GLAM · PEAK

Digital Access to Collections
Evidence Base

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www.glampeak.org.au
www.digitalcollections.org.au

Contents

Introduction

This document serves as the evidence base for the findings of the *Digital Access to Collections Stage 1 project report* and *Draft national framework for digital access to Australia's collections.* It should be read in conjunction with these two documents.

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Case studies

Case study 1: Dolord Mindi at Mowanjum Aboriginal Art and Cultural Centre, Western Australia

www.mowanjumarts.com

Summary

This is a strong example of how support from a large organisation (the State Library of Western Australia) can assist local people (Mowanjum Community) with their project to deliver culturally appropriate digital access to important collections.

Background

The Mowanjum Aboriginal Art and Cultural Centre (MAACC) is a creative hub and Dolord Mindi a keeping place for the Worrorra, Ngarinyin and Wunambal tribes, who make up the Mowanjum Community some 10 km outside Derby, Western Australia. MAACC and Dolord Mindi service the people of the vast geographic area at the top end of Western Australia.

These three language groups are united by their belief in the Wandjina as a sacred spiritual force and the creators of the land. They are the custodians of Wandjina law and iconography and continue to paint the Wandjina image to share their culture, knowledge and understanding of their way of life. The community uses contemporary materials such as acrylics and print-making as well as traditional boab nut carving and new digital technologies.

Mowanjum Aboriginal Art and Cultural Centre

MAACC hosts exhibitions, workshops and community projects, as well as the annual Mowanjum Festival, one of Australia's longest running Indigenous cultural festivals. It is an independent and non-profit company, 100 % owned by the community and governed by a committee of artists. Proceeds of the sale of artworks are returned to the artists and their community organisation.

Dolord Mindi at MAACC

Dolord Mindi is home to the Mowanjum Community Collection and Media Space. This space allows the community to explore and deepen cultural knowledge through digital media platforms. The project aims to preserve and collect archival records, while training staff to create new digital media stories.

In this space, community members can engage with an evolving collection via a community controlled database called Storylines — part of the State Library of Western Australia statewide Storylines Project. Storylines has the potential to reach communities connected to the Worrorra, Ngarinyin and Wunambal language groups with satellite internet access.

The aims of MAACC and Dolord Mindi are to:

- Balance the provision of access to the collection and the preservation of the items in the collections;

- Maintain the physical, historical, and aesthetic integrity of the items in the collection;

- Aim for standards, both practical and ethical, current in the practice of conservation in Australia; and

- Apply resources efficiently and effectively to the preservation of the collection through trained staff and outside advice when needed.

- Expand public education spaces to support learning for the community and visitors.

Employment and skills

MAACC

The Mowanjum cultural advisors are elders, community leaders and artists who value the art centre's potential to make positive changes in the lives of community members. They are the keepers of ancient knowledge, mentors, teachers and friends. They guide Mowanjum program development as well as processes for managing community

Left to right: Maitland Ngerdu,
Digital Collections Officer and Sherika Nulgit,
Digital Collections Officer at Dolord Mindi,
Mowanjum Aboriginal Art and Cultural Centre
(Wandjina image pictured at right).

Photo credit: John Petersen

collections and their continued support is of the greatest importance and is the reason why MAACC projects continue to grow stronger every year.

Every year, Mowanjum facilitates a professional development workshop with a visiting trainer or with Mowanjum Community elders. These workshops are aimed at extending the skills of Mowanjum staff and engaging the broader Kimberley arts and museum community.

MAACC has a growing number of trainee Digital Collections Officer positions allocated to Mowanjum Community members. All trainees are excellent at community liaison, connecting families with relevant archive content, and as Storylines administrators and advocates in the community.

Volunteering at Mowanjum offers a two way learning exchange or partnership between volunteers, Mowanjum arts workers, artists and community members.

The Western Australian Storylines Project

The Storylines Project started in 2013. A central archive contains photographs, oral histories, maps, ephemera, film and stories from the State Library of Western Australia heritage collections. The archive is being used to return material to Aboriginal families and community archives and in turn to revitalise the State Library's archives. In addition to this central archive, the State Library is working with remote communities to build and support local digital keeping places as safe repositories for Aboriginal cultural items and stories.

The Storylines Project at Mowanjum Community was the first of these community archives. MAACC modifies the State Library's central archive model according to its own protocols and the requirements of language groups and knowledge holders and to meet its own community's needs.

Storylines is an online platform that allows for access to be restricted. The majority of material in the central archive can be universally accessed where appropriate. There are different layers of access to material including community, staff, artist, local area member levels of access. It is often used by community members through local wifi hotspots. People use their own mobile phones and devices. Reconditioned laptops with wifi access are available to community members at low cost. There is relatively inexpensive local internet access. To help spread the word, team members take laptops into communities to introduce themselves and their work and demonstrate Storylines and show how it benefits the community.

Storylines allows digitised images of objects, people, places, stories, plants, animals and technology to be tagged and linked to create data knowledge profiles which reflect the many languages, stories and perspectives of Aboriginal Western Australia. The Storylines Project is managed by the State Library under guidance from an Aboriginal Reference Group.

Dolord Mindi

Dolord Mindi is supported by a team of Digital Collection Trainees recruited from Mowanjum community. Training in collection management addresses community unemployment rates, creates culturally relevant jobs and long-term employment opportunities for community members.

Trainees are also able to extend their experience though professional development workshops. These are held locally as well as interstate through art centre, museum and gallery networks. In 2015 Digital Collection Trainee Sherika Nulgit was a recipient of the 2016 National Film and Sound Archive Indigenous Fellowship.

Collections

Mowanjum Community Collection

The Mowanjum Community Collection contains cultural materials, artworks, photographs and recordings that are important to the community and preserve important elements of its heritage.

The collection includes bark paintings, boab nuts, boomerangs, coolamons, didgeridoos, digging sticks, dilly bags, flakes, maps, ochres, shields, spears, spear heads, spear throwers, stone tools, strings, fibres, hair belts, pearl ornaments and other items. The objects were donated by people with personal collections. Most common donators were residences with some family connection to mission workers, health care facilities and old Mowanjum.

Artefacts from the Kimberley are represented in various collections worldwide, however the items held at Mowanjum are especially significant because of their continuing links to country, as well as to the people who created and used them. Their descendants, the Mowanjum community and people living in related homelands are the current custodians of this culture.

Dolord Mindi Storylines

This collection features photographs, videos, sound, documents and object information. Dolord Mindi coordinates diverse recording projects that document the stories of people and places of cultural significance for families and language groups. Recordings are stored in the archive and are to be accessed by the community.

Storylines delivers an interactive platform that supports the maintenance of culture, language and law, as well as intergenerational teaching and learning. Having a community controlled database

allows Aboriginal families and communities to gain control of their own history, and assists in the return of photos and other information directly back into the community collection. In this way, the project also provides pathways for further repatriation from private collectors and major collecting institutions around the world.

An historic collection of rock art site photographs by German explorers in the 1920s and 30s has been imported into Storylines assisting current site identification and preservation. Traditional dances and songs have also been revived through reference to historic photos, recordings and videos.

Software

Dolord Mindi aims to maintain Mowanjum Community heritage through providing facilities and the Storylines digital database for community members to engage with the collection of archived cultural material, supporting intergenerational knowledge transfer as well as cultural production services and youth engagement programs.

Storylines software is used because of its simple interface and functionality, which has been designed with Aboriginal cultural protocols in mind. The Mowanjum Community's version of Storylines is independent of the State Library of Western Australia's version to support privacy and the platform can only be accessed with a password. The digital collection is not available for general public access because the collection belongs to the community and is culturally sensitive. Cultural material of restricted access including men's business and women's business is included in the archive but not in the database.

Process

The Digital Collection Officers scan and upload images of privately owned items, including photographs, brought to the Centre by community members. The officers tag the items so that they are linked to places and profiles of people. There are currently 3,245 profiles of people in the database which include information on family trees and language group. A profile contains a person's name, DOB, place of birth and siblings, mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, partner, totems, Dreaming, and if they have passed away Date of Death. Images of deceased people are restricted for a time determined by family members whether by culture or family preference.

The images are uploaded as JPEGs (and can be printed off for community members). Information, including the stories of elders about items is recorded into a spreadsheet before being entered into Storylines. Artefacts are accessioned into the keeping place and also photographed and documented for Storylines with advice and knowledge from a Council of Advisors comprising elders.

Some 90% of photographs are digitised and catalogued, 30% of objects and 90% of tape (but only 5% of the tape is uploaded to Storylines). Excel spreadsheets are entered into Storylines. For objects or materials record sheets are also generated containing all the metadata. This sheet is stored in a folder so the team have a paper and digital version on site.

Challenges

Staffing

There are challenges in terms of the team's capacity to make items digitally accessible. The collection is continually growing and the team is still uploading a backlog of data.

It also takes time to disseminate information about the project and to build the trusted reciprocal relationships with extended and geographically dispersed community members necessary for them to access Storylines and also contribute items to it.

There is an insufficient number of capable and trained staff to support the ongoing development of trainees.

Funding

While the State Library has donated the software and annual licence for Storylines, it cannot provide other operational funding. The project is fully set up with equipment but struggles to secure a sustainable model because of a year by year reliance on competitive grant programs, which are generally for project funding rather than for operations.

In particular, funding for the Collections and Media Space Manager position remains insecure. Arts workers are modestly paid through the National Jobs Program. The Dambimagarri Aboriginal Corporations has previously pledged matched funding and Lotterywest has funded the project.

"Storylines software is used because of its simple interface and functionality, which has been designed with Aboriginal cultural protocols in mind."

Connectivity

The team have cable internet and wifi. The connection is good but during the wet season there are often power outages.

Software

As a pilot study, the team is pushing the boundaries of what the software is capable of doing. They discuss and workshop their needs and ideas with staff at the State Library of Western Australia who then communicate with the *Keeping Culture* software developers. Functions for further development include mapping components and the use of local graphics. The team is working on the latter with Mowanjum artists.

Privacy and security

Storylines manages sensitive personal and cultural information well. It has a 'restrict button' to manage and vary access levels to particular material. The project ensures respect for sensitivities associated with images and profiles.

There is a fear of people from outside the three language groups using information for unauthorised professional research that does not benefit the groups. However, Storylines has a log in entry for the people from the three language groups only and MAACC works closely with the State Library about security concerns.

The team has established cultural protocols which are held in the platform's metadata and has determined with the Council of Advisors that some material will not be included in the database, while other material has restricted access for cultural reasons or family preference.

Opportunities

Storylines

Access to technical support from the State Library of Western Australia has been extremely helpful and Storylines is robust and suitably flexible to accommodate the needs and interests of its user group. It is user friendly for people who have basic computer literacy.

There are multiple ways to connect related stories and express them through different kinds of audio-visual materials, for example, a story may be told through a dance, song, totem, book, audio voice recording, photograph. Within Storylines, these different mediums can all be connected through the tagging function and levels of appropriate access can be determined by the community.

Usage

The team has recently created a private Storylines visitor access point in MAACC.

Positive and trusted relationships with community members and word of mouth are the key to encouraging community access and also sourcing additional material. Taking staff and laptops out on the road and into communities where the collections and local knowledge are located is a significant driver of a project that operates out of the Centre but is in reality networked through communities across a vast geographic area, not only electronically but also through personal relationships.

The material held within Storylines has demonstrated its capacity to revive cultural practices and traditions within the community.

Employment and skills

Storylines trains and employs people and develops community capacity and cultural development both in maintaining cultural traditions and nurturing contemporary artists.

Conclusion

Access to technical support from the State Library of Western Australia has been extremely helpful and Storylines is robust and suitably flexible to accommodate the needs and interests of its user group.

This program has increased employment and skills opportunities, and placed the management of culturally sensitive material in the hands of the community to whom it belongs.

Recurrent funding is required to sustain the program, including funding for the project manager's position, maintaining the steering committee and continuing to engage elders and compensate them for their time and knowledge.

Sources

- Katie Breckon, Collections and Media Space Manager, Maitland Ngerdu, Digital Collections Officer and Sherika Nulgit, Digital Collections Officer at Mowanjum Art and Cultural Centre
- Dr Inge Kral, Evaluation of the Wurnannangga Storylines Project (Mowanjum), Report for State Library of Western Australia (August 2015)
- Mowanjum Art and Cultural Centre fact sheet
- State Library of Western Australia staff

Case study 2: University of Tasmania Library of Special and Rare Collections

www.utas.edu.au/library/research/special-and-rare-collections

Summary

This university library holds a significant collection of special and rare items, which it aims to make digitally accessible for researchers now and in the future. While it has gone some way to achieving this, it needs greater capacity, expert advice about best practice, and refinements to its technology in order to achieve this goal. These issues are being address and the library is poised to realise many of its ambitions.

Background

The primary aim of the University of Tasmania's Special and Rare Collections is to make its significant collections discoverable and accessible to all current researchers, while preserving these collections for all future researchers.

The collections are managed and housed in the Morris Miller Library on the Sandy Bay campus. The Special and Rare Collections is a set of legacy collections that has been donated and acquired over the years since the University's inception in 1890. In 2015 this collection was confirmed as nationally significant by a National Library of Australia significance assessment. The collection continues to grow by donations, but currently space is a constraint.

The overall management of these collections is the responsibility of a Senior Librarian (Collections), with a part-time Librarian and part-time Library Officer. The library aims to have volunteers to support the maintenance of the collections and is planning to start the volunteer program with tasks related to digitisation and transcribing handwritten documents.

Community

The Special and Rare Collections are open to the public and the library provides a reference enquiry service. Most rare materials are available for viewing and consultation in the secure Reading Room. Some materials require access permission prior to viewing. Increasingly there are more online visitors — over 100,000 views on the Library Open Repository were recorded from January to June 2016, from locations all over the world.

The changing needs of researchers has presented challenges with the expectation of researchers to be able to access quality content online thus the aim to make the Collections discoverable and accessible to researchers of all types, both globally and locally; and to preserve the collections.

Community engagement and partnerships

Special and Rare Collections staff have identified the need to establish stronger networks and more of a community of practice around digitisation and preservation. Special and Rare Collections staff can seek advice from the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office (TAHO), part of LINC Tasmania, by referring questions to contacts and other networks, but there is no formal direction or policy. The library can seek information and ideas through networks with other university libraries and archives. Again, this relies on contacts rather than organised forums.

A community of practice has been established through project funding to investigate discovery platforms and select and implement an archival description and content management system which would position the Library to make globally discoverable its Special and Rare Collections, which represent unique cultural and historical primary research material.

The Library has been working with local cultural institutions, TAHO and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) to investigate systems and to consider the possibility of interoperability of systems between institutions in Tasmania. TMAG has recently engaged Gaia Resources, to work with them on The Tasmanian Collection — the Pilot Project, which will look at how to create a common, aggregated digital entry to Tasmania's cultural collections, and how this can encourage cultural tourism. The project will produce pilot web resource, as well as investigate how to move this into the future as a sustainable and useful resource for all museums and heritage collections across Tasmania.

Collection

The collection includes rare books and early manuscripts; journals; maps; university records of a non-business nature; and private papers and materials including diaries, letters, photographs, paintings and other collectable ephemera relating to Tasmania's cultural and social history. The Royal Society of Tasmania Library Collection is housed as part of a longstanding agreement.

The collection has more than 8,500 rare books and journal and houses the largest Quaker collection of books and private papers in the southern hemisphere. There are 500 private deposits including letters, diaries, papers, photographs. A significant donation of over 100,000 digital images detailing many aspects of Tasmania's cultural history has recently been accepted.

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The Christ College Library. 'Christ College was founded by Lord and Lady Franklin in 1846 in Tasmania to provide a university style education'.

Photo credit: Heather Excell

> "Special and Rare Collections staff have identified the need to establish stronger networks and more of a community of practice around digitisation and preservation."

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Photo credit: Heather Excell

Digital access

Discoverability and access to these materials is provided via various platforms and formats:

- Some of the material from the collections has been digitised and can be viewed in the Library Open Repository (ePrints) http://eprints.utas.edu.au/view/collections/ Many of these items have been digitised in response to queries from researchers.

- Rare books and journals are catalogued via the traditional online library catalogue http://millennium.lib.utas.edu.au/

- The private deposits have been described, to differing levels, on paper indexes and these have been digitised — allowing discoverability by online researchers, for example http://eprints.utas.edu.au/11177/1/rs_25_Diaries_and_Letters_of_G_T_W_B_Boyes_1820-1853.pdf

The most significant parts of the collection are described in the manner outlined above but much more detailed descriptions of the private deposits would serve researchers well. Various minor collections have print inventories. It is estimated that 30%–59% of the collection is currently described or catalogued.

Challenges

Resourcing to prioritise and plan the digitisation and preservation of the various collections, plus provision of description and metadata to make content discoverable are difficult to sustain. Added to this there is a need for digital collections to be curated and researched, to turn content into meaningful packages, exhibitions and narratives for users. Special and Rare Collections staff regularly apply for and have received grants to assist with various projects, but in the long term this is no substitute for recurrent operational funding.

Advice on best management practice for the full range of the library collections is difficult to identify, as many institutions are dealing with, for example, different platforms and systems.

The library wants to provide a high quality user experiences but has found limitations in available software and systems. It is also experiencing issues in managing copyright, particularly with unpublished content such as personal diaries and letters. Investigating copyright is time consuming and often leads to inconclusive resolutions.

The library makes available high quality images to reduce handling and staff time, but is aware that many institutions sell high quality images. Clarity is needed around the display of low and high resolution images. Resourcing to set this up would be ideal.
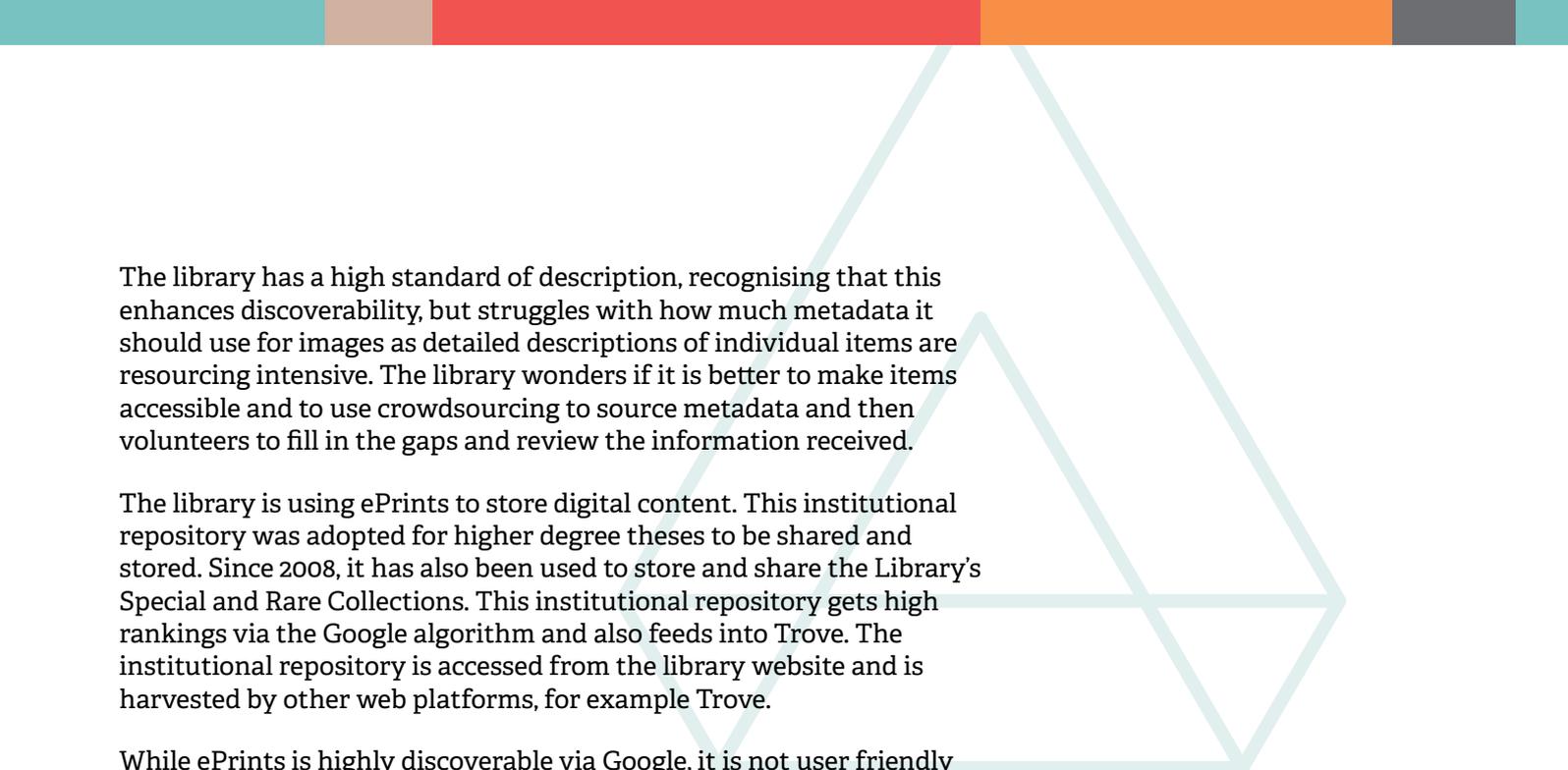
The library has a high standard of description, recognising that this enhances discoverability, but struggles with how much metadata it should use for images as detailed descriptions of individual items are resourcing intensive. The library wonders if it is better to make items accessible and to use crowdsourcing to source metadata and then volunteers to fill in the gaps and review the information received.

The library is using ePrints to store digital content. This institutional repository was adopted for higher degree theses to be shared and stored. Since 2008, it has also been used to store and share the Library's Special and Rare Collections. This institutional repository gets high rankings via the Google algorithm and also feeds into Trove. The institutional repository is accessed from the library website and is harvested by other web platforms, for example Trove.

While ePrints is highly discoverable via Google, it is not user friendly because each item file needs to be opened individually. There is no browsing capacity to scroll through images. There are also limits with the way metadata is displayed and limits to the overall structure of the database. As referred to previously, the Library is currently investigating platforms to address the user access issue and also to maximise the discoverability of its collections.

To help establish access to the collection the library has spoken to various vendors, providers and companies including: Gaia Resources, Artefactual (who supply AtoM, and Archivematica) Gale, Innovative, Omeka, eHive, Archive Space and Adlib.

The library is strongly supportive of any integrated national infrastructure initiatives such as Trove, but requires more information about how Trove could potentially reduce duplication of activities.

Opportunities

The library aims to have all its Special and Rare Collections discoverable and accessible online and to the same level of access as if the researcher were to visit the collection in person. It also views digital collections access as having potential to add value where the collection can be researched and navigated by themes and topics, provenance information and linkages to other collections and data. The library would also like to transcribe handwritten text. It aims to have complete metadata to aid discoverability. The Library also sees great opportunities for using digital collection access to enhance and develop its exhibition capacity. It also sees potential for online materials to facilitate a richly layered user experience and assist the preservation of fragile materials where three dimensional objects can be viewed from all angles and with zoom functionality; also where pages can be turned as easily as holding and turning the original copy.

As a result of project funding previously referred to, the Library is currently implementing Artefactual's Access to Memory (AtoM), an open-source archival description and workflow tool; along with Omeka/Ozmeka as a discovery tool overlaying AtoM, as well as investigating a geo-mapping tool. Omeka will have the potential to interoperate with the systems used by other Tasmanian cultural collections to provide a single point of discovery for all.

Conclusion

The library is ambitious and making steady progress in both digitisation and digital access. More resourcing is needed to achieve its ambitions: to make its significant collections discoverable and accessible to all current researchers, while preserving these collections for all future researchers.

The library is poised to realise many of its ambitions with new platforms and software currently being installed, though interoperability of the diverse array of digital platforms is an issue and with the desired functionality of systems not yet developed.

It needs advice on how to prioritise digitisation of its collection and whether it should progress detailed documentation first or simply make the collection accessible and crowd source information.

The library is grappling with issues of copyright and storage of high resolution images.

It supports aggregated databases like Trove and sees digital collections access as a means to provide a high level of researcher access and online experiences that engage with the collection, such as exhibitions and storytelling.

Case study 3: Buderim Pioneer Cottage, Queensland

www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/Experience-Sunshine-Coast/Cultural-Heritage

www.buderim.qld.au/buderims-history/buderim-historical-society/

Buderim Pioneer Cottage

Buderim Pioneer Cottage museum and Sunshine Coast Council

Summary

Buderim Pioneer Cottage's experience shows the positive impact of a high performing council with a focus on cultural heritage and digital access. Strong support from Sunshine Coast Council, the State Library of Queensland and Queensland Museum Network has enabled volunteers to move forward with confidence in terms of collection digitisation and access.

Background

The Buderim and District Historical Society was established in 1966 and operates a community-owned house museum, Buderim Pioneer Cottage, on the Sunshine Coast. The Society documents, records and shares the history of Buderim and the cottage with the community and visitors. It has an active group of more than 25 volunteers who share the role of opening the museum and welcoming visitors.

The museum is part of the region's 16-strong Cultural Heritage Network. It is open six days a week, for four hours per day and is always busy.

Partnerships and support

Sunshine Coast Council (SSC), with an estimated resident population of some 336,000 people, owns and cares for a number of heritage collections, as well as buildings across the region. As well as caring for its own collections, SSC has a six person Cultural Heritage Team (two of whom are funded from the Cultural Heritage Levy), who work with the community, providing workshops, support and training for museum volunteers.

The Cultural Heritage Team is the primary source of advice and support for the museum volunteers. The Cultural Heritage Levy allows the team to create a strong network Cultural Heritage Network for the Sunshine Coast and to back up the advice and support with funds to allow projects to be enacted and goals to be achieved. The process of training, grants and projects that are funded creates an ecology where museum volunteers not only feel educated and empowered to take on museum projects, but also funded and supported by local professional museum staff who are available close at hand.

When seeking advice regarding digitisation of its collection, the museum has built a relationship with the State Library of Queensland due to the workshops provided by the library through council. The President of Buderim Pioneer Cottage cites the social media skills she acquired by doing workshops presented by council in conjunction with the State Library.

The State Library of Queensland Connected Collections approach has seen much support extend out to community museums in this region, via the council staff. Although no State Library staff were interviewed for this project, it is worth noting the efforts made by this initiative of the State Library of Queensland, to see collections across the state connected and digitised for all. http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/qld-history/connected-collection-of-queensland-memory/digitisation-toolkit/queenslands-connected-collections-and-digitisation

In addition, the digitisation toolkit and information made available on the State Library of Queensland website is comprehensive and accessible for anyone who chooses to use it.

The museum also has a good connection with its local Museum Development Officer, one of five employed by Queensland Museum for the Queensland Museum Network.

Collection

The museum has a collection of around 5,000 items, primarily relating to a domestic home environment, and also encompassing archives and paper based materials connected to the history of the area. A majority of the items have been acquired by donation. However, in recent times, the museum group has undertaken strategic collecting, seeking out particular items required for the museum and its presentation.

Process

The collection is almost fully catalogued in an Access database created in-house. Not all objects are photographed. There is a committed three person team dedicated to cataloguing the collection and the museum acquires around 100 objects per annum. They have also discussed deaccession. A previous SCC grant saw a collection documentation manual produced for the museum by a museum consultant.

A portion of the museums' photograph collection is scanned and saved as TIFF files. The museum volunteers were skilled up in this process and the standards they should use, through a workshop provided by SCC. The Council uses for itself, and recommends the use of, State Library of Queensland standards for the digitisation of images.

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Top: Desk and writing materials from the collection of Buderim Pioneer Cottage.

Above: Kitchenalia on display at Buderim Pioneer Cottage.

Buderim Pioneer Cottage museum and Sunshine Coast Council

Digital access

The museum volunteers came to the decision to digitise their collection after attending the workshop provided by Council. There has been concern from one committee member about the sharing of images owned by the museum, however the majority of the group see it as a positive thing and one that promotes the museum and activities to the community and visitors. The President cites one example of a couple who drove out from Brisbane to visit the museum in order to see a bed held in the collection there. They have a similar bed in their home, and were keen to see another.

At this stage digital access is through photographs displayed on the museum website. The sharing of the collection will eventually occur through the Council's Art and Heritage Collection Database and the potential for this database to feed into aggregated platforms will be investigated.

Cultural Heritage Levy

Sunshine Coast Council raises an $8 per ratepayer annual Cultural Heritage Levy, which generates over $1million for cultural heritage provision. The levy aims to:

- Protect cultural places such as buildings and other sites
- Raise peoples' awareness of the value of local heritage
- Celebrate the cultural heritage of the Sunshine Coast.

In 2015–2016 the levy enabled projects such as the Heritage Sector Development Program, the heritage calendar, digital stories and film projects, museum boxes, grants and funding and more. It provided training for museum volunteers in:

- Digitisation
- Metals conservation
- The Australian curriculum and your museum
- Collection management principles
- Development of education programs
- Exhibition development and label making.

A link to the Council's Cultural Heritage Levy Program 2016-2017 is available here:
https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/Experience-Sunshine-Coast/Cultural-Heritage/Heritage-Levy

Opportunities for the broader network

- SCC has already identified significance assessment training as the next stage of assisting community museum volunteers with collection digitisation work. The Council staff has also acknowledged the lack of engagement by community museum volunteers (in general, and not including those at Buderim Pioneer Cottage) with the process of collection digitisation, and they are working to have significant objects held within regional collections digitised, with the consent of the museum, to ensure their longevity.

- There is potential for Council to consider creating a Collection Digitisation Officer traineeship, providing a role dedicated to the digitisation of regional collections, subject to funding available under the Cultural Heritage Levy. A position such as this could be taken up by a museum studies graduate, seeking further sector experience.

- Both the SCC and Buderim Pioneer Cottage could explore the potential to share their collections on national collection sharing platforms, so that a broader audience searching for national collections can identify those held in the Sunshine Coast region.

Conclusion

SCC has demonstrated a unique and firm commitment to both its own heritage collections and community collections across the region, through the $8 annual ratepayer Cultural Heritage Levy. The $1 million generated by this levy, enables a range of support services, funding and programs that have included a focus on the digitisation of collections. A levy of this type is unique in the Australian local government landscape, and SCC is to be applauded for its initiative and commitment to ensuring the sustainability of collections and museums across its region.

The Buderim Pioneer Cottage benefits from SCC's investment in cultural heritage. It is a well organised and engaging museum operated by a group of dedicated volunteers committed to sharing the story of their community and documenting their collection following museum best practice. The commitment to collection management and documentation is admirable and ensures the sustainability and security of the collection for future generations. The digitisation of the collection by cataloguing it into a digital program and holding digital images of the collection is also to be admired. The museum is keen to share their collection with visitors both virtual and real.

The Sunshine Coast region is an admirable example of community museums and local government working together to document and share collections with the wider community, leading to longevity and sustainability of the museums and their collections.

Sunshine Coast Council Digitisation Plan

The Digitisation Plan has seen all Council collections digitised and shared online via the Art and Heritage Collections Database. This database contains the council-owned public art collection, Sunshine Coast Art Collection and the collection of Bankfoot House, a council owned historic house. The database can be viewed here: https://sunshinecoast.spydus.com/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/OPAC/CULTCOLL?HOMEPRMS=CCPARAMS

The commitment to collection digitisation goes beyond council collections, with council supporting the documentation and digitisation of collections from community museums in the region. The regional digitisation project has been offered to 16 volunteer heritage organisations who are members of the Sunshine Coast Cultural Heritage Network as well as the council-run Heritage Library. Seven of the 16 museum groups have had some collection items digitised.

Community museum volunteers are encouraged to digitise their own collections. Support and advice on this process is provided through workshops on collection digitisation (photography and scanning) provided to community museum volunteers as well as a 'digitisation lab' being made available to all, within the facilities of Bankfoot House. Community museum volunteers who wish to digitise their collection items are welcome to use the facilities. Council will also loan out digitisation equipment to volunteers who wish to use the equipment.

Beyond this, SCC is also identifying significant objects within local collections, and borrowing the items, so that they may be digitised, in situations where volunteers have shown little engagement with the process of digitisation. Council has also funded the digitisation of collection items that are beyond the scope of council to digitise, by 'outsourcing' the digitisation of their own collection items and those of community museums who request it.

To date diaries, books, photos and maps have been digitised from Heritage Library, Landsborough Museum, Fairview, Bli Bli on Maroochy Historical Society, Bankfoot House, Buderim Historical Society, Discover Eumundi. Council staff are also working with Peachester History Committee on digitising two other significant local collections.

To date, the independent digitisation of collections by community museum volunteers has been limited, despite the provision of training, support and equipment. Staff at Sunshine Coast Council cite the following as reasons why the local volunteers they work with, have not engaged with the process of digitising their collections.

- Volunteers lack of time and have a high workload managing their respective museums
- Location of equipment and transporting objects/documents for digitisation
- Perceived or real experience using technology
- Trust and ownership of collections affect sharing of precious objects and materials
- Time and expertise collating research about collections and cataloguing onto the database.

Warrnambool & District Historical Society

Left to right: Rosemary Isaac, Secretary; Marita Murphy, Vice-President; Barbara McLeod, Treasurer; Janet Macdonald, President; Glenys Phillpot OAM, past president.

Photo credit: Nola Golding

Case study 4: Warrnambool and District Historical Society Inc, Victoria

www.warrnamboolhistory.org.au

Summary

Warrnambool and District Historical Society Inc (WDHS) is a volunteer-run institution using the Victorian Collections IMS, and progressively making its collection digitally accessible through its own website, Victorian Collections and Trove.

Background

WDHS is an archive and museum. It has no paid staff but an established and dedicated team of 18 volunteers. It has an internet connection, access to smartphones and NBN is soon to arrive. Many computer terminals are evident.

WDHS operates with three main focuses — conservation of collection items, research and education. It has pursued its conservation role by collecting and preserving items of local and broader historical interest. In addition to preserving material culture, it has also sought to preserve local historical knowledge. This goal has seen the WDHS having a research and publication role. It has made substantial progress in making the collection digitally accessible through Victorian Collections, Trove, and on its own website.

Community

Warrnambool City Council is a municipality covering 120sqkm in south-west Victoria. It contains the city of Warrnambool, which has a population of 33,300. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Warrnambool was home to a significant Indigenous population.

Tourism is a major driver of the city's economy. Each year more than 700,000 people visit Warrnambool and it is home to the award-winning Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village and the council-owned and managed Warrnambool Art Gallery.

Community engagement and partnerships

WDHS provides research services for Society members and also members of the public. It supplies information on request to Warrnambool City Council's planning department in relation to heritage issues, street naming and specific projects. It works cooperatively with fellow historical societies in the region, for instance support was given to Port Fairy Historical Society for its *Casino* online exhibition.

WDHS also supports and receives advice from the Cheeseworld Museum, Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village and Warrnambool Art Gallery. It receives professional guidance and technical support from local information technology businesses.

WDHS works closely with the Warrnambool Family History group in shared accommodation. The two incorporated organisations aim to eventually integrate all their records and databases. The WFHG has recently digitised its card file system (30,000 cards). The groups have also integrated their library and are now using a common catalogue. All digital records are on a single server with access to members of both groups.

WDHS is affiliated with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and Museums Australia (Victoria). Both organisations have run regional workshops at WDHS related to digital technology in recent years. The Society is working toward Museums Australia Accreditation and sees value in its experience participating in major online partnership projects like *The ANZAC Story.*

Collection

The WDHS has over 13,000 items in a variety of formats comprising art works (30+); badges, coins and medals (300); dockets (1,320); ledgers, minute books (795); miscellaneous small items (60); original documents (1,250); textiles (350); cards, tickets, letterheads (400); artefacts (1,000+); books (1,400); labels (250); maps (250); photographs (7,000); programs (450) and tourist guides (100). In addition, there is a huge research resources collection, which includes the combined files and library of WDHS and the Warrnambool Family History Group.

Three-quarters of the collection is catalogued and this work is ongoing. The catalogue comprises paper records, card files and computer databases (Access and Excel).

The Society cares for its collections and they are suitably boxed and stored. A climate controlled and secure archive is being established in a separate building to the research centre.

> "The Society finds the Victorian Collections IMS has most of the features they need and more and they aim to use it for the majority of their collections."

Hardware

The Society has an SLR camera with specialist lenses and two A3 scanners.

Software

The Victorian Collections Information Management System (IMS) is used primarily for artefacts and documents.

The reasons the WDHS decided on the Victorian Collections IMS were:

- Access to valuable and fragile items is limited and it helps preservation;
- It is free with no license or potential costs to the Society;
- It is well supported and backed up regularly;
- The Society is offered training through regional workshops that come to them;
- It was offered to the Society at the right time when they were considering how to combine and upgrade databases and further digitise their collections and offer digital access to them;
- Museums Australia (Victoria) workshops and support are offered;
- The platform gives remote or home access for the team and can also be used to answer enquiries;
- It suits the ability and previous experience of volunteers who are mainly seniors; and
- A comprehensive information manual (small Museums Cataloging Manual) was offered.

The Society finds the Victorian Collections IMS has most of the features they need and more and they aim to use it for the majority of their collections. However, it is likely that the photographs database (in Excel) will remain separate, though some images have been catalogued using both systems, and the Society has doubts about the IMS's suitability for its genealogy records. It hopes a future upgrade would allow the tagging of related records and the handling of family history records.

Images are held in JPEG format but increasingly the Society is moving to TIFF. Images are backed up to the Cloud.

Process

WDHS enters information into the Victorian Collections IMS manually to ensure high quality, consistent data entry and the Society does not make entries live until they are fully completed. Each entry takes an estimated 3 hours (45 minutes actual data entry and over two hours of research and compilation). The team described the process as being labour intensive even though the IMS only holds limited information.

Entering items into the Victorian Collections IMS is enabling the Society to review and update all its collection documentation, some of which is held in old databases. The group is aware that the old databases could possibly be converted to Excel spreadsheets and imported straight into the IMS but they have chosen not to do so. They are working towards having the IMS as their primary collections management database.

WDHS currently has over 1,300 items on Victorian Collections, linked to Trove.

Challenges

- WDHS is making great strides with digitisation but there is never enough time available. There is a significant backlog of documentation and cataloguing for acquisitions.

- Initially, the cataloguing team found that there were many steps to get from the Victorian Collections IMS to providing digital collections access via the web. They have worked at streamlining and simplifying the process.

- Not all their collections documentation information and fields can be added to the IMS, which is a simple database mainly developed for objects. The Society retains detailed object files and expressed concern about what happens to the information in the object files in the long term or the information in the old databases which cannot be easily added to the Database. The Society also considers this as reductionist but is pragmatic about the advantages that the Database provides to them.

- The WHDS has concerns about the potential for loss and theft of images on their website and on shared digital platforms.

- The Society finds it difficult to decide the priorities for its website with so much material available. It endeavours to prioritise the most significant items and finds the method in *Significance 2* useful in this process.

Opportunities

- WDHS finds that a strong web presence increases the Society's public profile and interest. When images are posted on Facebook the group notes many comments and a significant amount of community interest.

- Among other things, the WDHS website is used for story-telling (seven stories have been added). The Society also publishes books and booklets which are a lasting saleable item for revenue.

- The Society's website generates many online inquiries. Some are time consuming and out of scope — for example, requests for valuations — others are image purchase requests which produce revenue. There are 111 images on the website out of a total of 5,000+ images. The images on the website are representative of their entire collection and are generally ones which have been popular with the public, have been purchased in the past and therefore have undergone digital enhancement.

- The Society derives income from hourly research fees and image sales, and hopes that greater digital collections access through Victorian Collections and Trove will encourage grants and donations and generate more sales and research revenue.

Conclusion

The WDHS is successfully digitising its collection and making it accessible to researchers. It has embraced the Victorian Collections IMS as a free, well-supported collections management system, and this has prompted the review of documentation and upgrading of legacy databases. A high degree of pride is evident in ensuring that the work the Society enters and publishes online is of a high quality and the process is viewed as an opportunity for a collection documentation 'stock take'.

The Society uses the Victorian Collections platform and Trove to make the collection digitally accessible. The WDHS website remains a separate means to make the knowledge in its collection accessible for digital storytelling.

Digital access is expanding the Society's potential for public engagement and revenue generation.

Case study 5: Sustainable Collections Project, Central West, New South Wales

www.centralnswmuseums.orangemuseum.com.au/
movies/c/

www.millthorpemuseum.com

Golden Memories Museum, Millthorpe

*© Jean Francois Lanzarone, commissioned by
Orange Regional Museum*

Summary

A collaborative local government initiative in the cultural heritage field has provided the Golden Memories Museum with further support in its progress towards digital access for its collection.

Background

After being established in 1964, Millthorpe and District Historical Society opened the Golden Memories Museum (GMM) in 1965. The museum comprises eight buildings including a former school house, Good Templars Hall and a Museum of Rural Technology. It has no paid staff. There is a team of 20 active volunteers as well as others who do 'duty' on the front desk during opening hours. The themes covered include pioneers, social history of the town and advances in rural technology. There is a large collection of vehicles including working examples. GMM is one of the networked museums of the SCP.

Collection

GMM has a collection estimated at between 10 and 20,000 objects, including paper based archives, photographs, social history items and farm machinery. Almost all of the acquisitions were via donation. Approximately 35% of the collection is catalogued on a 'very old' card catalogue system. This was an early attempt to keep track of the collection. There is also an early collection register that gives some insight into the source of items within the collection. Around 70% of the rural technology collection was catalogued into an Excel spreadsheet more recently, and around 80% of the photographic collection has also been catalogued into a spreadsheet.

Software

In the past 15 years, a grant was received to purchase the Mosaic collections management system. Around 200 items were entered into the database, however, the volunteers interviewed advised that a decision had been made not to continue with the system. The reasons given were that it was only a single user license and could only be used on one computer at the museum. The museum's current plans

for cataloguing and collection digitisation require multiple volunteers on several computers at one time, entering data at locations that suit them, into an in house developed system.

"To get the old card catalogue onto the new database, someone can be sitting at the front desk doing their duty, and entering the information in the quiet times," Hayley Lavers, Collections Coordinator.

The museum has developed its own in-house cloud based collection management system, called TangleWeb, which is currently being trialled. The museum volunteers see the benefit of this as being multiple users entering data at one time and controlled in-house. Because it has been designed in house, the system integrates information in a manner that suits the museum volunteers. From trials of the system, they have declared that currently the situation is 'so far, so good'.

Digital access

The general public will be able to access the collections of the museum via a link that will be located on the museum website. The decision to share collection items on the website, will be made on a case by case basis, but there is concern within the organisation about sharing the collection online.

The first stages of collection digitisation will be the card catalogue, however this will not include photographing of the collection items. The museum also has plans to commence photographing and digitising any new acquisitions as they are catalogued. The museum is not using significance as a method for determining which items should be prioritised for digitisation, stating they do not have the time for undertaking significance assessments and writing statements of significance.

Photographs are digitised as requests for copies are made. They are scanned on a privately owned scanner housed at the museum. They are currently being saved as JPEGs at around 600 ppi. The museum does use a metadata system for identifying items in the photographic collection, using terms such as 't' for town and 'rt' for rural technology, when ordering their photographic collections and scanned versions of originals. Other than these two factors of saving JPEGs and categorising image content, there is no identified standard that the museum follows and they 'making it up as we go along'.

The decision to digitise was borne out of a desire to have ease of use of collection records, which currently make it difficult to match paper-based records with items in the collection. The museum chose not to use the eHive system being used by others across the region and those involved in the SCP, because, in their words, it has no category system, requiring extra work on the part of volunteers to make it user friendly.

Sustainable Collections Project

Since 2007, the Sustainable Collections Project (SCP) has been working with museum volunteers to document and interpret collections and stories from over 15 museums located across the region. The SCP operates across three local government areas in the Central West of NSW— Cabonne, Blayney and Orange — which together serve a population of around 57,000 residents. Administered by Orange City Council, each of the three councils contributes $15,000 per year.

The SCP is designed to assist community museums with the documentation, assessment and interpretation of collections and to work with councils to improve the planning and coordination of museums. It recognizes that the heritage collections are important community assets that need better documentation and management to sustain their value and significance into the future. A network of museum volunteers meets regularly to advise on training needs, plan workshops, joint projects and events. These programs strengthen co-operation and raise the profile of museums and villages.

The concept was initiated after an analysis of the region's collections and museums was conducted by museum consultant Kylie Winkworth, as Museum Advisor to the region under the Museum Advisors Program of Museums and Galleries NSW. The program has secured over $600,000 for museum work in the region since its inception in 2007. This includes council contributions, Arts NSW grants and a Regional Partnership with Sydney Living Museums, which has seen $140,000 of collaborative public programming focused on food and its place in our history and relevance to the community as a 'food bowl' region of NSW.

As part of the SCP, consultant Collection Officers have worked with volunteers in community museums to document and better care for their collections. While the new regional museum and current regional gallery collections will be documented via the Vernon collections management system, community museum volunteers are being encouraged to use the eHive cloud based collections management system to document and store their collections. eHive was created by the same company who created Vernon CMS. The decision to use eHive was made because of ease of use and it is free up to a certain number of entries. After that, a collection with up to 20,000 images would be charged in the region of US$400 per annum. Community museum volunteers decide how much, if any, of their collection is shared with the general public, as per the control options offered by the system. It is estimated that around 10% of the collections held by museums participating in the SCP have been catalogued, using this method.

Central NSW Museums is one of the featured 'communities' on the eHive site, with 13 identified community members: https://ehive.com/communities/1083/central-nsw-museums

These museums have shared 55 objects to the site, ranging from paper archives and objects to books and historical artwork. The collections of the network are also shared via a link on the Central NSW Museums website: http://www.centralnswmuseums.orangemuseum.com.au/museums/collections/

The process of cataloguing, digitising and sharing the collections online is an ongoing one, which the Museum Manager and Heritage Coordinator of Orange City Council, Alison Russell, has prioritised for the coming year.

Golden Memories Museum, Millthorpe

© Jean Francois Lanzarone, commissioned by Orange Regional Museum

Challenges

Capacity is an issue and 'not knowing who to ring' for information and support, although through the SCP, the volunteers can swap ideas with other Central NSW museums.

There has been some resistance to sharing the collection online from within the group, as museum volunteers are concerned about the security of the collection once it has online exposure. This issue is compounded by the lack of insurance of the collection, a situation which is common to many community museums. Volunteers are also concerned that if online users have seen all of the collection online, they will not come to Millthorpe to visit the museum.

The museum volunteers have not considered any other sharing platforms, however they do use Trove and were extremely enthusiastic about it as a research tool. They were also impressed with the maps collection at the State Library of NSW, often using them in research.

The greatest challenge facing the museum is the cataloguing and digitisation of a vast number of items across several buildings on their site. This, paired with the significant number of tasks expected of museum volunteers, is a challenge for all community museums and their volunteers. The process of cataloguing must fit in around a range of other museum and fundraising activities.

Opportunities

- With SCP collection officers being re-engaged to catalogue and digitise the collections in the near future, the SCP has a great opportunity to have a thorough understanding of the collections held across the region and demonstrate their importance to the community. A focused approach that sees cataloguers work methodically with museums one on one, should result in complete cataloguing of collections, in the case of some of the smaller museums.

- Sharing these collections online will see greater exposure for the museums from across the museum sector and the wider community.

- The SCP Collections Officers could be adapted to Regional Museum Officers operating out of the newly opened Orange Regional Museum, in the same way that the Museum of the Riverina has a Regional Museum Officer working with community museums across that region of NSW. The increase in Regional Museum Officers across regional NSW and other states (through local government and state government partnership and collaboration) will only serve to strengthen the community museum network, and work towards the sustainability of vulnerable and at risk collections across Australia.

- Golden Memories Museum has the opportunity to maintain and build an even stronger relationship with SCP and remain engaged with the project and its activities. The process of cataloguing the collection and entering it into the new TangleWeb database can be seen as an opportunity to stocktake the collection and to gain a better understanding of what they hold and the significance of their collection. A basic process of identifying significant objects and prioritising these items for cataloguing and digitisation first, would ensure that the most important items held by the museum were documented for future generations and museum volunteers.

- Both the Sustainable Collections Project and Golden Memories Museum could explore the potential to share their collections on national collection sharing platforms so that a broader audience searching for national collections can identify those held in the Central West region.

Conclusion

The Blayney, Cabonne and Orange councils have demonstrated a firm commitment to the digitisation and interpretation of community collections across the region, through their ongoing support of the Sustainable Collections Project. This ongoing commitment will see further collections documented and digitised across the region. With encouragement, this will lead to larger portions of the region's collections being shared with a wider audience.

GMM is about to embark on a very important stage of its collections management. The steps and processes they put in place now will establish long term patterns for the museum's collections and future volunteers. With this mind, the current volunteers acknowledge how important it is that they 'get it right' and be as informed about processes as they possibly can. The museum volunteers are still considering how and if they share their collections online and acknowledge that their view on this may differ from other community museums.

The volunteers of the museum have the capability to engage with the process of digitisation through the support available via the SCP. The funds available to the SCP provide the support that enables collections digitisation projects to be undertaken in the museums across the region in a comprehensive manner.

Case study 6: Murray Bridge Regional Gallery, South Australia

www.murraybridgegallery.com.au

Summary

The Murray Bridge Regional Gallery (MBRG) is a small gallery, with a handful of paid staff and a few volunteers. The collection is being prepared for the web but has yet to become fully digitally accessible.

Background

MBRG is an initiative of the Rural City of Murray Bridge. Established in 2001 by a group of dedicated community members, it is located in the heart of Murray Bridge, at the rear of the Town Hall.

The Gallery features three distinctive exhibition spaces and produces three new exhibitions every six to eight weeks from its permanent collection of over 40 works of art. It also features contemporary local artists, including digital art installations; offers works of art for sale in its shop and runs artists' workshops.

MBRG is staffed by one full-time Director and one full-time Retail Manager. There are two casuals. The Gallery also has six volunteers who assist with the shop and installing exhibitions, and student interns for specific projects. The Director draws interns from students she teaches at University in Adelaide.

Community

Murray Bridge is located 76 kilometres east-southeast of Adelaide. With a population of more than 16,000, Murray Bridge is the fourth most populous city in the state. The city contains a number of heritage-listed sites, including the Murray Bridge Transport Precinct, listed on the South Australian Heritage Register.

Community engagement and partnerships

The Gallery attracts between 12,000 and 14,000 visitors each year and has some 600 followers on Facebook, an Instagram account and communications using Mailchimp. Its website is produced in WordPress and features a rotating slideshow of five works of art from the collection, varied from time to time.

The Gallery is pleased with the support it receives from Regional Galleries South Australia and also networks through Artshub. It is not working in partnership with other galleries, however it has a good working relationship with The Hahndorf Academy, the home of the Heyson Prize, in the Adelaide Hills and its Director Rachel McElwee.

Collection

MBRG has a growing collection of artworks by significant South Australian artists including Franz Kempf, Trevor Nicholls, Pamela Kouwenhoven, Rita Hall and India Flint, along with works by Dennis Nona and Josie Kunoth Apetyarr.

The works are mostly two dimensional paintings and additionally sculpture, textiles and multimedia. The works in the collection are donated and new acquisitions are limited. The Gallery's donors include The ANZ Banking Group Ltd, David Dridan OAM, Dr Ian George, Franz Kempf OAM, the Marshall family and the combined Rotary Clubs of Murray Bridge.

Software

The collection was fully documented on the MOSAIC collection management system at first, but the Gallery has moved across to eHive.

eHive was chosen because it is free and linked to a larger system connected internationally. The Gallery views eHive as reliable, easy to use and intuitive. Importantly, the Gallery knows it would be easy to make the collection accessible on the internet, when they are ready to do so.

Operational and collection management identification photographs are taken at 300 dpi and used at 75–100 dpi for the website.

Challenges

The major challenge for the Gallery with regard to digital access is time and a dependence on volunteer labour for projects in addition to core operations.

Making the collection live on the internet is not yet possible for the following reasons:

- Busy schedule and limited resources;
- The need for a skilled volunteer or intern to undertake the project;

"The collection was fully documented on the MOSAIC collection management system at first, but the Gallery has moved across to eHive."

GLAM Peak Consultant Rebecca Jones (left) with Director, Melinda Rankin at Murray Bridge Regional Gallery

Photo credit: John Petersen

- Council requires a risk assessment which will take some time;

- Potential copyright restrictions to be investigated, including donation agreements by the artists, and the need for low resolution images of the art to deter inappropriate use;

- The need to remove some 40 artworks from frames and mounts to professionally photograph the artworks in high resolution, without glass reflection, and the potential need for an art conservator to avoid damage and remounting the collection;

- Logistics of the working space to take the photographs and arrange lighting during busy scheduling;

- The need for high quality images to reflect the integrity and positive brand of the Gallery and to demonstrate respect for the artists' works; and

- The potential complexity of linking multi-media artwork images to the work of art on the artists' websites through eHive.

Opportunities

The Gallery has ambitions for greater digital access through the internet via its website. It sees benefits for greater digital access and discoverability as including:

- A means to generate greater interest in the works of art in the collection and drive visitor numbers online and to the Gallery; and

- Encouraging artists to exhibit and donate works of art to develop the collection and Gallery's programming.

Conclusion

MBRG is developing a strong profile in South Australia as a regional gallery which is an accessible and welcoming community resource supporting the development of artists and the arts in the region. It has ambitions for digital access, but rather than simply making the collection publicly accessible on eHive, there are still significant steps to achieve this.

Survey results

The survey was made live via Survey Monkey and in hard copy between 23 September and 30 November 2016. During that time, 37 responses were received online.

Summary of findings

The findings have been summarised in the *Digital Access to Collections Stage 1 project report*.

Selected charts

The following charts show that the survey generated responses from a broad spread in terms of geography and collection type, and reflected smaller organisations at different stages of the journey towards digital access.

Figure 1: Location of respondents

Figure 2: Type of collection
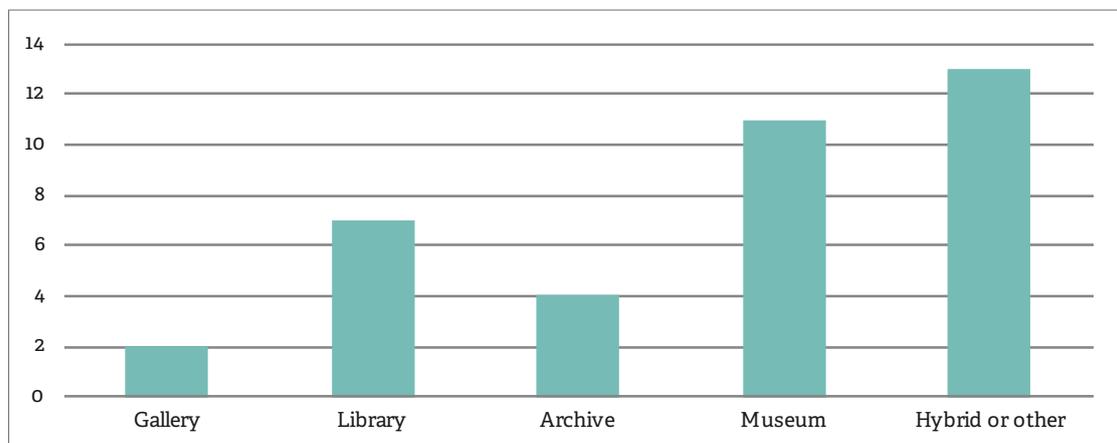
Figure 3: Administering body
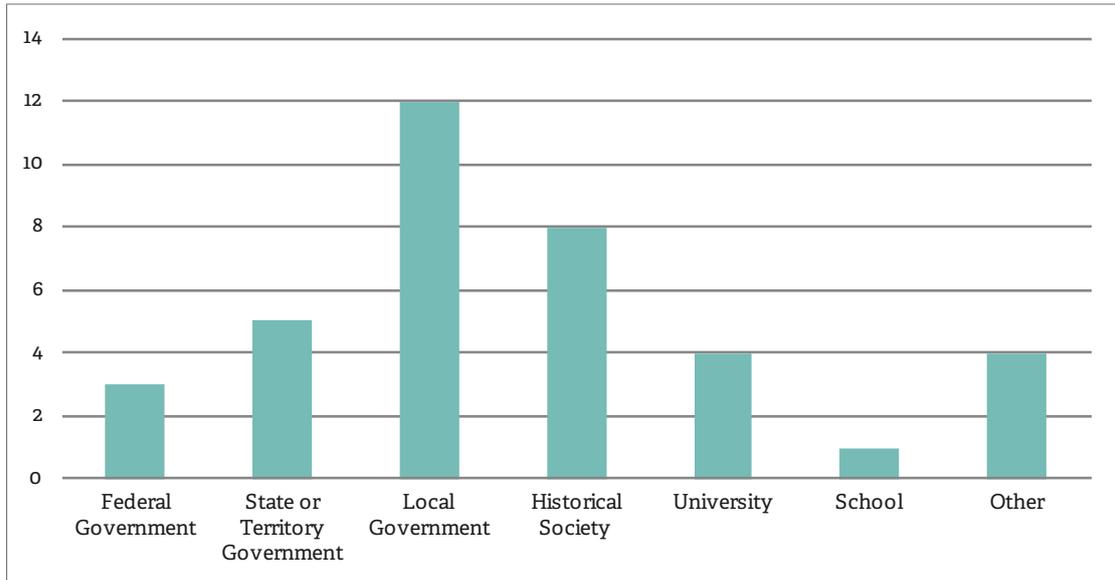
Figure 4: Types of objects or items in the collection
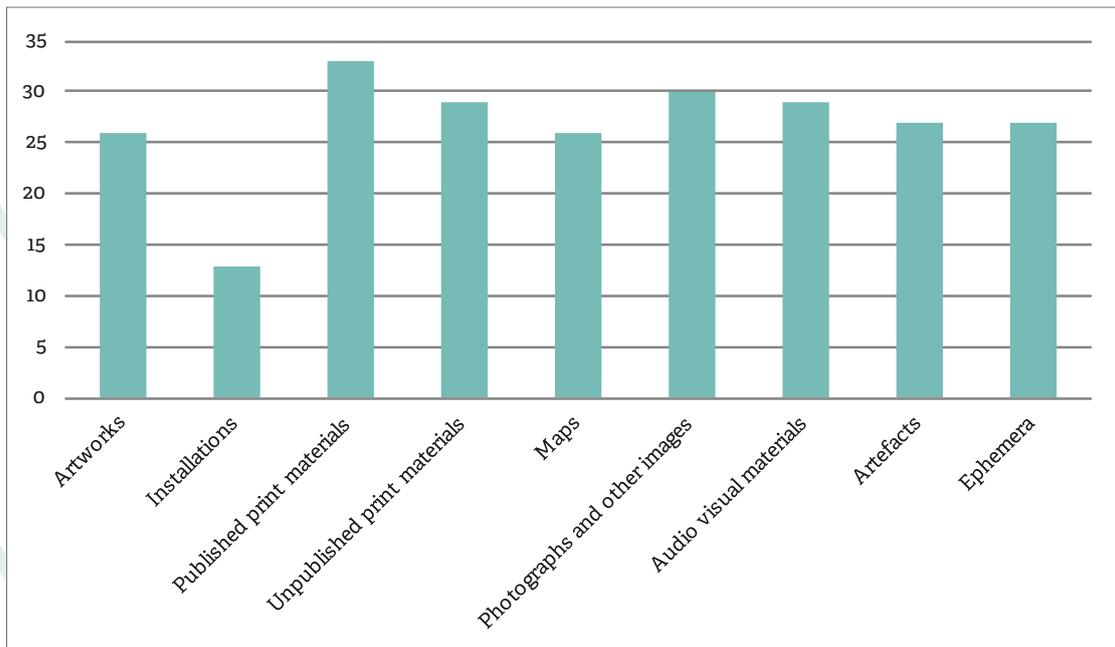
Figure 5: How are most items acquired for the collection?
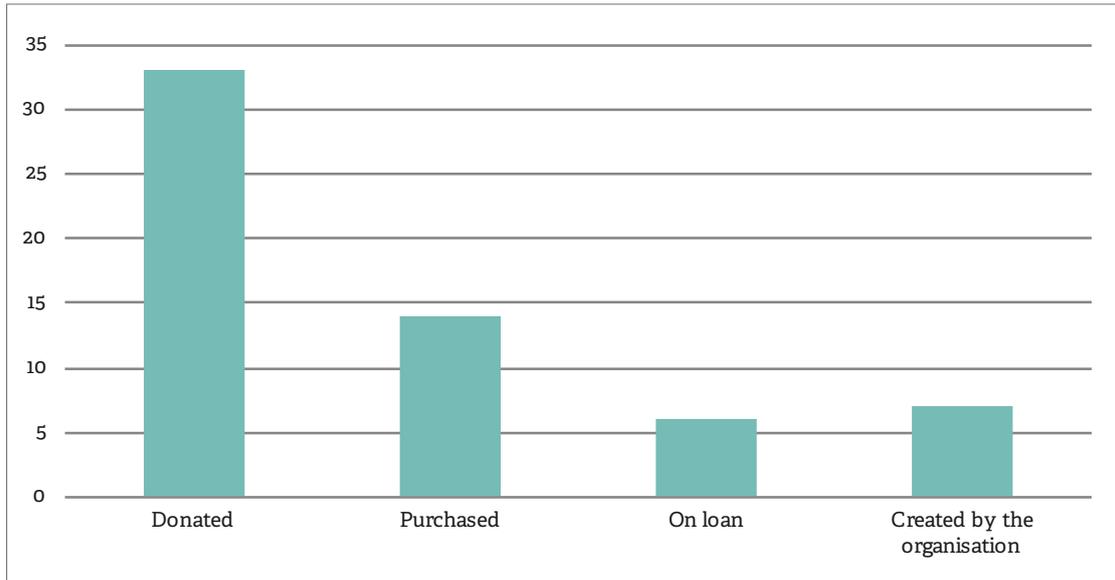

## Figure 6: Is your collection catalogued?
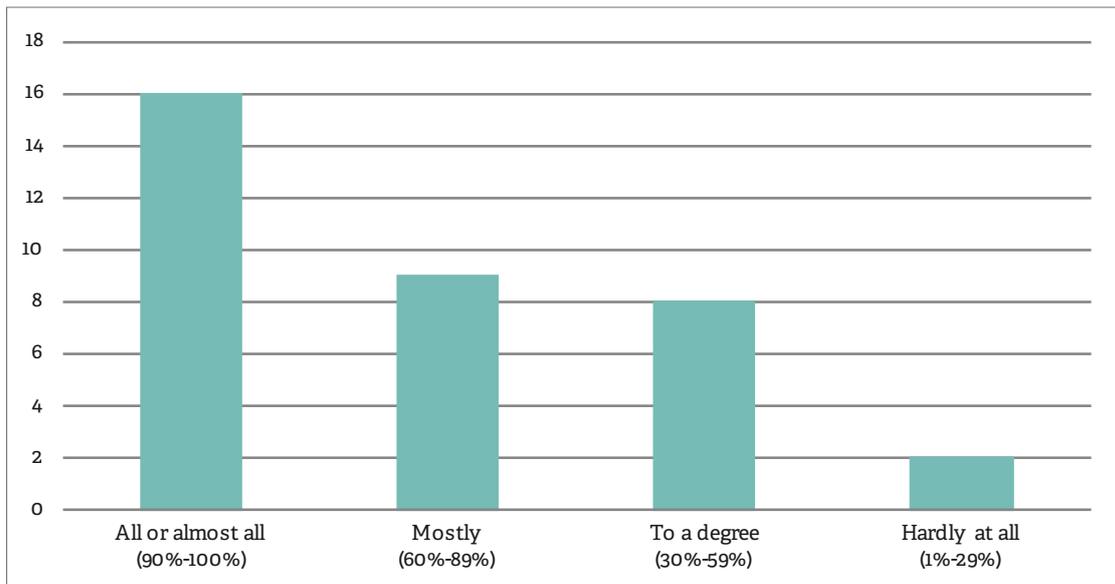
Figure 7: In what format is the collection catalogued?
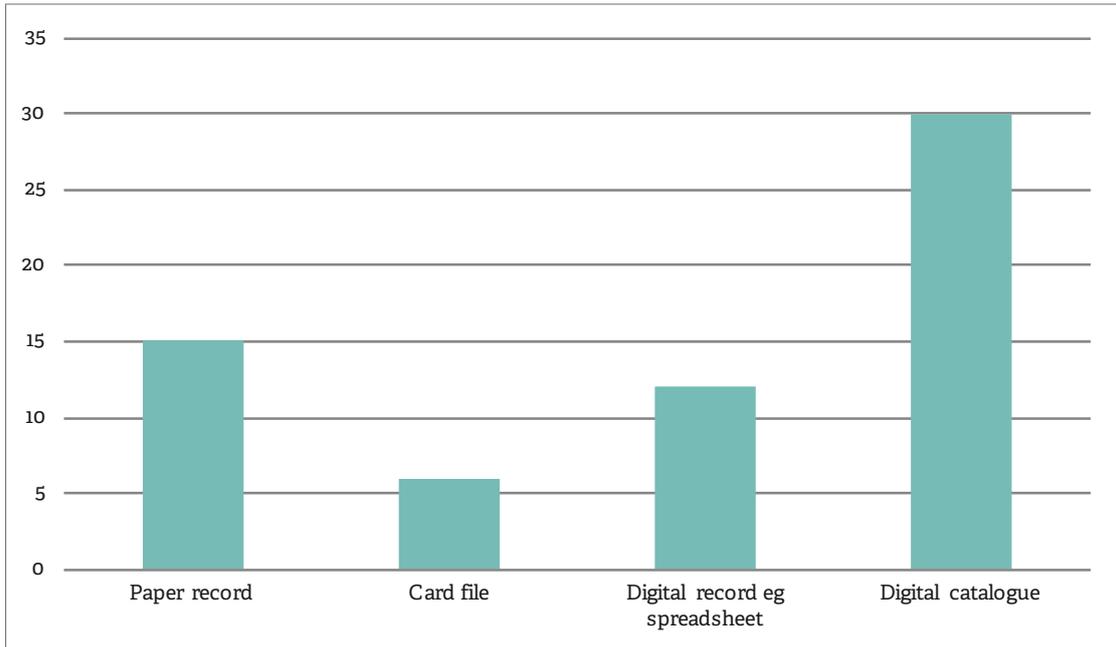

Figure 8: Have your photographs been scanned/digitised?
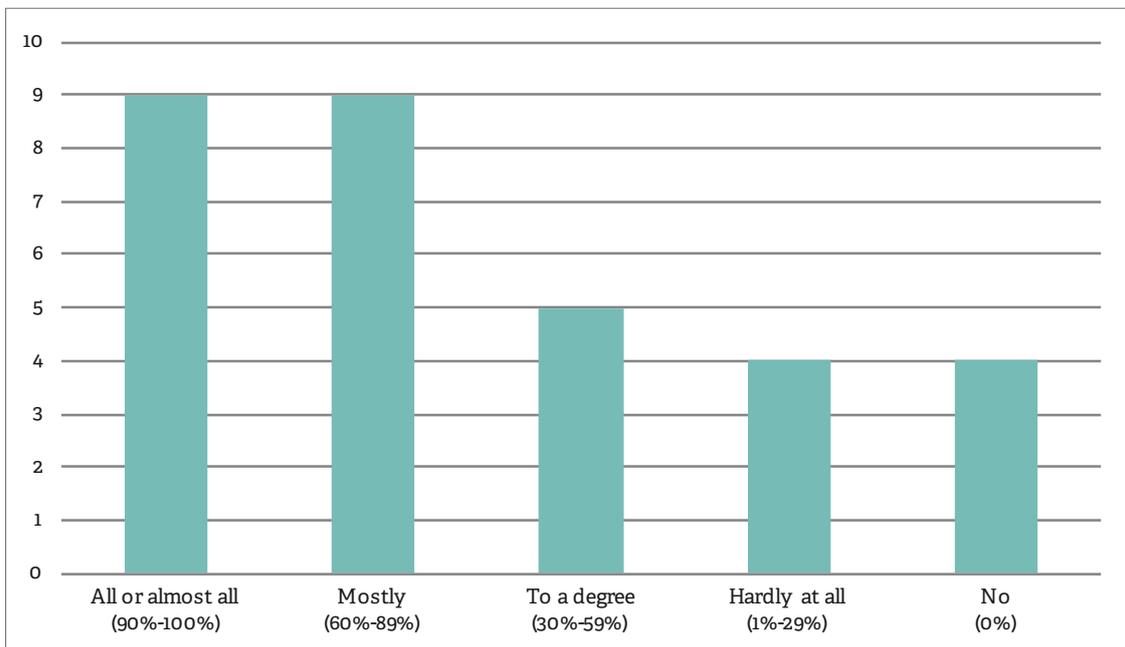
Figure 9: Are there any issues that have arisen around digitisation of photographs and images?

Category	Value
Quality of originals	16
Quality of scans	13
Identifying people/places	17
Digital storage	5
Digital platform	7
Copyright permissions	11
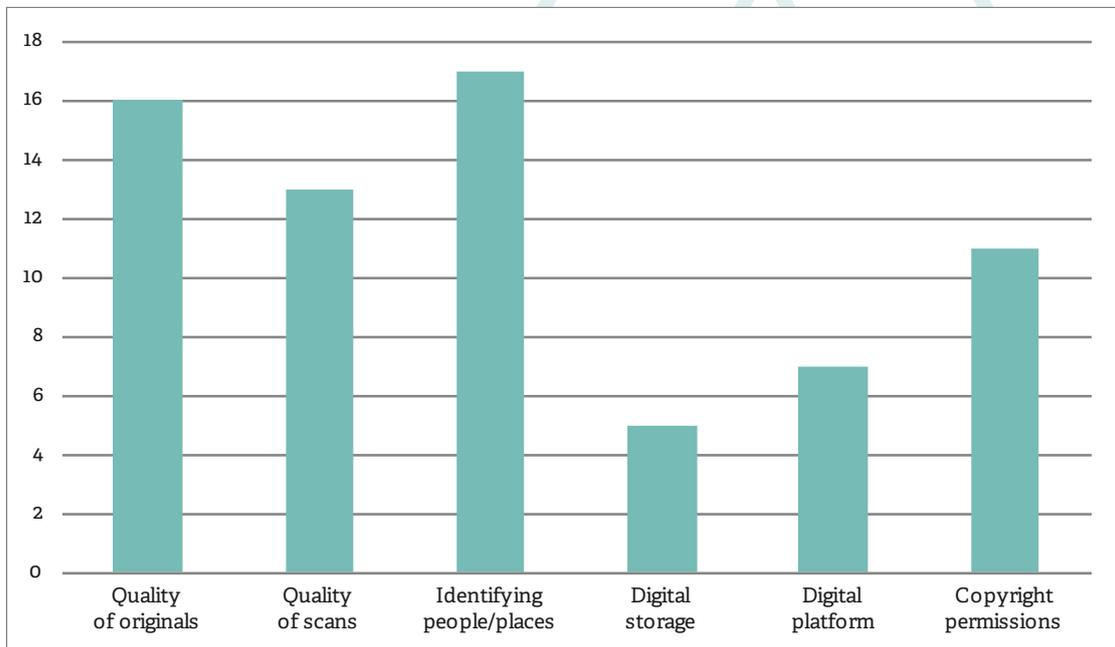
Figure 10: How is the collection shared with the community?

Category	Value
Physical display/exhibition	27
On site computer access	15
Online – own website	19
Online – other web platform	9
Private collection	1
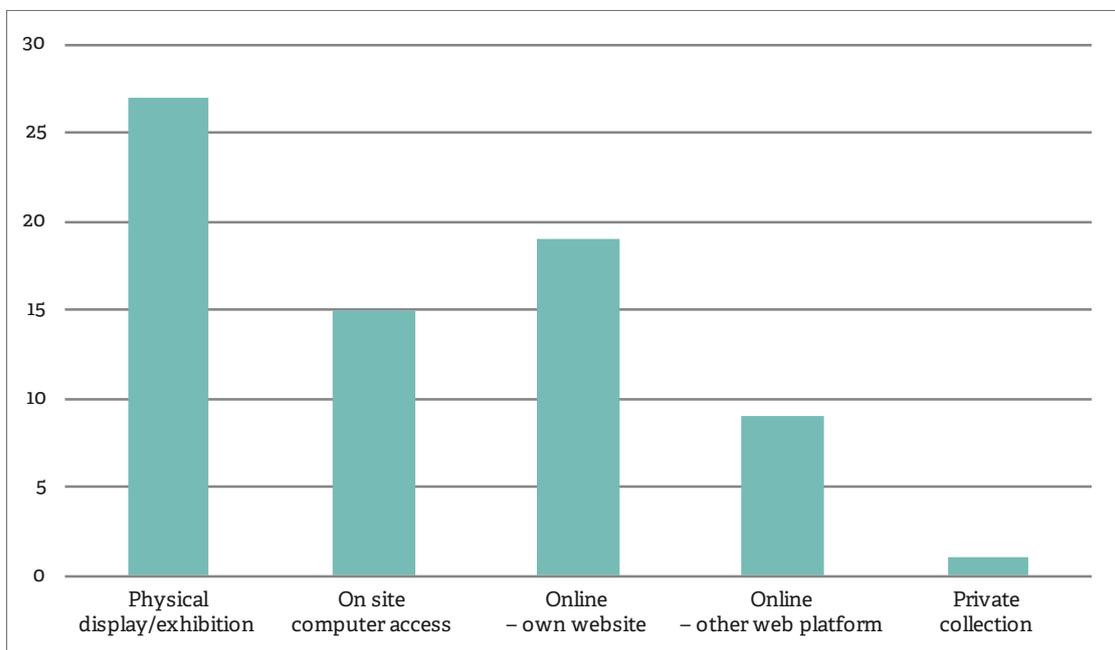
Appendix

Introduction to the survey

This survey relates to the Digital Access to Collections project, undertaken by the GLAM Peak Bodies, with support from the Australian Government Catalyst fund

The project consultants will be producing six in-depth case studies of collecting institutions working towards digital access to their collections. In addition, we would like to capture the experiences of other organisations across Australia where they are either just starting out on their journey or some way down the track of putting their collections online.

You can be part of the project by completing this survey. It will take approximately 30 minutes and we originally had a deadline of 30 October for completion but the survey has been reopened by popular demand.

Thank you for participating.

About the survey

The survey is in sections covering different aspects of your organisation's collecting practices and approaches to digital access. Not all the questions will apply to you and your organisation.

For the purposes of this survey, "collection digitisation" is the documenting of objects by taking digital photographs and recording information about objects held in the collection in a collections database, stored on a computer.

"Sharing the collection", refers to the uploading of photographs and information about the collection to the internet, on a website such as Trove, eHive or your own organisation based website.

Survey questions

- Name of organisation
- Administering body (eg: local council, historical society, university, etc)
- How are decisions made in and for the organisation?
- How many paid staff
- Roles of any paid staff
- How many active volunteers
- Roles of any active volunteers
- What are the main aims of the organisation?
- How large is your collection?
- What types of objects are there in your collection?

- How are most objects acquired?
- Is your collection catalogued?
- What percentage do you think is catalogued?
- If the collection is not catalogued, why not? What have been the barriers to stop you cataloguing the collection?
- If the collection is catalogued in a digital format, what type of software are you using to catalogue the collection?
- How did you choose this software?
- What do you see as the benefits of this software?
- What are the drawbacks or issues with the software?
- Does this software allow you to share your collection straight to the web?
- If the collection is not in a digital format, why not? What are the barriers stopping the organisation using digital methods for cataloguing?
- Are there photographs of the collection?
- If yes, how are they kept or stored?
- Do you store your photographs and images to any particular standard?
- Which standard and how did you know about it?
- Is the collection shared online in any way?
- How is it shared?
  - Site managed by the organisation
  - Collection sharing site such at Trove, eHive, Collecting Bug, etc.
  - Which one?
  - Why did you choose this one?
  - What do you see as the benefits of the site?
  - What are the issues with the site?
- What do you see are the benefits of sharing your collection online?
- What do you see are the issues with sharing your collection online?
- Why did you decide to digitise?
- Was there resistance to it from within your group?
- What information or support would help you decide to catalogue?
- What information would help you decide to digitise and share your collection?
- What support would help you decide to digitise and share your collection?
- Where would you like to go to receive that information?
- Are you aware that much of this information already exists online?
- Have you ever asked anyone in the peak support agencies such as MGnsw or MGqld or History SA etc for support with digitisation?

- Have you ever sought advice or support from other local collecting organisations?

- Have your ever sought support from elsewhere, such as local technology experts, students, etc?

- How do you determine priorities for digitisation? Do you assess significance?

- Are the systems that you use easily and fully compatible with your collection documentation standards and those of your sector?

- Are there outreach or other networks available in your state or territory to assist you and do you consider yourselves part of a wider regional, statewide or national project?

- Would you describe your organisation as a library, museum, historical society, gallery or archive?

- In what ways do you make your collection available to other researchers?

- Do you have any views on the platforms that you have encountered?

- Would your organisation have resources to pay for a subscription platform.

- Do you derive revenue from making your collection accessible? If so in what way?

- What is your internet connection like? And your mobile phone coverage?

- Does your organisation have access to the Internet or a smartphone?