Academic librarians’ research role > Information explosion > M-libraries > Monitoring solutions > The Wildlife Trusts online
welcome

We’re already planning our 2013 subscriptions. We’re pleased to keep our rates at 2012 levels (£70 per annum) and await your instructions. Please note our new address for editorial/ subscriptions is: 103 Bath Road, Willsbridge, Bristol, BS30 6ED, UK. The email address and phone number are unchanged.

Many of you are planning your 2013 subscriptions. The spotlight will be on cloud computing and we will be releasing a call for papers very soon and hope you’ll get involved whether speaking or attending.

Warm regards,

Catherine Dhanjal, Managing Editor

From time to time, MmIT offers space to suppliers who are developing and marketing products of potential interest to information services. Neither the journal nor the MMIT Group endorse any of the services covered in these pages. Articles published reflect the opinions of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editorial board or MMIT Group. While every reasonable effort is made to ensure that the contents of the articles, editorial and advertising are accurate, no responsibility can be accepted by the editorial board or MMIT Group for errors, misrepresentations or any resulting effects. Acceptance of an advertisement does not imply endorsement of the advertiser’s product(s) by the editorial board or MMIT.

MmIT is published quarterly by the Multimedia Information & Technology Group of Cilip in electronic format in February, May, August and November. Copy deadlines: six weeks prior to publication. IP access or user name/password available.

Advertising, subscriptions and online access, contact: the Managing Editor +44 (0)800 998 7990 / 07941 669925 catherine.dhanjal@theansweruk.com

Editorial Board
Anthony Hugh Thompson (Chair); Alun Jenkins (Finance Manager); Catherine Dhanjal (Managing Editor); Kevin Curran; Kate Lomax; and Olwen Terris

contents

News
MmIT Group 2013 Conference; winner of the Internet Librarian International two-day conference pass; the British Film Institute’s (BFI) new library

Reviews
Book review: Using Mobile Technology to Deliver Library Services
Book review: Location-Aware Services and QR Codes for Libraries
Book review: Information 2.0
Product review: HannsG HD LED monitor
Product review: Peli U100 Urban Elite Laptop Backpack

Features: mobile technologies
Experimental & innovative m-library projects
Real-time mobile learning

Features
MmIT Journal, part three of the history: 1992-2000
Online information overload: now how to store it?
The Wildlife Trust/Rothschild Reserve’s digitisation project
HistoryPin — digital history for the community
Academic librarians tackle Research Data Management
Wireless monitoring technology: background wizardry

Technology roundup
Paste images straight to the web; easy online flyers; creating voice-over tutorials
Remote group meetings from your mobile; shield yourself from web invaders

and finally...
2013 features; 2013 pricing
2013 Group Conference

We’re now planning our 2013 conference. It will cater for all sectors and will focus on life in the cloud: the tools, implications and pitfalls. There will be workshops, plenaries and interactive sessions. Contact Andy Tattersall, a.tattersall@shef.ac.uk for more information or visit our blog.

http://mmitblog.wordpress.com

Winner of the two-day ILI Conference Pass

Thanks to the generosity of Internet Librarian International Conference we were again able to offer one of our Group members a free place to the two-day event in London.

Khalda Mohammed of the British Institute of Radiology won the place. Her role has changed from librarian to information specialist where she will be developing and delivering online information resources and providing elearning CPD modules to the radiological community.

She is tasked with researching new technologies and also developing skills that will help her to deliver the educational materials. This ranges from researching software to learning how to configure the elearning system and developing some technological knowledge to understand radiological sciences. She is also involved in digitisation projects, having converted to an e-library service with no physical collections.

www.internet-librarian.com/2012/

BFI’s stunning new library

Home to one of the foremost libraries of film and television information in the world, the British Film Institute (BFI) has completely redeveloped its library service with a stunning new space on London’s Southbank. This development follows the move of the BFI National Library from Stephen Street, WC1 to this welcoming, new, purpose-built space. Developed under the Grade II listed Waterloo Bridge, this significant new build was undertaken by Coffey Architects. The refurbishment will make the library freely accessible to the public, attract new users, and integrate its considerable resources into its public and cultural programmes. The new design combines hanging bronze mesh, timber bookcases and subtle new lighting to create a space which is rich and vibrant yet welcoming and calm.

This major BFI project also attracted generous support from its principal funders, The Reuben Foundation; major benefactors, The Edwin Fox Foundation, and The Dr. Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation, and additional support from The Hintze Family Charitable Foundation.

The library has met a trio of specific requirements including: transparency — the function of the library within had to be clear from outside the foyer; noise attenuation and control — small pockets of dedicated, quiet study area have been designated in an otherwise vibrant and dynamic space; and flexibility — the space is multifunctional so that events and programmed activities can be held.

Visitors enter through a transparent glass entrance wall connecting the activity of the library to the rest of the venue. It allows the library to borrow light and to enable filmic events to connect the foyer and informal area of the library. This transparent entrance is the library’s fourth wall and doubles up as a projection screen and for the visitor presents the impression of entering into the film itself.

The library is split into three main areas for the different groups who are expected to use the library: casual users, researchers, and the more serious academics who will use the library for film research and culture. Uninterrupted sight lines have been designed into the space so that it is easily overlooked by library staff based at a centralised, panoramic library desk area.

www.coffeyarchitects.com www.bfi.org.uk
Compared to the TECH SET #13 Location-aware services and QR codes for libraries reviewed on page 6 in this issue, this book covers far more than the small cost difference would suggest, although the former is slightly more detailed. The author is an academic librarian at a UK university and his experience of assessing users’ needs and implementing mobile services is seen throughout the book. The examples listed are also both national and international and from different types of library and museum.

Briefly (!) the book chapters cover:

1. What mobile services do students want (and need)? This chapter presents the results of a higher education student survey at the author’s workplace. Although the results are dated (2009) with regard to the speed of change in this area, the author feels the general conclusions are still valid. These include that text messaging services were more popular than those via the mobile web, and that students were only interested in these services if they could see how they would be useful to them. This last conclusion underpins the author’s main point in this chapter: develop mobile services that the user asks for or would find useful, not which you or other staff are interested in, or what you think would be useful.

2. Mobile literacy: a comparison of the differences that searching for, analysing and using information from mobile sources makes — with respect to existing competency-based information literacy models. With the results in Chapter 1, this section is provided to enable you to see more clearly why providing some kinds of mobile services, and how, would produce the greatest benefits for your users.

3. The mobile librarian: how librarians and information specialists can become more mobile in the ways that they work and the services which they offer. For example, technology now lets you carry or access most — if not all — of a library’s resources in your hand, so how can you use this to become an effective roving librarian?

4. Texting: This chapter covers many ideas for the use of text messaging to add to or improve library services. Texting is a basic tool but universally available to all phone users.

5. Apps vs mobile websites: using case studies, the book examines the advantages and disadvantages of the two competing types of information/service provision. Again, the choice of which format to use will be dependent on which you, and your users, think will meet their needs.

6. Linking physical and virtual worlds via mobile devices: this chapter examines quick or free ways to use QR codes, alternative services to be gained from RFID-tagged stock, the use of location-aware services and how to prepare...
for emerging Augmented Reality (AR) services. Whilst this section contains many real examples of how other institutions have used these services along with the author’s suggestions, he doesn’t include information on how to set up or use any of these services.

7. Mobiles in teaching: this includes many practical examples and case studies from teacher-librarians of how to use mobile devices in teaching, particularly regarding information skills. The ideas are mostly free or low cost as they generally make use of the learners’ own devices.

8. EBooks for mobiles: a discussion of the different eBook formats, licences and lending services available for libraries. As the eBook market is still evolving, this chapter is more of a summary of the current situation.

9. So what now? This chapter focuses on how to collect users’ opinions and how to use those to start your mobile service provision. The author suggests initially providing cheap or easy-to-deliver services that also require little staff training. These can show staff the utility of mobile services and that provision of them is simpler and less scary than they imagine. As in other areas, successful initial projects aid acceptance of later ideas.

I agree with the statement that this book will be useful for all information professionals or museum staff who wish to learn more about mobile services or to improve the provision of these services at their workplace. I also agree it is a very good introduction to this field for library and information students, as every chapter contains references and an annotated bibliography of useful resources, mainly journal articles. The text is clear and jargon-free but nonetheless compared to the TECHSET #13 book this title is less practical, for example, it lists URLs but doesn’t detail how to set up services on those websites. With this lack of instruction I wonder how many of the non-technical readers the book is aimed at will actually implement any of these mobile services.
Useful for training staff in LBS

This book is very useful and informative, indeed in some places it’s like a hyperactive child with the non-stop usage suggestions and related information. The book covers the location-aware services of Foursquare, Facebook Places, Gowalla [editor’s note: Gowalla closed in March 2012], Alfred, Bizzy and Instagram. It also details advanced uses of QR codes (e.g. links to check a user directly into a location-based website), Augmented Reality, and contactless payments. This book is very practical, each service has a description, a section on how to actually implement it and information about how each fits in with general technology and library trends. Included within each service description are links to relevant online case studies.

The author, Joe Murphy, has used and applied all the technologies described. Based on his experience he includes sections on marketing these technologies to existing and potential users, and how to justify and demonstrate the use of these services to management. The author is American but although the examples and text are slightly biased, this book is applicable to users anywhere. There is also a chapter on best practice, practical considerations, and staff training needs, to be applied to the implementation of any or indeed all of these services. This is followed by a chapter on how to collect usage statistics within, and for, each of the location services. Finally, in acknowledgement of the ever-changing nature of these location-based services, the author lists websites, blogs and presentations to help keep the reader’s knowledge current. However, given the breadth of services covered I think that the number of references is rather low. There is no glossary in this book but the few acronyms mentioned in the text are defined in the index.

This book provides information on what users expect from these technologies and how to address these requirements, as well as for library staff looking to keep abreast of current technology. Murphy’s work would also constitute a useful training tool for staff if, or when, users expect instruction on these technologies as part of digital literacy training.

non-stop usage suggestions and related information on location-based services

I can see the benefits that a library will gain through engaging with location-based services such as Foursquare and Facebook Places to promote itself to users and non-users but I can’t see many actual benefits to users from these services. In contrast, the Augmented Reality (AR) section of the book was very useful and I think this technology will be used greatly (and even expected?) in libraries and museums in future as it directly benefits the user. Layar currently provides the most widely available and used mobile AR app globally. Layar allows you to add digital content (including videos, links to websites, images and animations) to print materials or to deliver digital content to you based on your location and direction you are looking. The book details how to connect existing layers in Layar with the library (e.g. Tweeps: showing nearby Twitter posts that were associated with that location) and gives suggestions for custom layers of direct use for library users, such as historical datasets associated with geotagged locations.

Likewise there will be huge user benefits from the increased use of near field communication (NFC), i.e. contactless short distance data transfers. With NFC-enabled devices users could pay library charges and directly download eBooks. The book also examines how to set up Google Wallet at your library (only available in America currently) and how to use the Paypal Mobile app.

In conclusion, yes, all the technologies mentioned could benefit libraries, but I fear some currently wouldn’t generate enough user participation or create enough user benefits for them to warrant implementation. However, as the capabilities of all technologies are continually increasing, prediction of future technology usage is very difficult!
This book is aimed at students taking courses in library and information science, publishing and communication, and fits generally within the umbrella of “the information society” and modules of similar title. After an introductory chapter, the book moves on to deal with changes in models of information production (Chapter 2), new models of information storage (Chapter 3), new models of information distribution (Chapter 4), and new models of information consumption (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 concludes with consideration of some implications for information professions, and publishers. Each chapter ends with some questions (useful, one presumes, for seminar topics) and the main chapters include some outline case studies.

Ollie students should engage in critical thinking

Martin de Saulles covers a wide range of topics, and in just over 130 pages, so one cannot expect a lot of detail. There are some facts and figures (particularly in the case studies) but the non-numerate are likely to find the chapters easy to read. I yearned for some more in-depth discussion and arguments that were carefully justified but that was not, apparently, the aim of the book. It is an overview, no more and no less. An example of this type of general coverage is on page 33, in the chapter on new models of information production. Correctly, the challenge of large internally-generated datasets is highlighted. Then de Saulles moves on to the skills required of information professionals to manage such datasets, noting that traditional LIS skills have not covered such datasets. This is true, but some information management programmes should equip students with such skills. One of the next sentences reads: “Expertise in computer programming and statistical analysis are often more useful and it is an area that library and information courses might consider incorporating into their curricula.” A sweeping statement that needs a little more unpacking, I think. While I agree partly with the sentiment that some awareness of computer programming essentials and statistical analysis would be useful, one has to remember that many library and information science students will do almost anything to avoid dealing with numbers. The problem is not that simple, and a basic Java module plus basic statistics module are not going to be sufficient to change the curriculum in the direction proposed. The paragraph goes on: “While some new technical capabilities may be needed to address this challenge” (a masterly understatement) “many library and information professionals already possess the core skills, according to Hyams (2011).” The core skills are (seemingly) an understanding of the principles of classification.

Unfortunately, classification principles are not the private property of library professionals, and a course in Java programming and object-oriented analysis should give the computer scientists a good understanding of the classification skills they would need to manage large datasets. For more details, readers should consult the ISKO website and look up the July 2012 event on classification.

This is not an isolated case, the coverage on information literacy on pages 103-106 left me wishing for some more research evidence (and whatever SCONUL drew on for the Seven Pillars model, was not strong empirical research evidence). On the plus side, the content covers the future of search, location-based services, copyright problems for eBook readers, YouTube and MIT, the Internet Archive, and many other topics that would provide a good grounding for library and information science students. I’m happy to keep updated with such developments in the technology quarters published by The Economist (also referenced in this book) and Learned Publishing discusses changes in publishing models in more depth than is possible in this book. It would probably be asking too much to expect coverage of the concepts around the networked society and discussed by Barry Wellman, Manuel Castells, together with other critiques of the information society (for example, by Frank Webster). But I, for one, would want students to engage in more critical thinking about some of the statements aired in this book, to research the empirical data about some of the organisations and events mentioned, and to engage with some of the sociological debates. In summary, this book provides a pleasant panoramic view of the information landscape, but do keep your brain in gear while driving through.

Photo: © Kornwa | Dreamstime.com

By de Saulles, Martin.
ISBN: 978-1-85604-754-8
Price: £49.95
price to cilip members: £39.96
I had the pleasure of reviewing the new HP225DJB from display specialist HannsG. The company has sold over 1 million monitors in the UK market since 2006 and is consistently ranked as a top six monitor seller. HannsG has placed significant emphasis on producing an ergonomic monitor designed for comfort and workplace efficiency. Complementing the ergonomic design and ultimately contributing to the viewing experience, the HP225DJB also boasts high-grade visuals thanks to a Full HD 1920 x 1080 resolution, a 5ms response time and HannsG’s proprietary X-Contrast technology delivering a dynamic contrast ratio of 15,000,000:1.

This specification makes the HP225DJB perfect for office applications and more than capable of meeting the demands of state-of-the-art design programs, rich HD multimedia content and much more. It came excellently packaged. I made the mistake of placing it in my office as a second monitor for a few weeks and my sons were blown away by how well their games looked on it compared to the laptop screen acting as the primary display. They urged me to buy one for them!

The HL225DJB also features modern LED technology. LED technology allows for an ultra-slim profile, so upgrading from the bulky LCD monitors of yesteryear will free up valuable desk space. It also provides environmentally friendly performance to reduce utility bills and the office carbon footprint; uses recycling-friendly materials; and increases a monitor’s lifespan which inadvertently reduces cost of ownership. Power consumption is also low for this display.

Completing the package is built-in speakers as standard, plus an industry leading three-year guarantee for complete peace of mind. The HP225DJB is available now from Misco.co.uk for £123.59 including VAT. Given the low price I was expecting mediocre performance but in reality I was pleasantly surprised.

www.hannspree.co.uk
www.misco.co.uk

Kevin Curran is Senior Lecturer in Computer Science, University of Ulster
Peli Products is the European name and outlet for Pelican Products of the US, manufacturers of rugged cases and portable lighting systems. The cases are designed for, and primarily used by, professionals such as musicians, film-makers and photographers, emergency services and others who need to transport highly technical and expensive equipment safely, anywhere in the world.

The U100 Elite Laptop Backpack Case is one of a new consumer range of cases aimed at users of eReaders, laptops, mobile phones, tablets, etcetera and intended to protect these items from the rigours of unfriendly environments or events. However, the reviewer’s opinion is that this case is not intended for the average consumer as it truly is very robust, weighing in at about 3.65kg, nearly 30 percent of an average backpacking load intended for a five week trip.

Essentially, the case is a durable nylon backpack with an integral plastic case to protect your laptop. Look at the specification:
- Built-in Peli watertight & crushproof case
- Fits 15” laptops and up to 17” Apple
- IP67-tested
- Top-loader laptop access with easy-open push button latch
- Pressure EQ valve prevents vacuum lock
- Impact protected iPad/tablet front compartment
- Bottom expanding sling storage
- Load compression straps
- 16 litre durable nylon pack
- Concealed water bottle pocket

The watertight, crushproof case is constructed of ABS plastic (Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene) which provides rigidity, hardness and heat resistance. The toughness of ABS is the result of submicroscopically fine, polybutadiene rubber particles, uniformly distributed in the plastic matrix: it’s some 10x tougher than most other plastics. The backpack is made of polyurethane-backed, 1000 denier nylon. IP67-tested refers to the plastic case, not to the nylon carrier, although this latter is water resistant. ‘IP’ is a measure of ‘Ingress Protection’. The ‘6’ indicates protection from dust ingress and the ‘7’ indicates protection against the effects of immersion in water to a depth between 15 cm and 1 metre. The presence of an automatic pressure EQ (equalisation) valve prevents a vacuum lock, making it easier to open at any altitude.

Three small, extra, foam pads with adhesive backing are supplied to help you adjust the
Figure 1, left, shows:
1. Built-in, watertight, crushproof case
2. Soft rubber handle with latch underneath
3. Impact-protected, iPad/tablet pocket
4. Bottom straps — sling storage
5. Load compression straps
6. 16 litre main compartment
7. Drinks bottle pouch
8. S-curve comfort back

Ken Cheetham, Student Support Disabilities Unit, Cardiff Metropolitan University

There's no question that this backpack will fully protect your laptop and tablet from all kinds of damage and the impact-protected, iPad/tablet pocket at the front includes a whole range of zippered and Velcro-fastening pouches and small compartments which might house your mobile 'phone, small camera, diary, pens, sandwich and banana. There's even a drinks pouch on the outside and a half-height pouch between the tablet section and main compartment that is not mentioned in any of the accompanying notes or diagrams. All this and still there's 16 litres in the main section. Space for books, files, folders perhaps — or maybe a change of clothes? The compression straps to both sides of this compartment are really useful, just as they are on the concertina side pockets on a rucksack. There are also bottom straps which would allow carrying something like a rolled-up waterproof coat, a sleeping mat or a nicely cosy blanket for a chill ride from the airport and if I seem a little bit light-hearted about all this, it's because I am well acquainted with the back-packer who carries an 80-litre rucksack, when 60 litres would do. The tendency is to fill it up — because you can. Incidentally, my 65-75 litre rucksack weighs only 1.9kg, though of course it is not crushproof.

Let me say in conclusion that this case is superb — absolutely top quality materials and construction and it will do what it claims. However, it is heavy and could result in a considerable load if filled, plus of course possible baggage surcharges if flying. These latter points lead me to suggest that this is not for the average, daily commuter, but may be indispensable for the serious technician.

The backpacks are covered by a 12-month warranty from date of purchase and the Peli case has a lifetime warranty, deservedly so, as this case sells at £300 from both Waterproof Cases and Amazon, another reason why it's clearly not your average commuter's ideal solution.

www.PeliProGear.com
www.peli.com
Jo Alcock, researcher at Evidence Base at Birmingham City University, delves into the explosion in growth of mobile technologies and reports on libraries’ use of such technologies to deliver resources and services

By the end of 2011, there were almost 6 billion mobile-cellular subscriptions, corresponding to a global penetration of 86 percent. The growth of mobile technologies in society has led to both increased opportunities and increased expectations for libraries to use mobile technologies to deliver resources and services. Most of the work in this area (which we refer to in this article as m-libraries) has been experimental in nature. There have been some innovative projects and pockets of good practice, though much of this is unreported.

Mobile infrastructure for libraries
In order to address this issue and improve sharing of best practice, JISC funded a programme of work on Mobile Infrastructure for Libraries which ran from November 2011 until September 2012. The programme included five institutional innovation projects and one community support project.

The institutional projects were:
- LearnMore (City University London) — developing a mobile app version of the popular lawbore™ service for law students
- MACON (Open University) — mobilising academic content online, a project working to improve access to resources via a mobile interface for EBSCO Discovery Service
- M-biblio (University of Bristol) — developing a mobile app for adding and storing bibliographic references
- MoPED (City University London) — investigating use of public electronic displays for engaging with users’ mobile devices
- PhoneBooth (London School of Economics and Political Science) — enabling access to the Charles Booth map archives via mobile devices

M-library community support project
The community support project, managed by Evidence Base at Birmingham City University in collaboration with Owen Stephens Consulting, aimed to support both the projects within the programme and the wider m-libraries community. It achieved this by focusing on two main areas of work: evidence gathering and community building.

1. Evidence gathering
Throughout the project, the team collected resources using a number of different social bookmarking tools. We also encouraged others to add to the list using the mlibs tag, and collected these via a combined RSS feed of Delicious, Pinboard and Diigo. The items from this RSS feed were displayed in the sidebar of the blog and we also shared relevant resources via blog posts and tweets (using the #mlibs tag).

The resources included blog posts, presentations, conference papers, articles and reports from all areas of mobile technologies in libraries (our core focus was academic libraries in UK but we also included resources of interest outside this).

In addition, we ran a fact-finding survey at the beginning of the project and repeated it at the end of the project. The information from the surveys helped us to identify trends in use of mobile technologies in libraries and consider barriers to implementation. The project presented an overview of this research at the 4th International M-libraries Conference in September 2012.

2. Community building
In order to encourage sharing of best practice in the long-term, the project helped to build connections and stimulate discussion in the following ways:
- Information sharing event
Feedback from the community via the event and social media communications highlighted the value of face-to-face events for supporting sharing within the community. Members of the m-library community also stressed the importance of being able to access information to inform practice, which led to development to the pathways to best practice guides.

Pathways to Best Practice
The Pathways to Best Practice guides were produced by the project team, based on the collation of information throughout the project. The guides are all available at www.m-libraries.info/pathways-to-best-practice-guides/ and each is outlined below to share some of the ideas you may want to investigate.

1. **Introducing users to the library**
   Mobile devices can be used in a number of different ways to support an introduction to the library, either within induction sessions or for self-guided introductions. Ways of using mobile technologies to support this include using mobile devices within induction sessions (e.g. treasure/scavenger hunts), to deliver tours, offering introductory guides via mobile devices, or using QR codes or augmented reality on physical handouts to enhance the experience with electronic content. For an interesting approach to inductions, see North Carolina State University’s scavenger hunt using iPod touches and Evernote.

2. **Helping onsite users — roving support**
   Helping users at their point of need via roving support has been greatly enhanced by developments in mobile technologies, enabling library staff to use devices such as web-enabled smartphones and tablets in and around the library (or further afield). University of Warwick uses mobile devices to support roving in its enquiry support team.

3. **Helping users within the library — guides and signage**
   To help users within the library, QR codes or Augmented Reality can be used to link to more detailed information about a service, mobile-friendly videos of how to use equipment or to link directly to electronic resources (e.g. in shelves with print resources which have electronic versions or supplements). Bournemouth University has developed bookmarks with QR codes to direct people to subject-specific electronic resources.

4. **Providing access to resources via mobile devices**
   As we become more accustomed to using our mobile to access the web and read text, we expect resources to be available via our mobile devices, including library resources and content. The aforementioned MACON project at Open University has published a toolkit covering many different areas of consideration (including authentication, content formats, delivery options, user requirements and usability testing).

5. **Developing a mobile strategy for the library**
   Due to the rapidly changing nature of mobile technologies, developing a mobile strategy is challenging. University of Glasgow has developed a robust yet flexible strategy incorporating a number of different elements of mobile technologies in response...
focus on mobile technologies: m-libraries

8. **Loaning mobile devices**
In order to provide more people with access to mobile technologies, some libraries loan out mobile devices. This may be for use within the library only (or sometimes on the campus in the case of a University) or for loan to take home. Radcliffe Science Library at University of Oxford loans out iPads and eReaders, and University of Chester ran a trial project loaning eReaders to students for use during their course.

9. **Supporting learning, teaching and research**
Examples of ways to use mobile devices within learning, teaching and research include using SMS voting during teaching to get feedback or to gather responses to questions and test knowledge, presenting or demonstrating content from mobile devices, using tablets as an input for teaching and learning (linked to projectors), and using Augmented Reality to introduce learners to new material (e.g. special collections). The JISC-funded SCARLET project uses Augmented Reality to support learning and teaching using special collections and librarians at the University of Brighton use Poll Everywhere in their information skills sessions.

10. **Collection management**
Mobile technologies can be used to support library staff in their activities, for example supporting collection management activities such as weeding (delivering information and enabling withdrawal of material from mobile devices) or using mobile devices to select or order new materials. An innovative example of library staff use is the Augmented Reality shelving app which is being developed at University of Miami, Ohio.

What next?
Who knows what’s next for mobile technologies, but if recent statistics are anything to go by, mobile is here to stay and will continue to grow in popularity. Many of us are using multiple devices to achieve tasks, and we’re making the most of the convenience of mobile technologies; 34 percent of us use the device that’s closest to us when looking for information.

As mobile technologies continue to become more integrated into society, libraries need to tap into opportunities to use these technologies to provide access to support and resources for users.

References
3. http://pipes.yahoo.com/pipes/pipe.info?_id=23aee33d07e722d3a2f2a45238dc92d
4. www.slideshare.net/joyanne/m-libraries-on-the-hype-cycle
5. www.lib.ncsu.edu/instruction/scavenger.html
8. www.open.ac.uk/blogs/macon/toolkit/
9. www.gla.ac.uk/services/library/aboutthelibrary/libraryinnovation/librarygoesmobile/
11. http://mbibliolrl.bit.ac.uk
13. www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/science/services/e-readers/ipad
14. www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/science/services/e-readers
15. www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/newsletter/55 (pp. 18-20)
17. http://librariansontheloose.wordpress.com/2011/03/02/using-polleverywhere-in-a-search-skills-session/

Jo Alcock can be contacted on: Jo.Alcock@bcu.ac.uk

If you’d like to learn more about the project, please visit our project blog at www.m-libraries.info/and join the conversation at our new mailing list, M-LIBRARIES-GROUP@JISCMAIL.AC.UK
Bob Little explains how, over the last few years, continuing technological advances allied to increasing demand for learning materials — which are being made more generally accessible — has led to a rapid rise in mobile learning applications.

It’s often said that mobile, or m-learning, has different parameters from those of the more conventional elearning. In other words, you can’t just take elearning materials and attempt to deliver them via m-learning. If they’re to be useful, the learning materials have to be adapted for delivery from ‘e’ to ‘m’.

For one thing, screen size is different, so learning materials made for delivery via desktop or laptop computers — and even tablets — need to be modified for delivery via mobile devices, such as mobile phones. Obviously, this has implications — in terms of visual appearance as well as learning design — for those who design and develop learning materials for these devices.

Real & virtual learning
The Interactive Realtime Multimedia Applications on Service Orientated Infrastructures (IRMOS) Project, which ended in 2011, was a 36 month, 12.9m Euro project awarded by the European Commission to a Consortium of 13 leading European organisations. The idea behind the project was that today’s Service Orientated Infrastructures (SOIs) lack real-time (RT) capabilities.

So IRMOS used grid and cloud computing to provide the computing resources to bring learners together in both the real and virtual worlds. The 13 organisations collaborating on the IRMOS Project aimed to design, develop and validate an SOI to allow the adoption of interactive real-time applications, especially multimedia applications. The overriding objective of IRMOS was to enable real-time interaction between people and applications over an SOI, where processing, storage and networking needs to be combined and delivered with guaranteed levels of service.

The project was coordinated by Stuart Smithson of Xyratex Ltd, of Havant near Portsmouth and the technical coordinator is professor Dimosthenis Kyriazis, of the Institute of Communication & Computer Systems at the National Technical University of Athens. The project’s partners comprised: Xyratex International Ltd and the University of Southampton (both UK); the Institute of Communication & Computer Systems — National Technical University of Athens (Greece); Stiftelsen Sinntef (Norway); Telefonica I+D (Spain); Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna and eXact learning solutions (formerly Giunti Labs) (Italy); Alcatel-Lucent Deutschland AG, Universität Stuttgart, DFT Digital Film Technology GmbH and Deutsche Thomson OHG (all Germany).

The elearning scenario within IRMOS related to ‘extended geo-learning’, delivered ‘in-class’, ‘in-house’, ‘in campus and ‘in building’ on an urban, suburban and global GPS basis. In particular, eXact learning solutions worked on ‘learner positioning’ in virtual worlds as well as in the real-world.
Focus on mobile technologies: real-time m-learning

Fabrizio Giorgini, head of R&D at eXact learning solutions, commented, “And, of course, the learning content produced can be reused and distributed via different delivery media — such as text books, web-based learning materials, mobile learning, digital boards and so on.”

Art galleries, museums and schools in the digital world

Using the IRMOS-empowered set up, learners are able to meet in specific real-world learning hubs, such as art galleries, museums, tourist attractions, schools and/or industrial locations, and receive location-based learning materials and community services, geo-located and allied to relevance and context awareness.

Initially the IRMOS Project has applications in three areas: collaborative digital film production; virtual and augmented reality; and interactive collaborative elearning. In this latter case, for example, Anna is one of a group of Spanish students visiting Athens as part of a school trip. They are learning about classical Greece and, before their visit, they have already experienced an interactive, real-time virtual course on ancient Greek architecture. While visiting the Acropolis, Anna accesses the elearning application again and indicates the topics in which she is interested. The application, running on an IRMOS-enabled platform, considers her device’s capabilities and the kind of services she needs. It then constructs a virtual reality learning environment around which Anna can move — with her fellow students. She can interact with the learning material by accessing real-time multimedia content, using video streaming and seeing a visualisation of how the Acropolis used to look.

This enables a large number of people with a need for a synchronised experience to interact with one another through a virtual environment. It also allows real-time delivery of multimedia material to users with adaptation of the service rates, based on the users’ ability to consume the delivered data rate and on the number of simultaneous users of the system. Furthermore, the system provides the automated selection of the best source of material for delivery to the user and automated construction of the service over the network.

Powering personalised learning online

Giorgini added, “IRMOS was an early step on the road to personalised learning, delivered via mobile or other delivery mechanisms. This has now developed to the point where the new version of the eXact learning LCMS platform — version 10 — which was launched in October adds unique learning content personalisation and integration features with third party LMSs. These features include such things as dynamic publishing, template-based personalisation and DITA support.

“It’s increasingly important to develop and store learning content in such a way that it is conducive to it being used — not just in a static, blended approach to learning but also in a dynamic way that is able to repackage itself, interoperating with media and skills based personalisation systems within the enterprise,” Giorgini continued.

“This will allow it to adapt, in real-time, to the learner’s personality, perspective and learning preferences; as well as her/his skills and competency gaps, the learner’s location and the available device to deliver the learning and/or support. Moreover, the content must be easily delivered from the central enterprise repository or a federated network of corporate repositories.”

Bob Little can be contacted on: bob.little@boblittlepr.com
www.irmosproject.eu

Image: © Dan Breckwoldt | Dreamstime.com
From *AVL* to *MmIT* — 1992 to 2000 — a brief history of the journal & multimedia development in libraries

Anthony Hugh Thompson, MA, Ph.D, FLA, Hon.FCilip, and chair of the MmIT Editorial Board, presents the third of what has become a fascinating four part series on the journal’s history.

Like all sagas this one looks doomed to go on and on (oh, no, I hear you cry!). It was the original intention to cover the period 1992 to date in one go, but this has proved to be impossible as there just is not enough space in one issue of the journal for that! So I am afraid there will be a Part 4!

The first two years of the 1990s were good ones for the *Audiovisual Librarian*. Financially we appeared to be sound, and our already-professional journal continued to go from strength–to-strength as it has done up to the present. But alas, the danger signs were there, yet another economic crisis was taking hold, and this resulted in libraries around the world reviewing their periodical holdings and cancelling many of them. Over the next four years the subscriptions dropped from 600 to 360.

So the 1990s became a ‘Jekyll and Hyde’ situation for the journal. It was a time of continuous development for the journal, dedicated to its subscribers and Group members around the world.

**1992: introducing camera-ready copy**

We were printing 3,750 copies of the journal, having them film wrapped and despatched by Highland Printers, and sent by discounted rates in the UK and by an air freight firm to countries abroad. Total cost per issue was around £3,000. All AV personal members received their own paper copies, funded entirely by subscription income.

A laser printer, scanner and an OCR program was purchased which speeded up the desktop publishing and enabled me to produce camera-ready copy for the printer, which incidentally reduced the printing costs. It was suggested that a fast 486 computer would be needed in 1993! A major problem was that of obtaining original articles, while ‘Seen and Heard’ (always a popular part of the journal) had grown to occupy nearly half the space. The editorial team sadly lost Patsy Cullen, who, with Catherine Pinion, had edited ‘Seen and Heard’ for many years. Fortunately we found a replacement in Chris Lorimer, a regular contributor to the journal. Olivia Fitzpatrick had been promoted and could no longer continue as reviews editor. I took over this job. A competition was held for a new cover design, but the results were disappointing, we even got ‘designs’ scrawled on the back of envelopes!

The title was to remain the same, but a subtitle ‘the multi..."
media information journal’ was added. Ami Professional was upgraded to Version 3, and CorelDraw to 3. However, Pagemaker and CorelDraw became the software of choice later in the year.

As far as content was concerned, the decade began with articles on ‘Making a video about online searching’, ‘Sound effects on Compact Disk’, ‘Guidelines on cataloguing off-air recordings’, ‘The making of a talking book’, ‘Multimedia use in Nigerian libraries’, and ‘Guidelines on Computer Software’.

1993: ‘Video Reviews’ appeared for the first time

Due to subscription losses and other economies, the journal now had a print run of 2950 copies. 2100 went to members of the Library Association (LA) AV Group as part of their membership, and 140 to members of the ASLIB AV Group. There were 411 subscribers in 55 countries, a number that had sadly decreased considerably from the 815 subscribers the journal had at its peak. Advertising was increasingly difficult to obtain for the journal, reducing our income still further. Thought was being given to a possible title change and to moving to an A4 format as it was felt that we had reached the maximum size for an A5 format, as well as its restricting the overall design of the journal. The AVL treasurer issued a report that showed that in 1990 the journal’s income was £16,700 while expenditure was £14,000. By 1993 income had dropped to £13,800 while expenditure had reached £21,500 — reserves were depleting rapidly and this situation could not be sustained.

The February 1993 issue saw the new cover designed by a student at Brunel College of Technology in Bristol. This was the best of the small and disappointing bunch of entries to our Cover Competition, despite the £100 prize. ‘Seen and Heard’, now edited by Catherine Pinion and Chris Lorimer, continued to grow and was now classified into sections, improving it still further. For many readers, this was a most valuable section. Maureen Brown from the BFI began sending quarterly lists of selected videos suitable for library purchase. ‘Video Reviews’ appeared for the first time. May 1993 had an international flavour with articles on ‘The Audiovisual Department of the Bibliothèque de France’, ‘Satellite broadcasting and Higher Education’ and ‘The

Southern Ontario Multilingual Pool’. August saw two major articles, ‘Preserving our audiovisual heritage — a national and international challenge’, and ‘Digitising the Bodleian’.

1994: overcoming financial crisis

The managing editor’s report stated “The AVL is in danger of running out of money during 1995”. Either it had to cease publication at the end of 1994 or 1995 or considerable savings had to be made and alternative sources of income had to be sought. A variety of suggestions were made as to how this could be achieved.

The cost of supplying paper copies to personal members of the LA and ASLIB AV groups was identified as the major financial problem for the journal. The journal would remain in profit if it had to provide paper copies to its subscribers only, as it was the income from subscriptions that had made it possible to supply 8,800 paper copies to personal members each year. Up to this point in time, the LA and ASLIB Groups did not make a financial contribution to the AVL, except that the LA paid postage to its members. But set against this was the fact that it was their members’ journal, and to many the only link they had with their respective AV Group. “We are funding the provision of the periodical for a readership of over 2,200 non-paying customers from a small subscription base which is now in decline.”

This led to a stressful, and because there were a number of committees involved plus two parent bodies, a prolonged period where we appealed to the LA and ASLIB for some financial help, looked into the possibilities of selling the journal to a commercial publisher, or going independent, and making considerable changes to the journal to make it less expensive to produce. Consideration had to be given to the journal being published on the internet and the Editorial Board began to look into this possibility seriously. A suggestion that the AVL should become a ‘refereed journal’ happily received little or no support, as this would have probably changed the journal from a practical much read journal to an academic little-read journal — we felt we needed to get our message across as widely as possible.

1994 also saw a new cover design by the managing editor and my editorial (I only wrote an editorial when I had something to say!) celebrated 20 years of the Audiovisual Librarian. It also saw the beginning of ‘In the crystal ball’, a new section by Andrew Stokell which brought together actual and potential technology developments that could affect our work in the future. A new section of ‘Video Reviews’, complete with smiley (or otherwise) faces also began. In August I wrote an editorial on what ‘reading’ means...
and decided it covered absorbing information from all forms of multimedia, and ‘Seen and Heard’ began to appear on the internet in an experiment organised by Roy McKeown. This was later to include ‘Publications’. Actual photos became more common in the journal, alongside the many graphics produced with CorelDraw. The inclusion of photos became so much easier when I got used to using Pagemaker.

1995: a disk-shaped future
As a result of the substantial changes made to the journal itself and the production of camera-ready copy, reduced postal costs, coupled with additional income from the LA AV Group, the journal survived this extremely difficult period and, while still on a financial ‘knife-edge’, it seemed that it could continue for some years to come.

At the end of 1995 the ASLIB AV Group had changed its name to the Multimedia Group, while the LA AV Group were in the process of doing the same. A working party was set up to look further into publication on the internet. ‘Seen and Heard’ and ‘Publications’ were already available on the net, 10 days after publication of the journal itself. Advertising was taken over by Catherine Pinion, who gallantly raised some £2,250 in the year.

Andrew Stokell decided the future was disk-shaped, and so it proved to be for some years, ‘Multimedia Kiosks’, ‘Information retrieval from CD-ROM’ and ‘Other people’s pictures: remote access to images’ were amongst the many articles. Peter Godwin manfully managed to continue to find reports of conferences and meetings of interest to readers in his ongoing ‘Reports’ section.

1996: a greater online presence
The Working Party set up to examine publications on the internet concluded “that they liked the AVL in its paper form and that the internet was not appropriate for all the content”. An interesting and rather Luddite decision in retrospect! However, they recommended that there should be a more substantial presence for both the journal and the LA Multimedia Group on the net. ‘Hardware Reviews’ began to appear in the journal.

As one of the many economy measures, printed back copies of the journal were now no longer available but film copies could be purchased from University Microfilms. 1996 saw yet another cover design along with some interior changes by the managing editor, eager to stretch his abilities with CorelDraw. These were to coincide with the change of the title of the journal to Audiovisual Librarian: multimedia information, to tie in with the change of names of the two parent AV Groups and the IFLA AV and Multimedia Round Table. Articles included ‘Archiving video games’, ‘Citing electronic sites’, ‘The UK National Discography’, ‘UNESCO and AV: some recent projects’, Managing a large academic CD-ROM network’, and ‘Guidelines for more effective OHT production’. This last named article was unusual in that there were five very positive responses to the author, the managing editor, who often asked if indeed there was anyone out there! Normally there was little or no response to any of the content of the journal, although when one met actual readers, one was always assured that they loved the journal. The article coincided with the introduction of Powerpoint, which was not included in the article — however the guidelines suggested still equally apply to Powerpoint presentations as to the older plastic OHTs (Overhead Projector Transparency).

1997: the computer screen makes the front cover
I succeeded Catherine Pinion as chair of the LA Multimedia Group, as well as remaining chair of the Editorial Board. 1997 saw yet another cover design, the computer screen as a multimedia resource appearing for the first time. ‘Trash to treasure — or the incredibly strange films that stopped hiding and became High Street videos instead’ by Antony Brewerton, not only had the longest title the journal had ever published but allowed the managing editor to include some ‘page 3 type ladies’ in the title graphic! Articles included ‘The AV collections of the Archivo General de las Nacion in Buenos Aires’, and ‘Audiovisual Management Education: an Australian initiative’. The number of excellent articles from other countries continued to be a major feature of the journal.

1998: Multimedia Information & Technology is born
1998 was a momentous year! A number of major changes took place. The LA Multimedia Group merged with the LA Information Technology Group on 14 January 1999 to become the LA Multimedia and Information Technology Group (LAMIT). I remained chair of the new Group — Professor Bruce Royan who was co-chair had to give up this post due to pressure of work. Several members of the previous IT Group Committee agreed to join the editorial team and the Editorial Board. They proved to be a most welcome addition.

Whether or not the merger had taken place the IT Group had wished to become a partner in this journal as they no longer had an editor, and a new title Multimedia Information
and Technology (MmIT) was proposed. A new cover (inspired by the cover of a rather upperclass architectural journal) was designed by the managing editor for the new title. The merger did indeed take place happily and successfully and the new title was adopted in August 1998.

It was then decided that from February 1999 MmIT would appear in full on the internet free to members of the parent groups and the supply of paper copies would cease. Following this decision and as a result of a meeting between the chief executive of the LA and the chair and treasurer of the Editorial Board in February 1998, it was agreed that:

1. All LAMIT members would receive a paper copy of a 16 page quarterly newsletter consisting of material from the full journal. This was necessary to fulfill the requirements of the ‘Hammond Formula’ which at that time required all LA groups to communicate to its members with a minimum of 12 pages of A4, four times a year (although not all did!). This was published under the title LAMIT News.

2. The full journal, now titled Multimedia Information and Technology would be published on the internet, free to all LAMIT members, from February 1999.

3. The paper copy would continue to be published for all subscribers. Special arrangements were made for those group members who did not have internet access.

While this decision was not popular with some LAMIT group members, it did provide the only realistic way forward for the journal to continue to publish and its content made available to all members and subscribers. An appeal to ASLIB for help in either putting the journal on the web or for some finance to enable this to happen was not even answered, and the continuation of the ASLIB Multimedia Group as co-publisher was in some doubt.

LAMIT developed its website in March, and the journal was uploaded and managed on the internet by a company called Catchword. The change to online went smoothly and any initial problems were quickly addressed by Catchword. Initially the response to the online version was poor, not many members looked at the internet version to begin with, while 100 chose to continue to subscribe to the paper copy. However, only 600 copies of the journal were now printed, plus 8,500 copies of LAMIT News, thus reducing costs considerably and ensuring a future for the journal.

1999: finances back on track

At the Editorial Board Meeting in September, both Ann Aungle and Catherine Pinion resigned — a great loss. Both had worked hard contributing to the journal in many ways, and Catherine was the longest-serving member of the Board and Editorial Team at that time. Dr Ann Borda took over ‘Bibliographic Update’. Two members of the old IT Group were also elected to the Board — Tina Theis became secretary, and Jane Rowlands contributed greatly in a number of ways, in particular producing the ‘Technical’ section. Due to all the changes over the decade, the journal was now financially back in the black again.

This decade charted 10 years of considerable change in the tools available to the multimedia librarian, and the increasing dominance of digital technology and systems in our work.

Equipment reviews included a top of the range Sony Vaio Laptop with a 12Gb hard drive. We also reviewed a JVC D-VHS Digital Video Recorder. D-VHS never really caught on, and this must have been one of the last of the video cassette recorder developments before the video cassette recorder plus DVD recorder to allow you to copy your videocassettes to DVD signalled the end of VHS.

This decade charted 10 years of considerable change in the tools available to the multimedia librarian, and the increasing dominance of digital technology and systems in our work.

MMIT journal: the product of a team of dedicated people

It also covered major changes in the way the journal was produced and disseminated to members of the Multimedia Groups, which themselves had undergone large scale change.

Financially, the journal was in a better state of health and its future looked more positive — indeed it is still going strong today!

There is no doubt that the journal has played a significant part in the development of ‘multimedia libraries’ internationally, and has maintained a high professional standard since its inception. When we advertised for a new managing editor in 2000, a reader wrote to ‘thank you for providing information in and editing what is one of the best librarian journals in this country over so many years’.

All of us who worked on the journal, either as members of the editorial team and/or the Editorial Board felt strongly about the journal and its future, and it was the product of a team of dedicated people. And I would like to thank all of them most sincerely for all the work they did on our behalf.

Anthony Hugh Thompson, MA, Ph.D, FLA, Hon.FCiLip
One of the perennial, if not biggest, problems we all face is not “how do I find information?”, but “where do I store it?” We all too often hear the old saying ‘information overload’ and now I am increasingly coming across the problem of information storage overload. When I say information, I mean everything. Tweets, Google Docs, bookmarks, images, Excel files, RSS feeds, the whole kit and caboodle.

The level of the problem varies from person to person and according to how much they engage with technology, from personal photos on their smartphone to confidential patient data in the workplace. Finding a solution can take a lot of time and effort, putting it into practice more so, and getting your organisation to do this is pretty much impossible.

I recently caught up with a senior colleague from our technical support department at the University of Sheffield for a coffee and we talked about this growing problem. His concern was how to figure out where staff should be saving things, what tools and processes people should have as options, and how they should employ them. We are both technically minded in that we look to technology, especially web technology to solve problems or change the ways we
we’ve hit information overload, now where can we store it?

work. We both have a multitude of presences online and use the web extensively to blog, Tweet, Google+, bookmark, store, automate, aggregate, link, share, host, write and organise, amongst other things. So we have a lot of data and, where possible, we try to make our content work for us; we maximise its value and because of our roles and background, we try to do this in as safe an environment as possible. We are two of dozens of like-minded people at my institution who have worked like this ever since the number ‘2.0’ was clamped on the backside of ‘Web’ about seven years ago.

web technologies fall in and out of popularity, like fashions...

Yet despite this knowledge and what can be regarded by some in the information sector as using a particular ‘state of mind’ — one where we are naturally open to new tools and technologies and invariably can spot their value quicker than most — we still struggle to get a grip on our content.

A place for everything...

In a perfect world everything would be in one place, it would probably be ‘Google World’ or something along those lines. Every bookmark, social update, file, video, feed, would be in one place, just like a Tesco shop, and probably with just about as much soul. There are tools out there that promise the web collectionist this, but invariably you find a few holes in their software. Take the brilliant ‘If This Then That’ (IFTTT) tool which takes one web application and sets up an automated trigger that allows it to work with another similar tool. It did so many great things until Twitter removed some of the functionality. Even IFTTT is far from being perfect, but once a new tool comes out or another one revokes access — invariably as they want to promote their own system or for other financial reasons — it falls apart.

Regardless of what we do, the web does not sit still — no one predicted Facebook’s social media dominance and no one could have predicted the rapid decline of Yahoo or MySpace. Everything must come to end. Shift is normal and we have to be prepared to move at some point.

many people, certainly in academia, have yet to be won over by the many technological options available to them

We need to talk about Kevin

To reach a solution we have to be aware of a few home truths before we go on. We are never going to have less data — we are in the perpetual state of creating content on a global scale, whether this be in the professional or personal setting. Many of us use some of the discovery, aggregation and sharing tools, and it is unlikely that we will return to a time where these will not exist in some form. The day we produce less content will only come when either we decide to switch off from the web, a governmental or super-huge commercial business locks down the web, or more realistically, we die — but we are unlikely to care at that point.

Regardless of what we do, the web does not sit still — no one predicted Facebook’s social media dominance and no one could have predicted the rapid decline of Yahoo or MySpace. Everything must come to end. Shift is normal and we have to be prepared to move at some point.

I am certain that we cannot collect all of our content in one place unless we use nothing bar one platform, such as Google or Apple. Yet locking yourself down to a single platform would mean locking yourself down to certain ways of working and consuming. Google and Apple are great,
we’ve hit information overload, now where can we store it?

but there are so many tools out there that work better than those from Google and Apple, or exist simply because neither company has made a similar tool (yet). Just think about the idea of using nothing but one of the two above platforms. Just think about what wonderful tools you would be missing out on: Prezi, Mendeley, Twitter, Evernote, Audioboo, Dropbox and so many others.

It’s time to get organised
The idea that one day you can declutter your online presence is more of a pipe dream than a reality. What you can do is to set up filters and and tools that will at least refine your ever-expanding pile of information, so that at least you find more that interests you and use less time going through the ever-bigger pile of junk.

I use a selection of tools and techniques to stay abreast of my interests professionally and personally. These include RSS aggregators, news services, discussion lists and forums, personalised start pages and social media hosts. The nature of my work dictates that I explore new ways of working and that means new technologies, all of which means an ever-expanding collection of information. Nevertheless, many of these tools give me the ability to store my content in multiple, accessible locations. They are very much like the techno version of the Sorcerer’s Apprentice in that they do your work for you, the trick is teaching them not to bring too much content back to you.

• RSS feeds and aggregation
  I am a big fan of RSS yet have rarely met anyone who has ever employed one or even an aggregator. RSS feeds exist on an awful lot of websites these days from news sites to academic journals, from search engines to blogs. The ability of staying abreast of multiple websites without having to visit them to check on new content cannot be underestimated, especially when applied to websites you rarely visit or those that are updated infrequently. Google Reader is the tool I use, mostly as I have it as part of my personal and professional Google Apps packages. Other established aggregators worthy of inspection include FeedReader and Bloglines.

• Bookmarking
  Also known as your ‘favourites’ on some web browsers. There are a whole host of useful tools out there to store your bookmarks on the cloud. The two I use are Google Chrome’s bookmarks which allows me to sync them across different locations once I have signed into Google. Whilst I still use the brilliant Delicious bookmarking tool which allows me to save my favourites into the web and employs a tagging system to help you filter your hundreds if not thousands of bookmarks. Web-based social bookmarking, sharing sites such as Delicious, Diigo, StumbleUpon and Reddit allow users to find topics of interest based on what other people are finding.

• Social reference management
  There are several tools out there that allow you to save your research and papers in one place, but the cream of the crop is without a doubt Mendeley. Mendeley is not just a reference management tool but also a social network, a reference discovery tool and alternative metric to citation and impact factors. Alongside Mendeley are other social reference management tools such as Connotea and CiteULike which allow users to find and share references with others.

• Discussion lists and forums
  These are the oldest but most effective way of having a conversation on the web. Whether they are private or public forums, they bring together like-minded people to discuss a topic or solve a problem. These ways of
we’ve hit information overload, now where can we store it?

The idea that we can get a grip on our digital life is something we should worry less about, as the personal data pile is not going to get smaller. Our photos, status updates, bookmarks, music, documents, videos and miscellaneous files are unlikely to decrease in time unless we turn off our relationship with the web and get a job drystone walling. What we should be concerned with is the issue of keeping what really matters safe, the video of your child’s first steps, your insurance documents, the literature search for your Masters dissertation. We need to become comfortable with the notion that everything comes to an end and that we will have to move from one service to another and that the data we love most goes with us. The Guardian Tech Weekly Podcast recently covered the cheery topic of what happens to our content when we die. The chances are that, like the majority of your physical possessions, it will probably mean little to your family, whilst to you its significance may become clear too late.

Useful resources:
- Micro audio blogging tool: http://audioboo.fm/
- Social reference manager: www.citeulike.org/
- Social bookmarking: www.delicious.com/
- Automated content creator: https://ifttt.com/
- RSS feed aggregator: www.google.com/reader/
- Social reference manager: www.mendeley.com/
- Personalised dashboard/start page: www.netvibes.com/en
- Personalised newspaper/magazine: http://paper.li/ personalise a newspaper/magazine
- http://zite.com/ personalise a newspaper/magazine

Digital death:
- Digital Death Day: http://digitaldeathday.com/

communicating have diversified in recent years onto platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, but are no less useful. Professional and academic social networks such as LinkedIn and ResearchGate are great locations to have discussions and to follow hot topics. These are places to ask questions and find answers, a way to tap into the knowledge of the crowd. I use many of the aforementioned networks not to communicate but to stay abreast of my interests and others similar to mine.

- Personalised dashboards
  iGoogle, Yahoo Pipes and Netvibes are without doubt the three main exponents of personalised dashboards or start pages. The allow users to pull in a wide variety of content including RSS feeds, videos, audio and calendars through the use of widgets. In effect they are personal or public-facing multi-contextual versions of RSS aggregators. iGoogle is being ‘retired’ in late 2013 and another player, Pageflakes, has been under-developed in recent years and now appears to have gone all together, leaving Netvibes the potential market leader in this area.

- Personalised news digests
  Taking a leaf out of RSS feed aggregators and personal start pages who were the forerunners of personalised news services post Web 2.0, personalised news sites are designed more to work on mobile devices and interact with your social feeds such as Twitter. They automatically pull in content they think you will be interested in, based on set parameters such as what you already read or topics and people you follow. Zite and Paper.li are two of the best tools for creating your own personal daily newspaper or magazine.

- Social Media
  There is not much that can be said that has not already about Twitter. Some argue that it makes the problem of information overload greater, in that the sheer volume of Tweets makes it hard to find relevant content. For some it can be quite overwhelming, whilst others employ tools like Tweetdeck and Hootsuite to better manage the wealth of content passing by them. If you attend a library or information conference in the next year I strongly suggest you set up a Twitter account to follow the conference hashtag, you will be very surprised by what you read. Facebook continues to lead the way, but Google+ is gaining momentum thanks to the wealth of other tools it provides free of charge to users.
Creating a digital archive of the Rothschild Reserves

Adam Cormack explains the history of The Wildlife Trusts and its development. 100 years ago, in May 1912, the banker and naturalist Charles Rothschild founded the ‘Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves’, later to become The Wildlife Trusts. Rothschild’s new organisation was formed in reaction to what he saw as the widespread destruction of Britain’s wild places, as the country industrialised and land management intensified.

What marked Rothschild’s vision out as something new and special was his focus on protecting places for wildlife. Until then conservation had focused almost exclusively on protecting species from persecution or over-zealous collectors. Rothschild saw that to preserve the country’s wildlife, the places it lived in needed to be safeguarded: the woods, fens, meadows and heaths that were vanishing from the landscape of Britain.

The Society’s initial aim was to create a list of Britain’s finest wildlife sites for potential purchase as protected nature reserves. Three years of information gathering followed, the first-ever national survey of wildlife sites, in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Rothschild and his colleagues were looking for the ‘breeding-places of scarce creatures’, the ‘localities of scarce plants’ and areas of ‘geological interest’. By 1915 they had compiled a list of 284 sites ‘worthy of preservation’, known today as ‘the Rothschild Reserves’.

Many of the sites on Rothschild’s list will be familiar to naturalists today: the groves of wild box trees on Box Hill in Surrey; the Farne Islands off the coast of Northumberland; Woodwalton Fen near Peterborough (bought by Rothschild in 1910 and one of the UK’s oldest nature reserves); the seabird island of Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth; Ben

preserving Britain’s finest wildlife sites as protected nature reserves
Lawers in Scotland, renowned for its rare alpine wildflowers; the shingle coastline at Dungeness in Kent; and the archipelago of St Kilda far out in the north west Atlantic.

For each of the 284 sites there were papers, maps and correspondence between Rothschild and landowners and land agents as the Society sought to acquire or safeguard the sites somehow. The documents relating to each of the sites were kept in blue linen envelopes (belonging to the Rothschild bank) and stored in a large wooden filing box. The documents have remained stored in this way for almost a century, occasionally moving offices and once or twice being unearthed by writers working on books or research projects.

This year Rothschild’s Society — now known as The Wildlife Trusts — has been celebrating its centenary, marking 100 years of Rothschild’s vision for protecting places for wildlife. As part of our work to commemorate the organisation’s early work we wanted to give greater public access to the archive by digitising it and making it available to a wider audience. Although detail is patchy on some of the sites, this is still one of the UK’s best records of the state of British nature in the early twentieth century, and a valuable benchmark to measure progress in nature conservation.

Digitisation on a small, charity budget
First we arranged for a company to scan the several thousand paper documents. Once this was complete and the digital files had been returned to us we considered our options for publishing them online. We could add them to pages on our website as a bottom-of-the-page attachment or as a hyperlink with a right click PDF download. But after 100 years locked away we wanted to make more of the materials and ensure they really saw the light of the day, a link on a webpage didn’t really do them justice.

We looked at several companies offering digital self-publishing services and eventually decided to use a company called issuu. We then used simple PDF creation software to generate PDFs for each of the sites, giving them a generic cover design to create some uniformity and visual consistency.

We uploaded the PDFs to issuu whose software then created PDF flipbooks for each site that we could embed on our website. The end result was a slick-looking but very cheap way of presenting the archive documents on our website, making them easy to read and also making it easy for us to share them with third parties via the embed codes provided by issuu.

We’ve already had several enquiries from researchers and students and it’s great to know that all that work undertaken a hundred years ago is now just a click or two away for anyone who is interested.

The Society published Rothschild’s list of sites in 1915 and handed this over to the government. However, it wasn’t until 1949 that the Government introduced legislation for protecting wildlife sites. Although some sites have been lost, around three quarters of the ‘Rothschild Reserves’ sites are protected for nature today — a remarkable living legacy.

The archive is available at: http://wildlifetrusts.org/rothschildreserves

More on the history of The Wildlife Trusts is at: http://wildlifetrusts.org/100
Opening up historical collections with Historypin

Rebekkah Abraham, Historypin’s content manager, explains how the resource aims to bring people together all over the world, from across families, communities and different generations, to see & share their history in a new way.

Everyone has history to share, some of it stretching back over decades, passed down and added to over many generations. Some of it saved up in dusty boxes of old photos under the bed. Some of it in piles of Betamax tapes and audio cassette recordings. Lots of it buried in memories and old stories. On top of this, there are millions of archives around the world with incredible collections of local and national history. Historypin sets out to make all this invaluable material the subject of mass-participation — to allow millions of people to see the world through the amazing lens it provides.

The main hub of the project is www.historypin.com which allows users to upload photos, videos, audio recordings, and stories and pin them to a particular date and time on the Historypin map of the world. Street level images and videos can be also be overlaid onto Google Maps Street View for a fascinating and nostalgic then-and-now juxtaposition. Content can be curated into Collections and strung together into Tours, creating fresh interpretations and new narratives.

Through the free smartphone app (available for iPhone and Android devices), you can become immersed in the story of your current location, submit a photo or view Tours and Collections on the go. With the Augmented Reality feature you can view historical photos layered over the current street scene and take a Historypin Repeat: a photo of the contemporary scene that matches the historical photograph.

Historypin has been created by We Are What We Do, a not-for-profit organisation that puts things into the world that will benefit communities and societies and we strongly believe that history has a unique power to do this. We have seen again and again what can be achieved when people come together around the history of their streets and we want to multiply all that everywhere.

So far 200,000 pieces of content have been pinned by individuals, community groups and historical organisations from across the globe. Over 500 historical organisations are using Historypin to map, share and encourage participation with their content, from local history groups through to national collections. This mashup of archival and personal content creates an exciting tapestry of photos and stories to explore. Many archival images have been enriched by personal stories. One photo pinned by a newspaper archive that shows the arrest of anti-Vietnam War protestors had this personal account added by Barbara Roberts: “I was there. Why is there no mention of the number of demonstrators who were injured? I was kicked and beaten by the police. My clothes were torn, and I was bleeding from my head. The violence stopped after I heard a policeman shout: ‘My God, it’s a woman you’re beating.’”

Through Local Projects we take Historypin directly into neighbourhoods and communities. Last year we ran Pinning Reading’s History which invited everyone in the town of Reading, UK to dig out and pin their photographs and stories. The hub of the project was an interactive exhibition
at Reading Museum which provided a drop-in space for people to come and pin their history and explore what had been shared by others. A team of volunteers and champions took the project out into the town, running activities and events in schools, care homes and community centres to discover unknown photos and capture untold stories. Over 4,000 pieces of content were uploaded and the project had a real impact on many of the participants: “I feel as though I’ve learnt so much more about Reading. I’ve lived here all my life but having used Historypin I feel more connected with the place and the people.”

The inspiration for Historypin is the rich potential of personal and local history to start conversations and build stronger communities, so we love hearing about the ways that people have integrated Historypin into their own programmes. Teachers, community groups and historical organisations have been using Historypin in creative and innovative ways with their local communities. Skipton Library, Yorkshire, UK and West Hartford Library, Connecticut, USA both run regular Historypinning workshops, inviting locals to bring in their photographs to be scanned and pinned.

Over 200,000 pieces of content have been pinned so far and over 500 historical associations are using the resource whilst a project in Reading resulted in 4,000 pieces of content being uploaded.

Other historical organisations have incorporated Historypin into their public history events and digital projects. As part of the Auckland Heritage Festival, Auckland Libraries created a Tour to transport people to travel back to 1912 to walk in the footsteps of Sir John Logan, the ‘father of Auckland’. Over in Arkansas, USA the History Centre pinned 100 photos and audio clips as part of the centenary celebrations for Winthrop Rockefeller, Governor of Arkansas. Using the Historypin embed tool they embedded their mapped content, Tours and Collections into their own website so the content could be explored in the context of their wider centenary programme.

Over the next year we’ll be developing more new tools that enable people to piece together the histories of their area. In particular we will be piloting crowdsourcing tools that enable Historypinners to collaborate to solve the many mysteries buried in a photo and identify the who, what, where and when of historical content. These tools will offer exciting opportunities for individual and institutional collections to be enriched with valuable location, date and contextual data that possibly only people with local or specialist knowledge can contribute. With more ways to contribute and participate, Historypin will continue to be a space where diverse audiences can collaborate to share, explore and create histories of their neighbourhoods.

To get started sharing your collections and stories, visit www.historypin.com.

For more information about Historypin and working with us, contact Rebekkah Abraham: rebekkah.abraham@wearewhatwedo.org
A new role for academic librarians? Research Data Management

Andrew Cox (pictured), Eddy Verbaan and Barbara Sen, of the University of Sheffield’s iSchool explain the role of librarians in Research Data Management and how a new JISC-funded project aims to support librarians to understand their potential RDM role and how to upskill in this area.

Introduction

The rise of e-resources has, in the eyes of some, posed profound questions about the role of physical libraries and of librarians. But we are a resourceful crowd who are good at working together as a profession to reinvent our role in new circumstances. Some old forms of library work may be in decline in a digital world, but there are other areas of challenge where our professional knowledge, such as of principles of information organisation, collection management and information literacy, are needed more than ever. One newly-recognised problem where librarians’ professional expertise is needed is in Research Data Management (RDM).

What is RDM?

RDM has been defined as “the organisation of data, from its entry to the research cycle through to the dissemination and archiving of valuable results” (Whyte & Tedds, 2011). In the research process, academic researchers collect or create data, be that questionnaire responses, interview transcripts, audio files, experimental data, field measurements or data from simulations. Data is very different in different fields and specialities. Often researchers would not even use the term, for example, historians talk about ‘sources’.

Yet what is common is that often researchers are not consciously managing this material, and thereby they risk data loss, privacy threats and loss of impact. Because data is so diverse, so the issues are complex. What data management is and what constitutes best practice is specific to particular research areas. The case for RDM will also be different in different contexts. Yet the scale of the problem is growing and there is growing pressure on universities to improve the situation.
Why is RDM important now?

RDM is now being recognised as a major issue for all researchers in universities, as a result of a number of interconnected changes. E-science, and e-research across all academic disciplines, now generates huge amounts of data. Much e-research is based on large scale collaborations of investigators distributed around the world. They are often using shared tools and repositories, in the Cloud, perhaps. The sheer amount of data can be staggering. Yet much data is also actually quite ‘fragile’ in the sense that without appropriate metadata it could be hard to locate and reuse and without preservation strategy unique data could be lost.

Recognising this, nearly all the funders of research in the UK, including the Funding Councils and the Wellcome Trust now mandate that every project they fund has a robust approach to research data management. The funders’ common principles on data policy set out a shared vision. Just as the open access movement has pressed for sharing of research results, similar arguments are being made for open sharing of data created by publically funded projects. Some publishers also require the data on which research findings are based to be published. In response many institutions are also defining RDM policies for their own researchers. Thus, there is increasing pressure on researchers to manage their data at a policy level.

The direct benefits of RDM to researchers are also an important context. Managing the continued accessibility, integrity and quality of data, is key to the validity and reproducibility of researchers’ work. Researchers are also likely to be attracted to the potential increased impact their research might gain as a result of sharing their data more openly. Yet this implies more consideration of data management and planning from the very beginning of a project. Risks posed by loss of data, privacy or security issues are also an incentive for much more careful data management.

These factors combined mean that in the future all researchers in universities will need to think much more carefully about managing the data they create in research, ideally by careful planning even before they start to actually collect data.

What roles might librarians take on in RDM?

The library has a potential role in contributing to the support infrastructure in which RDM can be improved. LIS services around the world are currently trying to understand how they can best support researchers to follow good RDM practices (Corrall, 2012; Lewis, 2010; Lyon, 2012). What will be involved will vary between institutions, but a number of roles are emerging, such as influencing policy, teaching students and researchers about best practice in managing data, offering expert advice and building local catalogues or repositories for data. It is likely to be a highly collaborative activity, working closely with individual researchers and with other support services, such as the Research Office or computing services.

RDMRose

The RDMRose project is one JISC-funded initiative which aims to directly support librarians to understand their potential role and upskill themselves. RDMRose is a collaborative project between the Information School at the University of Sheffield and the libraries of the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York. These academic libraries are already working together on a number of collaborative initiatives, for example, sharing White Rose Research Online as a joint institutional repository.

One of the outputs of the RDMRose project will be an Open Educational Resource for self-directed continuing professional development for any information professional, especially liaison librarians. Any information professional will be able to access the resource on the web. They will be able to work through all the learning materials systematically or they can follow themes that relate to their current role. They will also be able to study the module through the Information School as a part-time student or on a full-time Masters course. The material will be available to other LIS educators and trainers under a Creative Commons Share Alike licence.

Learning outcomes from RDMRose are that participants will be able to:

1. Explain the diverse nature of research across academic disciplines and specialities and discuss different conceptions of research data
2. Analyse the context in which research data management has become an issue
3. Explore the role of support services, including libraries, in RDM
4. Reflect for themselves as individuals, and for information professionals in general, the role and priority of supporting research data management
5. Explain and apply the key concepts of research data management and data curation to real world case studies and professional practice
6. Know how to keep knowledge up-to-date

A first version of this material will be issued in January 2013.

Andrew Cox can be contacted on: a.m.cox@sheffield.ac.uk
Project website: www.sheffield.ac.uk/is/research/projects/rdmrose
The Digital Curation Centre offers a plethora of reports and tools to help researchers understand the issues www.dcc.ac.uk/
JISC are also doing much through their Managing Research Data programme to chart this new territory. www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/mrd.aspx

References

Available online: www.dcc.ac.uk/webfn_send/487
The hidden eyes and ears keeping exhibits alive

Visitors to cultural venues are enjoying a richer experience than ever before thanks to the evolution of some truly incredible multimedia technology. What they probably don’t realise is that, behind the scenes, a hidden array of engineering wizardry is also working constantly on a background role that is vitally important, but often overlooked.

Maintaining the good condition of exhibits is not a glamorous task, but is an essential one, and technology is playing a growing role in safeguarding the integrity of valuable items for current and future generations. Playing a key role is wireless monitoring technology which gives the managers of museums and galleries eyes and ears where previously they would have none.

This allows them to keep a close check on the unseen threats that can damage valuable assets. Elements as seemingly harmless as dust and carbon dioxide in the air can slowly and stealthily cause material deterioration, as can a number of barely-visible insect pests. With this level of monitoring in place, those responsible for valuable collections can identify the onset of issues and put in place the correct protective measures.

Dust, for example, is a bigger threat than it might seem. To a large extent, dust is inevitable and impossible to prevent. The daily footfall of visitors to any exhibition inevitably brings dirt, which transforms into dust. Not only is dust and dirt unsightly, but when it accumulates it can lead to a buildup of damaging materials that can lead to scratches, erosion, staining and can also attract insect pests. Similarly, cleaning too often can cause surfaces to erode. Finding that fine line between cleaning too much and not cleaning enough is a huge challenge faced by curators.

The Dust Busters

In response to this challenge, The IMC Group recently launched a new device known as the Hanwell DustBug, following research in conjunction with the University of East Anglia, the National Trust, English Heritage and Historic Royal Palaces. It was designed to monitor the amount of dust in a particular area, and provide curators, exhibition managers and preservation officers with vital data to support decisions on dusting patterns.

Placed on a flat surface facing upwards, the DustBug’s glass-fronted sensor gathers and measures the dust that is naturally falling and displays its real-time reading on a small numeric screen. It can also be easily integrated into a broader environmental monitoring system so that dust is monitored in addition to other parameters such as temperature and humidity.

Another microscopic danger is that of insects, which can be a result of dust accumulation or moulds generated by...
Features

Wireless technology helps curators and conservators

High humidity. Anobium Punctatum (‘woodworm’), Carpet Beetle Larvae, Silverfish and the Clothes Moth have all been responsible for damage to furniture, textiles and other valuables during the last 100 years within UK museums.

These pests have previously been difficult to control, with museums and galleries forced to spend large sums to bring in pest control companies. This is not only an expensive option, but the remedial treatments can leave residues or harmful gases on important items.

The problem itself is nothing new. What is new is the ability of curators to take action at an early stage. One of the most effective solutions is to place items in purpose-built containers which hold oxygen scavenger sachets to reduce the level of oxygen inside the container, killing all insect pests. This is monitored by a device that detects oxygen levels within the space and alerts users via an indicator when the level drops below 0.1 percent or rises above 0.5 percent assisting with confirmation of treatment success.

Logging temperature changes in London

The Museum of London uses Hanwell’s RadioLog software within its building to keep track of changes in temperature and humidity which could impact upon the condition of exhibits. Conservator Adrian Doyle, of the Museum of London, says, “The Museum of London has introduced an integrated pest management (IPM) risk zones concept which uses electronic colour-coded gallery and store-floor plans mapped and stamped with IPM risk zones and insect trap location symbols. These have been incorporated into the Hanwell environmental data management system and, together with a colour-coded trapping spreadsheet, make it easy to relate the environmental data to pest risk, which has helped determine the appropriate level of response to infestation or environmental problems.”

Top notch air quality for the National Trust

Air quality was a key factor in a recent project that Hanwell carried out in partnership with the National Trust, which routinely monitors temperature and humidity in showroom and storage areas at more than 100 properties as part of its preventative conservation practice.

The most common application has been the development of conservation heating — which is monitored and controlled centrally to optimise environmental conditions — as well as improving energy efficiency.

Wireless technology has the potential to transform our ability to gather data from diverse sources and locations. By overcoming the need for vast numbers of fixed cables, the scope of measurement is expanding further and wider than ever before. Careful monitoring can have financial advantages and energy use has been identified as a major area of interest.

Monitoring energy in Manchester

Manchester Art Gallery recently embarked on a monitoring programme to assess energy usage. With only fiscal sub-metering available, it was clear that the gallery’s directors required a more detailed analysis. The objectives were to provide baseline data to support a funding application for a new low-energy lighting system, recover costs for various events and activities, and reduce overall running costs by monitoring the burden of equipment that maintained strict environmental conditions throughout the building 24 hours a day.

The DustBug provides curators, exhibition managers & preservation officers with vital data to support decisions on dusting patterns.
Following the simple installation of a wireless energy monitoring system, the gallery was able to recover the full costs of commercial activities outside of normal hours. With an average of 90 events per year, this equated to approximately 440 hours, or about 10 percent of annual average opening hours. The data was also used to help set fees as part of the catering contract tender process, to identify areas of waste and inefficiency, to inform good practice, to support a strategy of investment in the building’s infrastructure of machinery and equipment and to enhance the gallery’s reputation as an environmentally-responsible operation.

Choosing a matchless monitoring system
Unfortunately, not all wireless monitoring was created equally and there is a lot of inferior technology, leading many to dismiss wireless monitoring in general as a fad that can’t be trusted to do its job.

The biggest cause of failure is frequency. In the field of wireless monitoring, a lot of companies have seized upon the 2.4GHz network as the best channel. After all, it’s the international standard adopted by the computer industry worldwide, and it tends to be the cheapest option. But it has critical limitations. Although it is perfectly suited to handling high-speed data, it has a low range, and that is where problems arise. Higher frequencies have shorter wavelengths and the result is poorer propagation through a building.

Not all wireless monitoring was created equally... check the channel, range covered, and stats available from your smart meter

In a large building, the distance that data can travel — between rooms, departments and floors — becomes a crucial factor. Some incredibly innovative solutions have been developed in the UK to overcome the issue of limited range. Rather than being restricted to 100m (line of sight), it is possible to send data over astonishing distances of up to 3,500m (line of sight). The only way of determining this is to ask your chosen suppliers to undertake a like-for-like demonstration.

Another common misconception is the difference between automatic meter reading (AMR), which is typically provided by what are known as smart meters, and energy monitoring. The first gives you an overall meter reading, which is fine as a general indicator, but limited in terms of real usefulness. With constant energy monitoring, by contrast, you can build up a much more detailed picture by finding out exactly where the electricity is going — whether it’s air-conditioning, heating, lighting, power sockets or IT servers. Working from that level of data, you can make much more informed decisions about energy management or reduction of usage, which can have very important financial implications.

With tailored monitoring solutions in place, galleries and museums can place a ring of scrutiny around all corners of the institution, from the building itself at the broadest level to the smallest exhibits within it.

www.the-imcgroup.com
Share an image online in less than 30 secs...

Snaggy is a free service that allows you to paste images straight to the web. It really is simple.

For instance, the steps below show what you need to do to capture a screenshot of your desktop and share it with a friend (or the public):

1. Capture your screen with your keyboard’s Print Screen [PrtScn] key
2. Visit http://snag.gy and use Ctrl key plus V key to paste your image into the link on screen

It’s that simple!
You can also use snaggy’s simple editor to crop and annotate your image. You can paste selections from your favorite image editor or paste local files and images from websites into snaggy. There are lots of other ways to do this but I haven’t seen many as simple.

http://snag.gy/

Print-friendly online disposable event flyers

Tackk.com is a neat idea which is founded on the idea of fliers and, in the online world, web content that expires. You can create a very simple online print-friendly display for an event coming up, for example.

You simply visit the site, fill in the main title and sub-title. Next you can add a photo and edit the main text beneath the photo. You can also use the colour palette editor to vary the font colours or choose additional features. If you want your flyer to stay up longer than Tackk’s predetermined date, sign up (free) to choose an expiry date.

Ideas could include selling your old computer monitor, your ‘big’ birthday bash or your wedding. Perhaps you’re in a band and wish to advertise your band’s upcoming gig. You can ‘Tackk’ about anything. You control the look and feel of your Tackk, who to share it with, and even how long it lives. It’s easy to share the URL of your Tackk with one click sharing with key social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest. So what are you waiting for? You can sign up for a free account and customise your URLS, and set expiry dates on the pages too.

http://tackk.com

Create beautiful online tutorials: ShowMe

ShowMe allows you to record voice-over whiteboard tutorials and share them online. It’s a radically intuitive app or download that anyone will find extremely easy to use.

You can begin recording your ShowMe as soon as you open the app. There’s no need to navigate around complicated menus. Just drop images from your photo library to write over or around them and easily switch between drawing and erasing (or pausing and playing) to make your ShowMe flow from concept to concept. You can make it as long or as short as it needs to be and record as many tutorials as you want. Once you’ve finished recording, upload your ShowMe to share with the community (or keep it private if you prefer).

There are a variety of uses for an app like this. For instance, you can easily explain a range of topics from maths to chemistry, music theory to basket weaving, or attach a personal message to any travel photos you want to share, or even grade student work with commentary explaining the reasoning behind their performance. To see examples of tutorials that other people have created or to search for inspiration, visit the website.

www.showme.com
Participate in remote group meetings on your mobile device

Who wouldn’t like the flexibility of being able to attend an online meeting from their mobile device? Well, now you can with the join.me mobile viewer. This mobile app for Android allows you to view someone’s screen and collaborate in real-time. Whilst it’s optimised for Android, they make versions for PCs, Macs, and iPhones/iPads as well.

It’s not difficult to use. Start by downloading the app, install and then check to see whether you have a mobile or WiFi connection. Then direct your colleagues to https://join.me to start a meeting, web conference or adhoc collaboration. They click the big “share” button to begin broadcasting their screen. It generates a secure nine-digit meeting code. You type that into the join.me app and if everything goes OK, you will all be on the same page, even if you are on the other side of the world.

As they strive to make it simple to share your screen with others, the user interface for join.me is minimal, relegated to a single toolbar. Here you can click on the ‘phone icon to get a free conference number to share, use the chat bubble to bring up the chat window or use the broadcast tower to pause or resume screensharing. You can also get a list of who’s in the meeting and share control with one of the viewers. Oh, and did I mention that it is also 100 percent free for the basic version? This includes internet calling, screen sharing, chat and sending files. The pro (chargeable) version naturally includes more features along with the opportunity to try it free for 14 days.

Visit the website: https://join.me/

Download the app here: www.appbrain.com/app/join-me-viewer/com.logmein.joinme

There are a number of videos about join.me on YouTube, including the hilarious Bad Meeting #42: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhlIKABO6x0&feature=share&list=UUpFctPRvIT8Sm9A6mszK68nw

Protect yourself from web invaders

Hotspot Shield is a free privacy, security and anonymous web access tool which aims to ensure safe, private web browsing and disruption of censorship of blocked content. It has achieved over 75 million downloads to date. Hotspot Shield lets you access the information you want — anonymously. You can access blocked sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Skype in countries where the internet is censored.

You can also access US sites such as Netflix or Hulu from outside the USA. The UK version, Expat Shield, allows you to access UK sites when abroad, such as BBC iPlayer or 4oD. I can vouch that this does work as I tried it some time ago whilst travelling.

Hotspot Shield also offers WiFi and anti-malware protection to keep hackers from stealing your personal information while you are browsing the internet via public WiFi hotspots. A powerful feature is the ability to browse the internet privately and anonymously; it doesn’t collect any information on your personal identity.

They also offer an ad-free Elite version at a nominal monthly or yearly fee, which also has additional malware protection for users from over three million known and suspected web domains including malware, illegal or phishing, infected and spam sites and content farms.

Hotspot Shield and Expat Shield are available as free or Elite premium versions for Android, iOS, Mac and PC. Operating Systems which are supported include Windows XP, Windows 2000, Windows Vista, Windows 7, Mac OS 10x.

www.hotspotshield.com
www.expatshield.com

Kevin Curran is Senior Lecturer in Computer Science, University of Ulster

Image: © Corina Ralu | Dreamstime.com
coming soon...

February: focus on cloud computing
May: focus on ebooks and ejournals
August: focus on data security, data management, SaaS
November: focus on elearning

More information on our 2013 Group conference coming soon!

Plus our regular items:
Features
News
Reviews
Technology roundup

2013 pricing

We’re keeping our 2013 prices at the 2012 rate: £70 p.a.

Remember we’re online only from 2012 but institutional users can now request access via IP address/es as well or instead of user name/password, just contact catherine.dhanjal@theansweruk.com to set this up.

Your articles, photographs, reviews, thoughts and suggestions for the journal are always welcome, just contact Catherine Dhanjal on catherine.dhanjal@theansweruk.com or call +44 (0)800 998 7990.

If undelivered please return to MmIT, 103 Bath Road, Willsbridge, Bristol, BS30 6ED, UK