c45% were unsure and only c10% thought this would be of no use. (41 respondents)
- 55% thought UKAT would be the most appropriate vocabulary to apply to collection-records; c30% LCSH and c20% JACS (12 responses)

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Summary finding re controlled vocabularies: Internally produced term/authority lists are most prevalent, with 3rd party controlled vocabularies mostly used or desired for the Arts. UKAT is the most popular choice for a high-level vocabulary for collection-records.

Aggregating and Opening Data

- 75% of respondents were willing to provide collections information to a service such as Culture Grid, with no definite no's. Most of these were also keen to contribute to Europeana, the European cultural portal. (34 respondents)
- 50% of respondents would contribute their records unconditionally (i.e. as fully open data for resource discovery). Only 2% said no, the rest unsure. (36 respondents)
- Of those who indicated some conditions, attribution was the primary concern, with some indicating it would depend on the nature of the information within the record e.g. personal or specific-location detail of special materials not to be fully open. (12 respondents)

Summary finding re aggregating & opening data: Respondents are keen to contribute records (not media) to aggregation / resource discovery services and mostly on a fully open basis, with attribution being the major area of concern.

University Museum Users and University Museum search-service audience

- The main users of University Museums were ranked in the following order: undergraduates; the public; post-graduate researchers; academics; post-graduate students; schools and other researchers. (38 respondents)
- HE researchers and Learners (70-80%) were seen as the primary audience for a University Museum portal. (33 respondents)

Summary finding: Although a large percentage of University Museum users are from outside Higher Education (over 75% in 50% of cases); respondents saw the main audience for a University Museum portal as Higher Education researchers and learners.

Features for a UK University Museum search-service: (35 respondents)

The features that were indicated as most essential were:

- Advanced search
- Search across all UK University Museums
- Search & refine by University Museum & collections
- Browse collections by (at least broad) subject coverage
- Search & refine by (associated) people

The features that were indicated as most desirable were:

- Directed to larger images/media at University Museum site
- View related items to results
- Search & refine by type of digital resource
- Saving & returning to searches

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- Expanding results to items/collections outside Higher Education

The features that were indicated as mostly not needed were:

- Editing of records by appropriate people
- Search & refine by whether a preview image is available

Summary Findings: *The features that ranked highest matched more traditional resource discovery features. Other requested features included tagging and commenting.*

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University Museum User Survey Findings: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/umuser>

- 32 responses in all
- Most, approx 60% of respondents were members of the public and post-graduate students. Others included researchers, lecturers and under-graduates
- Subject areas represented included: Archaeology, Social History and History of Art and Geology
- Approx 50% used University Museums monthly, 30% quarterly and 10% annually, 5% weekly (19 respondents)
- Approx 50% used up to 5 different UMs, 40% only used one (21 respondents)
- The primary reason for use was research (academic & curatorial), then enjoyment, learning and teaching and local history (21 respondents)
- 21 respondents indicated that they use non-University Museums for the same purposes
- 70% used Museum catalogues to search online and 30% search engines, with others relying on their own knowledge or that of collections staff (17 respondents)
- 90% thought collection records had an important role to play in Resource Discovery. 10% unsure, but no no's. (18 respondents)
- 60% thought finding more than one collection record from different sources was not an issue, 22% thought it was. (18 respondents)

Features for a UK University Museum search-service:

The features that were indicated as most essential by users were:

- Advanced search
- Search & refine by period
- See images where available
- Search & refine by (associated) people
- Search across University Museums

The features that were indicated as most desirable by users were:

- View related items to results
- Compare at least 2 results
- Expanding results to items / collections outside Higher Education
- Search & refine by subject
- Browse collections by subject

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The features that were indicated as mostly not needed by users were:

- Viewing on a map
- Viewing on small screens (for phones/tablets)
- Search & refine by digital resource
- Embedding searches in own website

Summary findings: *Although a very small sample of users responded, a few interesting points came out:*

Most people use University Museums for some kind of research, but enjoyment (just visiting) also rated highly.

Resource discovery was mostly done via museum catalogues, with most people stating collection records had an important role in this

Most people also used up to 5 different University Museums alongside non-HE museums, indicating that a cross-University Museums search that applied the Contextual Wrappers approach and connected with information from outside the sector would be of most value.

The most essential/desirable interface features were again of the more traditional kind. Map views and small-screen provision was even stated as 'not needed' with respondents indicating that direct interaction with University Museum staff and the 'personal touch' was very much appreciated.