



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

University library

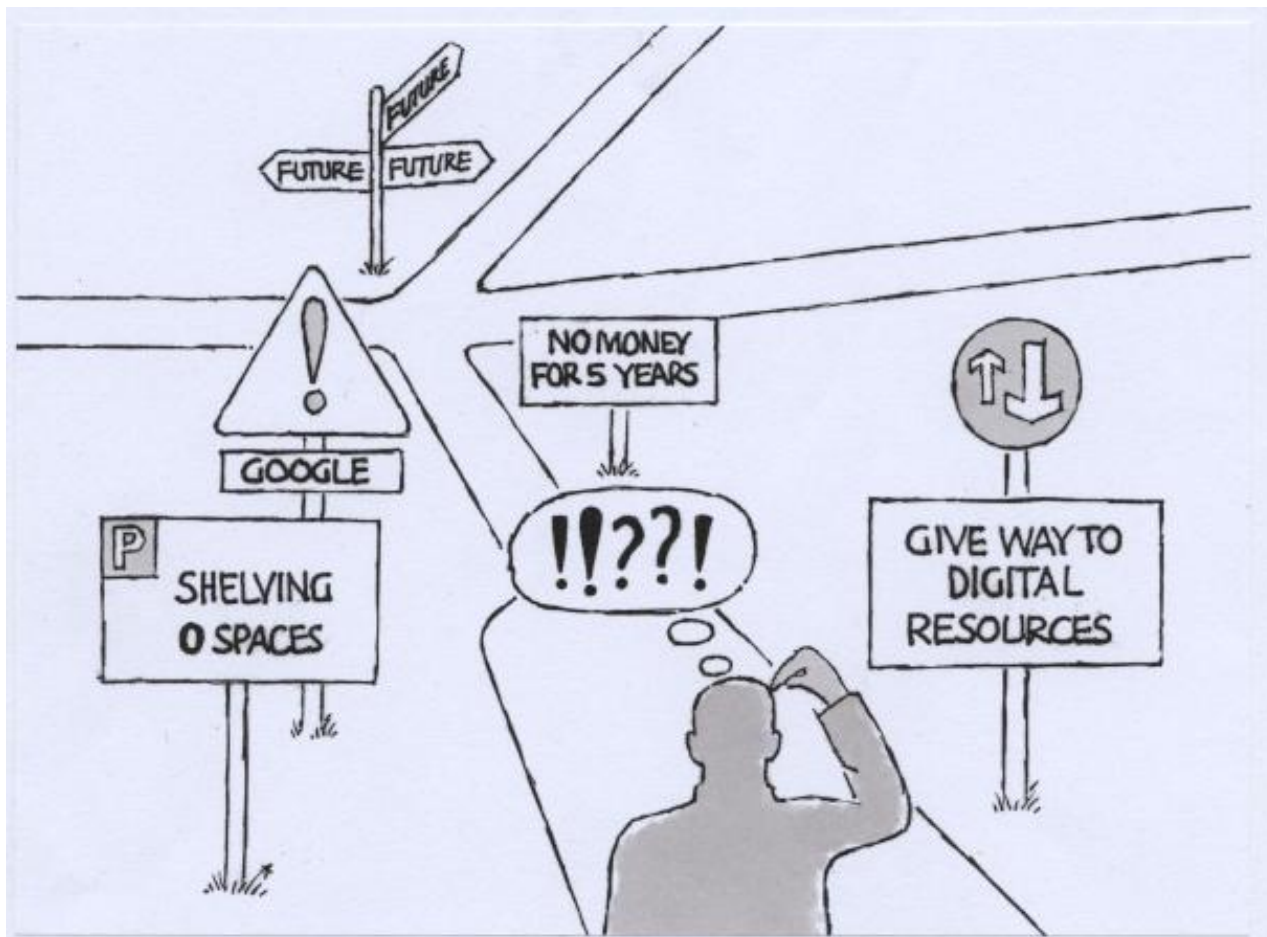
Heritage or Legacy: devising a framework for
strategic management of collections

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Overview

- The big question: what is the future shape of HE libraries?
- Developing an integrated strategy for our collections at Leeds
- Planning for the future – do we dare to share?

What keeps you awake at night?



A bleak future for physical collections?

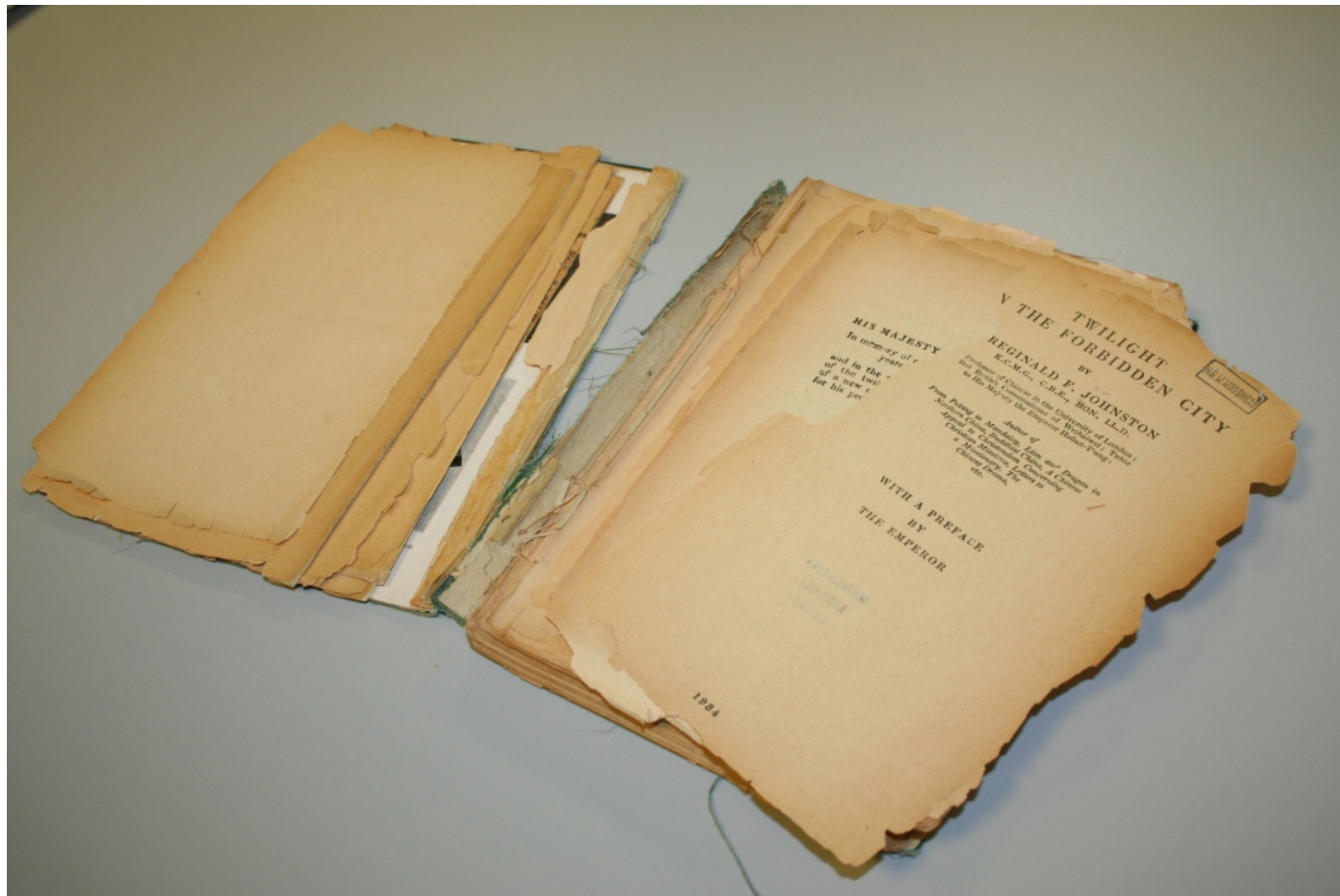
- Acid paper
- Disintegrating bindings
- Inappropriate storage conditions
- Rough handling (and book drops!)
- Leaking roofs

And the scale of the problem?

Leeds did a survey of open access collections:

- At least 55% are printed on acid paper
- 10% at immediate risk, many more slowly crumbling
- Poor quality of manufacture of many foreign publications
- Particularly acute for material published 1850-1970
- Major research collections at risk almost in their entirety

For example



Working towards a solution: Underlying parameters

- Some materials are unique and will attract scholars
- Some collections attract scholars by their breadth and depth
- These collections are not necessarily located within “Special Collections”
- It is important to preserve access to physical originals for some scholarly purposes

Working towards a solution: A new collections policy

- Single framework for all collections, including digital
- Based on collection strengths
- All collections classified into 4 major types
- Each collection groups together materials scattered at various physical locations, both open and closed access and can include digital
- “Heritage & legacy” collections represent the long-term assets which we need to develop and protect

A collection typology

Heritage:

Significant & distinctive collections which continue to be developed

Legacy:

Significant & distinctive collections: historic strengths but no longer added to

Self-renewing:

Supporting current research & teaching

Finite:

No longer relevant - can be considered for withdrawal

Panning for gold: a difficult process!

- Identifying collections which have “national or international significance”
- Weighing up a metrics-based approach vs. pooling our collective knowledge and expertise
- Objectivity in subjectivity
- Subject interactions
- Creation of a database to support ongoing collection management
- Need for more UK-based tools!

Panning for Gold: a metrics approach

- White Rose/BL Collaborative Collection Management Project
 - Seeking ways to help identify low use monographs for disposal
 - Pilot with 13,000 records from the 3 Universities batch searched against BL catalogues and COPAC
 - Results analysed via an access database
 - 60% items held in 8 locations
 - Approx 8% items held in no other locations

Example – Leeds Russian Archive

- Nationally designated collection with particular focus on Russian emigré literature (1920-1945)
- Linked to material in open access collections on:
 - 20th century Russian literature
 - 20th century Russian history
 - History and theology of the Russian Orthodox Church
 - Russian art
 - Russian theatre

Working towards a solution: Revitalised collection care

- New policy and strategic plan for collection care
- Integrated with other policies into a broad strategic vision for our future
- Identifying major points of interaction with current activities and planning
- Exploring challenges of digital preservation and digital surrogacy through JISC Life-Share Project
- Impact on resource allocation
- Engaging all staff to create a shared understanding

Prioritise heritage collections for

- Collection development
- Space allocation (inc. protection in stock editing exercises)
- Storage conditions (wherever possible)
- Conservation treatment
- Digitisation
- Bids for external funding
- Promotional activities

Outstanding questions

- How do we ensure users from Leeds are aware of and can access the material they require if it is not held locally?
- How do we fulfil our obligations to future generations to preserve what we currently hold?
- How do we tackle the brittle paper problem, given its scale (even within our heritage and legacy collections)?
- And all this with reducing budgets!

The challenge for the UK community

- How will we blend physical materials with access to digital surrogates in a single and comprehensive service?
- How will we ensure we don't lose significant materials through local action/inaction?
- How can most libraries continue to build meaningful collections as budgets reduce?
- How can we avoid wasteful duplication between libraries?

The challenge to us!

- Building new and collaborative structures for resource discovery and access
- Serious consideration of the benefits (and necessity!) of concerted action on preserving the print record
- Reassessing how collaborative agreements and facilities can help us meet our mission (to both present and future generations)
- A shared commitment to taking action



Questions?

Thank you