

## Contextual Wrappers 2: University Museum & User Surveys Report:

### Introduction

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

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

### Respondents:

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

### Collections Records:

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

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

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

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### Item/Object Records:

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

### Digital Images and other media:

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

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

### Controlled Vocabularies:

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

## Contextual Wrappers 2: University Museum & User Surveys Report:

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

### Aggregating and Opening Data

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

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

### University Museum Users and University Museum search-service audience

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

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

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

The features that were indicated as most essential were:

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

The features that were indicated as most desirable were:

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

## **Contextual Wrappers 2: University Museum & User Surveys Report:**

- Expanding results to items/collections outside Higher Education

The features that were indicated as mostly not needed were:

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

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

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

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

### Features for a UK University Museum search-service:

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

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

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

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

## Contextual Wrappers 2: University Museum & User Surveys Report:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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