

The “Long Tail” of Born-Digital Publications in the UK: What can we learn from Legal Deposit Data?

Reference: 2021-CB-LDD

Supervisor (name & role)	Ian Cooke (Head of Contemporary British Publications)
Department & Site	Contemporary British Collections, London (St Pancras) This project could also be undertaken at the Library’s Boston Spa site.
Start date/Timeframe	Anytime from May 2021 onwards, but to be completed by March 2022 (exact start date to be agreed with the supervisor)
Duration	3 months (or part-time equivalent) For a part-time placement, the student would be required to spend a minimum of 2 days/week working on the project.
Suitability for remote working	This placement could be completed entirely remotely. If working remotely, it is expected that the student would have access to a PC and network to allow remote meetings and file sharing.

Context for placement

[Legal Deposit](#) provides the regulation for our collecting of contemporary UK publications, and this lies at the heart of the British Library’s collections. These regulations enable the collection of digital publications, including those published as digital-only. The Library uses a mix of technologies for this, including web archiving.

For small publishers (producing fewer than 50 publications per year) there is a ‘Publisher Submission Portal’, which provides a simple method for the deposit of digital-only works. We have over 1,000 publishers registered to use the portal and approximately 30,000 books deposited.

This placement will investigate the use of the Portal and what the data relating to deposit can tell us about small publishers:

- What types of publication are deposited, and how representative is this of the total digital activity of small publishers?
- How does the use of the Portal relate to the ‘long tail’ of publishing online in the UK?
- How can Portal data be used to help identify publishers either on the live web or through the data we have collected in the UK Web Archive?
- How can findings from data analysis support engagement with publishers, with a particular focus on encouraging deposit from publishers and creators who are less well represented within our legal deposit collections?

Expected tasks and outcomes

The Placement Student will identify a thematic area that they would like to investigate. This might be by broad subject of publisher interest (e.g. UK politics) or by type of publisher (e.g. campaigning organisations). The student will work with colleagues in Contemporary British Publications and Collection Development Implementation to define a method and requirements for data to analyse, and to survey publications on the web and within the UK Web Archive.

We would expect outcomes to include:

- A report on publisher activity using the Portal;
- A report on activity on the UK web, comparing to publications received via the Portal;
- Recommendations for further action, including to support engagement with publishers; and
- Blog posts on the project and progress

Reports should include anonymised data, and will be presented to the Collections Development and Acquisitions group representing all six UK Legal Deposit Libraries. We would welcome other suggested outputs from students interested in this placement, particularly where these may support engagement with publishers, authors and creators.

Training and development opportunities

All placement students are welcome to access the Library's offer of workshops, talks and training. For further details please refer to the [Application Guidelines on the British Library website](#).

In addition, this placement project will offer the following:

- Experience in the development and implementation of policy at scale within the context of a national library. The implementation and review of Non-Print Legal Deposit in the UK is a very large undertaking, requiring decision-making across Library teams related to curatorial, collection management and technology infrastructure development. This placement will provide an opportunity for a student to apply analytical skills in a focused project that directly impacts on policy development.
- An opportunity to participate in team meetings and contribute to the activities of the Contemporary British Publications team as a whole.
- An opportunity to work with colleagues in Collection Development Implementation. Depending on timing of the placement, the student may also be able to meet colleagues in related roles at other UK Legal Deposit Libraries.
- An opportunity to either develop or use existing skills in data analysis

Required knowledge and skills

Please ensure that you are aware of the general expectations for all applicants, as detailed in the [Application Guidelines on the British Library website](#).

For this specific project, the following additional criteria apply:

- The student should have good experience with using Excel to analyse data. It is expected that the analysis will be using Excel, but we are interested in applications that suggest the use of other tools, as long as project outputs can be interpreted using Excel.
- This placement does not require formal training in statistical methods or tools and methodologies for quantitative analysis, although both would be an advantage.
- The student should have a strong interest in an area of UK publishing that will form the basis of a case study for the project.

Application deadline: 5pm on Friday **18 December 2020**

Further information on eligibility, conditions and how to apply is available on the British Library website: <https://www.bl.uk/news/2020/october/phd-placement-adverts-2020>