Information Supply in the era of mass digitisation

Ronald Milne,
Director of Scholarship and Collections,
The British Library

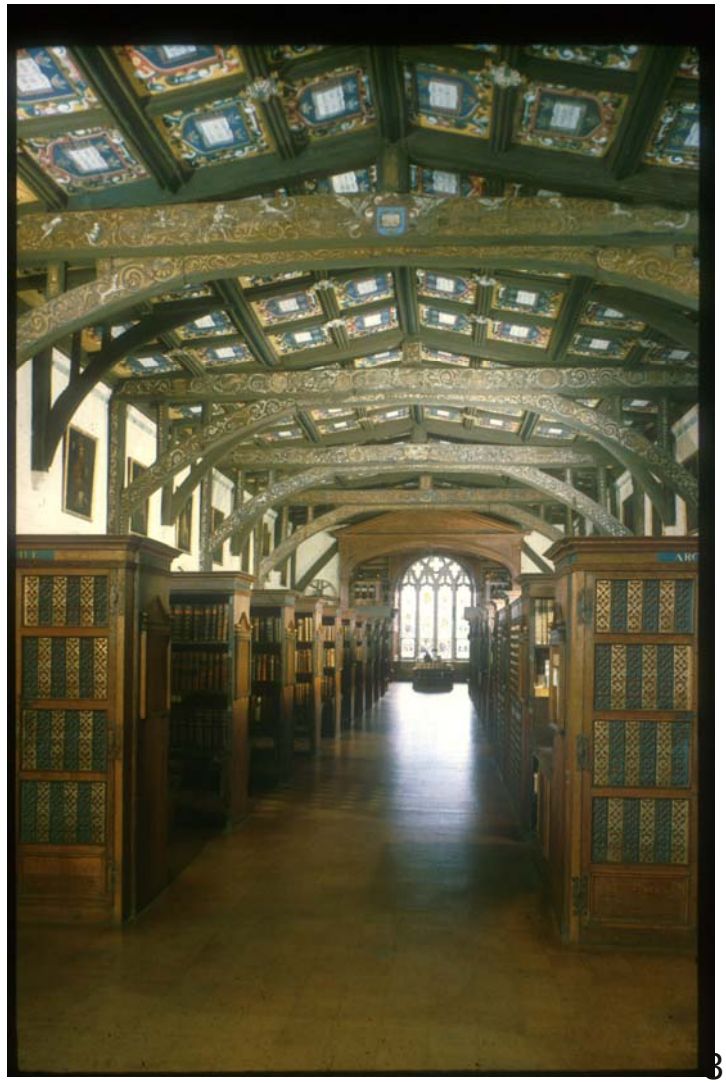
Frankfurt Symposium
13 October 2007

Collections define libraries

The Universal Library

Gabriel Naudé, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque* (1627) promoted the concept of a superlibrary where every enquirer would find the item he was looking for, even if it could be found nowhere else.

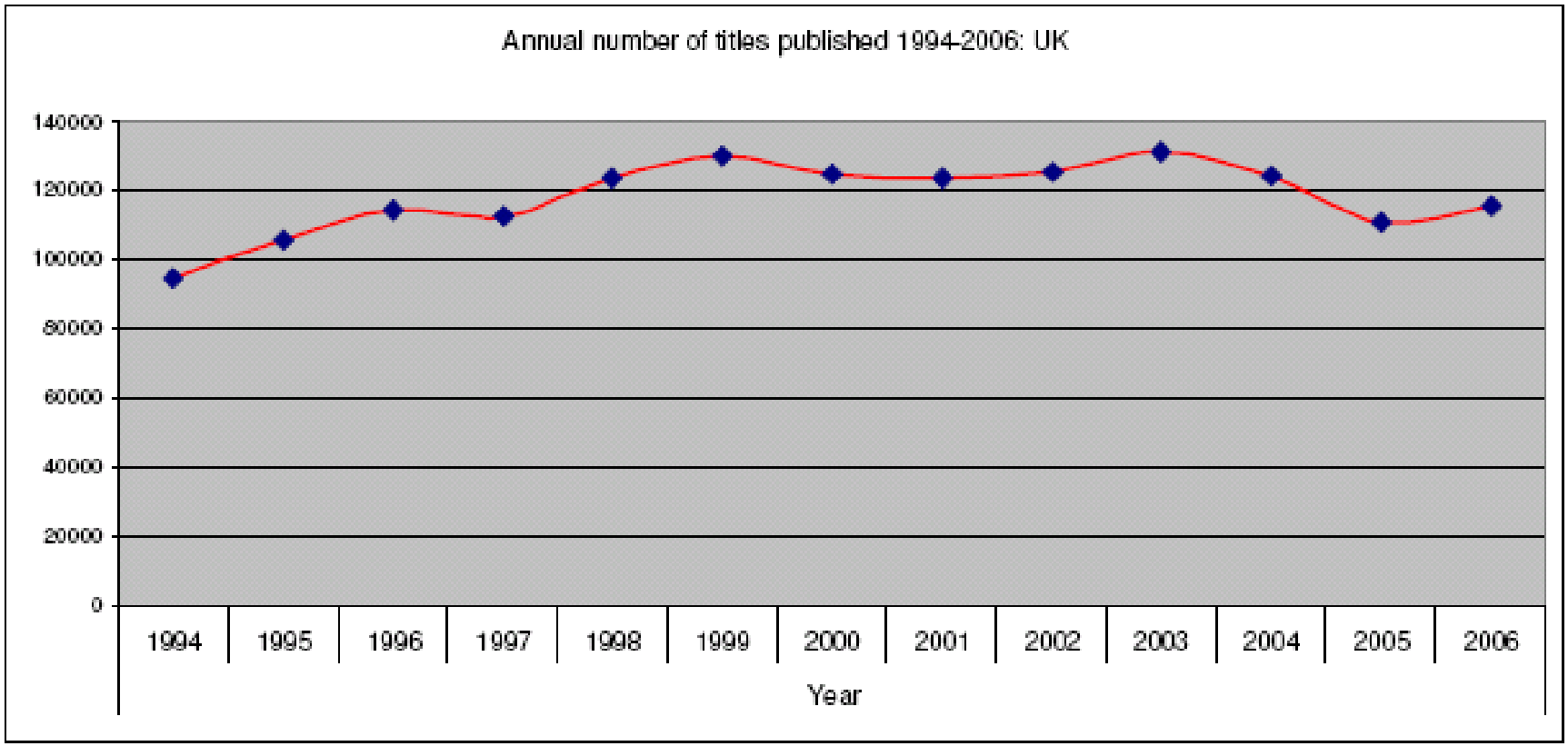
Antonio Panizzi, Principal Librarian of the British Museum Library, 1856-67 maintained that the ideal library was one in which he could fathom the most intricate enquiry.



21st Century Collections: having and holding?

- Late 20th/early 21st century - era of the hybrid library
- Manuscript, print and electronic
- Content is either held physically, or we connect to it
- But ‘connections’ are not necessarily in perpetuity
  - (discontinued subscriptions/the transient nature of much material on the Web/broken links)
- If all libraries’ collections were entirely electronic, there would be little to distinguish between them
- What would differentiate them would be:
  - Degree of connection to subscription services and “managed” access to freely accessible content on the internet
  - Library as space (but if all content is available electronically, you may not need to/want to visit the library anyway)
  - Other services provided

Death of the book?



Source: Nielsen Book Data press release, 30 July 2007

Death of the book?

•Predictions of the death of the book grossly exaggerated, but:

• Paragraph, chapter, article replacing serial issue and monograph as we knew them

• Annotations/articles tied to datasets replacing monograph and stand-alone articles

• Authorship questioned by Web 2.0-type authorship, e.g. wikipedia's communal anonymous 'authorship'

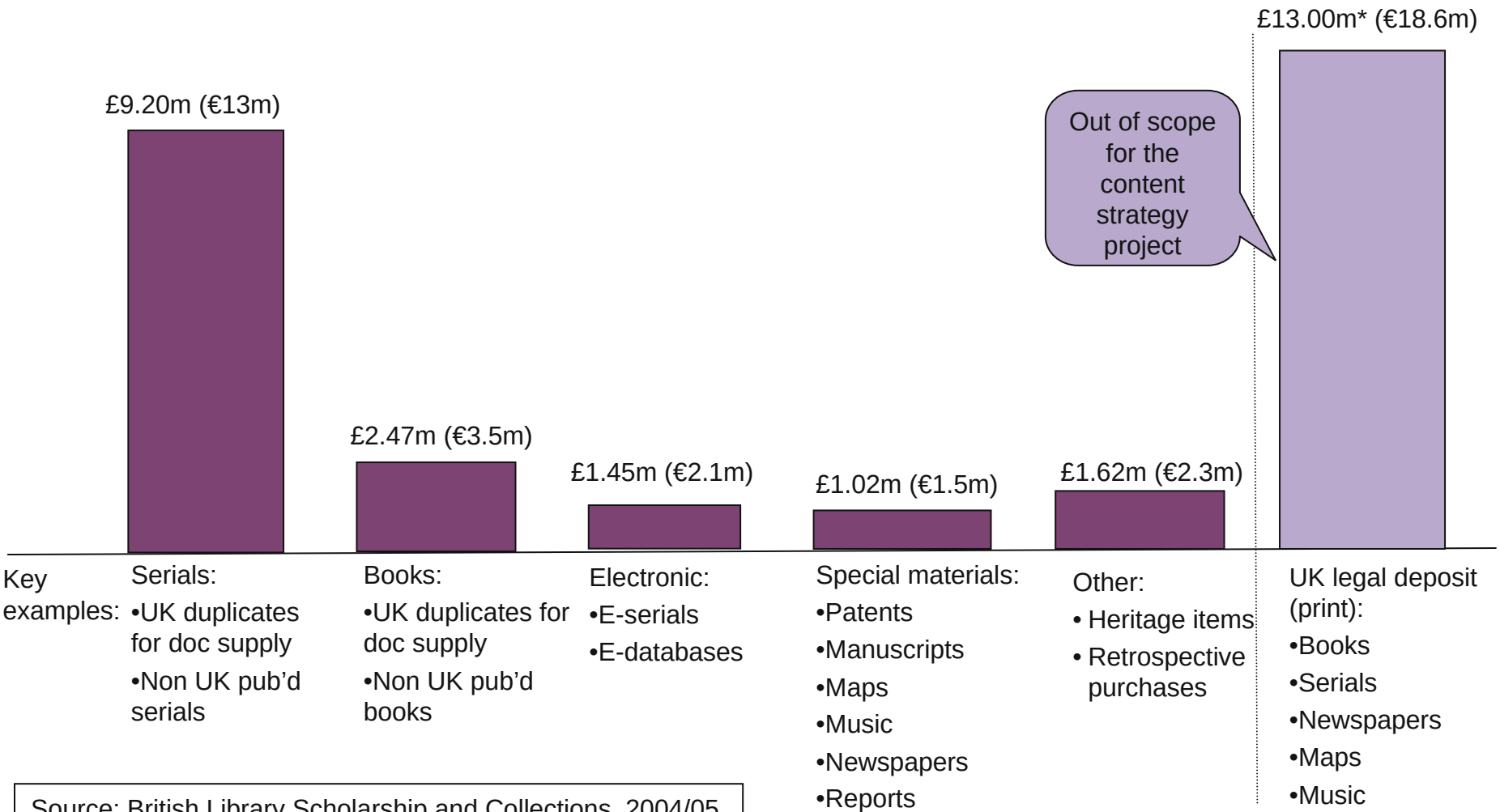
• In Science, Technology and Medicine, researchers access what they need from their desktop or laptop, with Social Sciences not far behind and happening in Arts & Humanities too – Classics, Philosophy, Law use largely electronic scholarly communications

•Certain proportion of material available as Open Access resource

The British Library's Content Strategy

- The Library's corporate strategy 'Redefining the Library: The British Library's strategy 2005 – 2008' identified the Library's collection and expert staff as the Library's two most important assets.
- In 2005/06, the Library undertook to develop a strategy, setting out the overarching principles which govern the Library's collecting, and the requirement to manage the transition from a collecting strategy to a collecting and connecting (i.e. content) strategy.
- Content Strategy work focused on the materials that the Library purchases and licenses through its 'acquisitions' budget (which currently stands at c £17m (€24m) per year).
- Consultation led to 143 responses, which represented a broad coverage of all Arts and Humanities/Social Science areas served by the Library.Responses are available as www.bl.uk/contentstrategy

The largest category of spend on purchased acquisitions is serials



Source: British Library Scholarship and Collections, 2004/05

*Fig. calculated in 2003 and adjusted for inflation to represent 'book price' value of UK legal deposit materials via purchase

Content Strategy implementation plan for 2007/08

- Make available a revised set of content strategy templates across the 38 Arts & Humanities/Social Science Research Assessment Exercise disciplines and 8 special formats of materials covered in the content strategy
- Take forward the connecting element of the content strategy by determining criteria for selecting partners, developing existing partnerships and establishing new relationships in support of collaborative collecting, access and preservation
- Plan the transition from collecting print only or print and electronic formats in parallel, to collecting digital copies only for purchased UK journals that duplicate print copies held under legal deposit, and purchased overseas journals
- Decide moderate shifts in Arts & Humanities/Social Science collecting that can be accommodated within existing resources
- Select new and effective mechanisms for developing an ongoing dialogue with researchers to validate the development of the Library's content strategy on a regular basis

Collaborative Collection Management
Current Projects with the British Library

WRU: White Rose University Consortium (Leeds, Sheffield, York): low use monographs (2004-2005, Phase 2 currently being considered)

Victoria & Albert Museum: Legal deposit exhibition catalogues at National Art Library (1996 -)

School of Oriental & African Studies: Vernacular languages, access (1998 -)

London School of Economics And Political Science & **University of Oxford**: Western European official publications, grey literature (2002 -)

Institute of Advanced Legal Studies: Overseas law materials (2002 -)

Natural History Museum: Serials (2002 –)

University College London: Dutch & Scandinavian (2003 -)

UKWAC: Web archiving (June 2004 -)

The UK Research Reserve (UKRR) project

Safeguarding the long term future of printed research journals

- Ensure ‘last copies’ are not inadvertently discarded
- One copy at the British Library
- Two copies within Higher Education library network
- Ensuring efficient use of resources
- Significant space gains within Higher Education libraries
- Re-purpose space for new opportunities

UKRR: Phases 1 & 2

Phase 1 funded by UK HE Funding Councils

£709,164 (€1m)

January 2007 to June 2008

Develop a prototype UKRR

Test an operational service for researchers

Evaluate the prototype (currently being undertaken)

Use the knowledge and experience gained to develop Phase 2

Build on Phase 1

Open the UKRR to all research libraries wishing to participate

Dependent on receiving additional funding

Digitisation projects

• Move away from expensive ‘boutique’ digitisation to mass digitisation: Google Book search & Microsoft MSN Book Search

• Early English Books Online, Eighteenth Century Collections Online etc.

• Collect Britain – New Opportunities Fund digitisation of thematic collections eg ‘Streets of London’; photographic images of Victorian Britain, also sound recordings – virtual exhibitions

•Joint Information Systems Committee in 2003/4 provided £2m (€2.86m)for 2m pages of British and Irish 19th Century newspapers, £1m (€1.42m) for 3900 hours of audio

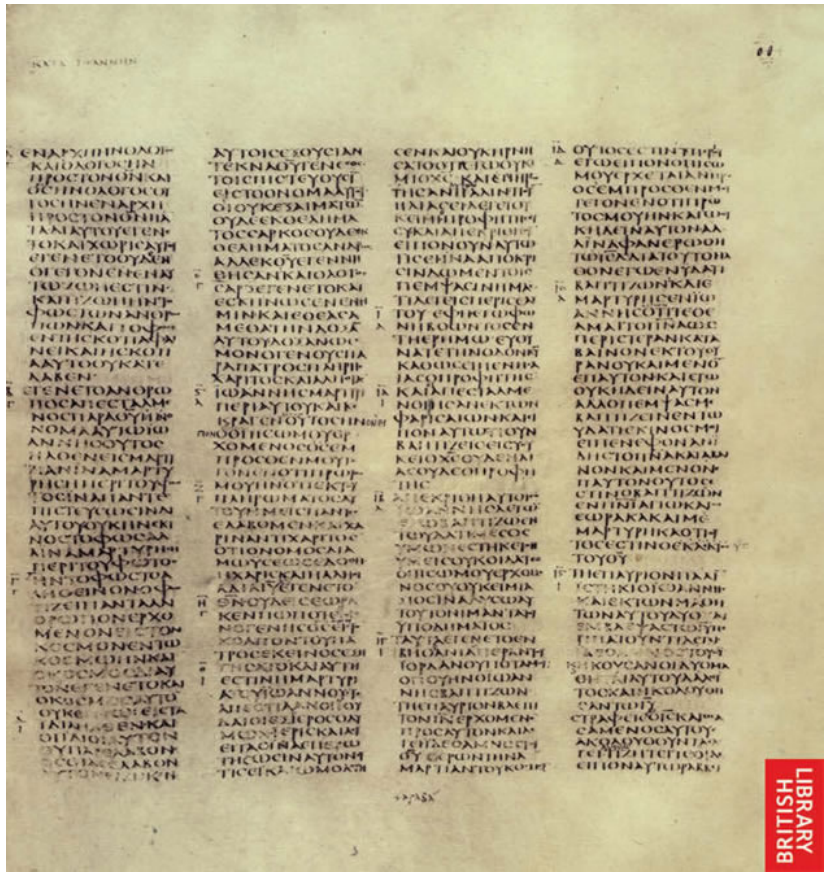
•Second tranche of JISC funding Jan 2007 – 2009

- Archival Sound Recording: 4200 hours
- British Newspapers 1620-1900: 1.1 million pages, including British Library’s Burney collection of 18th Century newspapers

Boutique digitisation: heritage items

- One-off
- Self-selecting i.e. obvious treasures
- Drivers: cultural restitution, wider public access
- Sometimes private sponsorship, especially for iconic items
- Sometimes possible to ignore cumulative effect of other costs e.g. hosting

Boutique digitisation projects: International Dunhuang Project, Codex Sinaiticus: cultural restitution



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Early Manuscripts at Oxford University

Digital facsimiles of complete manuscripts, scanned directly from the originals

This site provides access to over 80 early manuscripts now in institutions associated with the University of Oxford. Please read the information about using this website.

Between 1995 and 2000 the Early Manuscripts Imaging Project created high resolution digital images from manuscripts which were selected as major treasures from their respective libraries, to create wider availability for originals which may otherwise be too fragile for handling.

In 2001 interim responsibility was taken up by the Libraries Automation Service's R&D section who have undertaken a complete redesign of the site to improve the service. The site is now in the care of the Oxford Digital Library, to whom enquiries should be addressed.

Please note: We are aware that a number of manuscripts are incomplete. Unfortunately, the omission of some images only came to light after the project had completed (during the redesign of the website). We are currently in the process of identifying the resources needed to complete the scanning of these manuscripts. The incomplete manuscripts are still accessible from this site, on the principle that a nearly complete manuscript is better than none at all.

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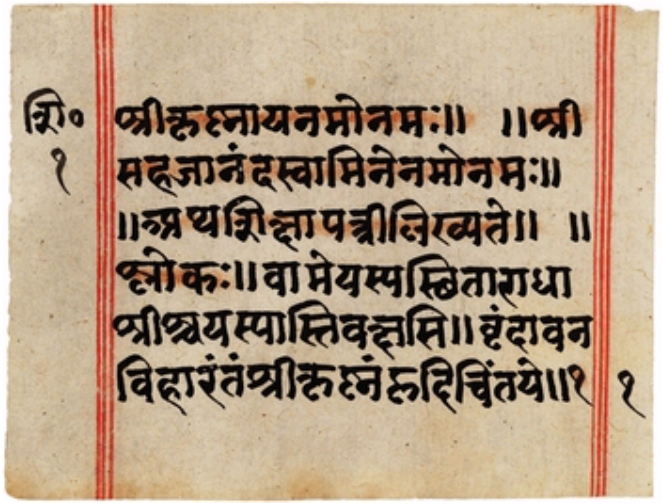

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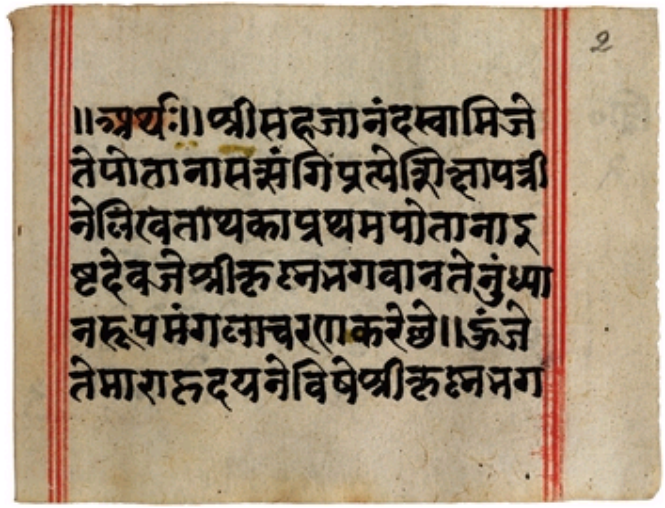


Verse 1

I meditate, in my heart, upon Lord Shree Krishna, on whose left resides Radha and in whose heart resides Lakshmi, and who performs Lila with His Bhaktas in Vrindavan.

DIGITAL SHIKSHAPATRI
http://www.shikshapatri.org.uk/~imagedb/shikshapatri.html
Internet
start 2 M... Inb... 2 I... Google 100% 11:25

Collect Britain

Archival Sound Recordings

Mass Digitisation
Google Library Project: objectives in outline

•Originally: To digitise materials from five major research libraries: Harvard, Michigan, New York Public, Oxford, Stanford (now joined by Bavarian State Library, Ghent University Library, National Library of Catalonia, Princeton, University of California, University Complutense of Madrid, University Library of Lausanne, University of Texas at Austin, University of Virginia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Mysore University, Keio University, Cornell University)

•To create OCR'd text, with indexes for search and retrieval via Google search services and, in particular, Google Book Search

•To provide online searching and access to hitherto inaccessible printed materials for the public, worldwide

Mass digitisation: some notes

•For libraries these are digitisation projects, but for Google and Microsoft they are as much indexing projects

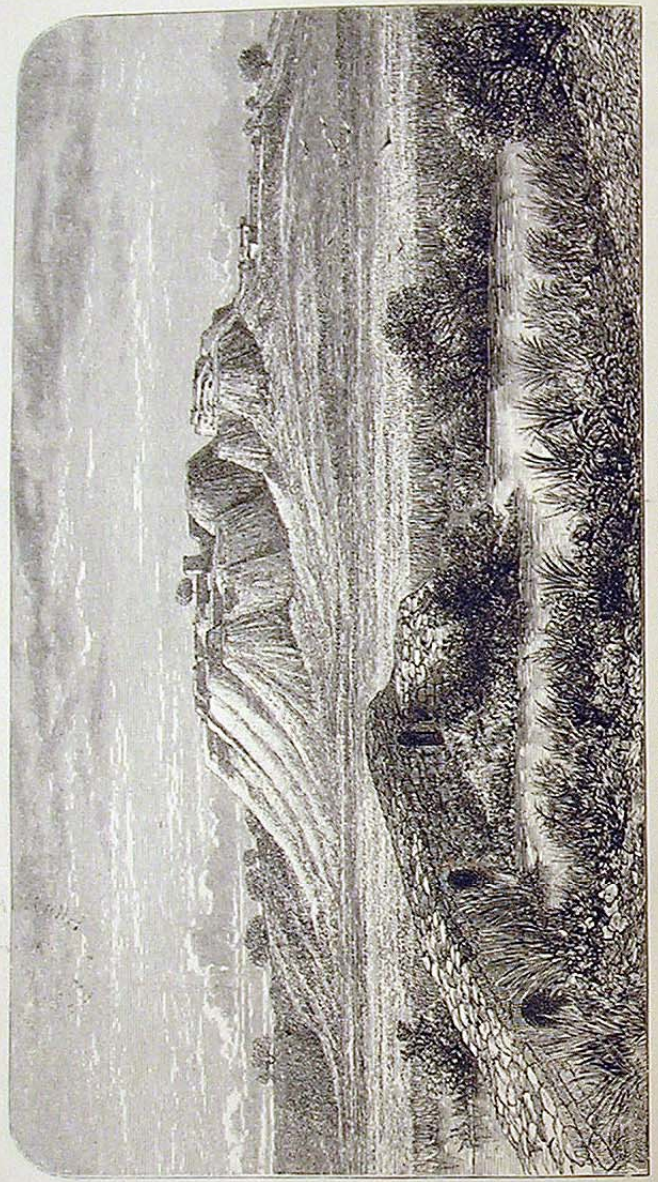
•Industrial scale

•Access, with preservation benefits

•Digital copies linked to library catalogue entries

•Very heavy investment by Google/Microsoft, and cost to the institution in staff time and opportunity costs

•But … without this level of investment, mass digitisation would not happen



Frontispiece.

TROY AS IT APPEARS AFTER THE EXCAVATIONS OF 1879.

The View is taken from the Bridge on the ancient Scamander. The Theatre is in the hills to the left which border the Valley of the Simois. The hills to the right, which belong to the same plateau, dominate the Plain of the Scamander. Behind Hissarlik extends the site of Novum Ilium. The clouds to the left are over Mount Ida. To the right of Hissarlik are Dr. Schliemann's houses and magazines.

ILIOS:

THE CITY AND COUNTRY

OF

THE TROJANS:

THE RESULTS OF RESEARCHES AND DISCOVERIES ON THE SITE OF TROY AND THROUGHOUT THE TROAD IN THE YEARS 1871-72-73-78-79.

INCLUDING AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR.

By DR. HENRY SCHLIEMANN,

F.S.A., F.R.I. British Architects,

AUTHOR OF "TROY AND ITS REMAINS," "MYCENÆ," ETC.

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BY PROFESSORS RUDOLF VIRCHOW, MAX MÜLLER, A. H. SAYCE, J. P. MAHAFFY, H. BRUGSCH-BEY, P. ASCHERSON, M. A. POSTOLACCAS, M. E. BURNOUF, MR. F. CALVERT, AND MR. A. J. DUFFIELD.

κέκλυτέ μευ, Τρῶες καὶ ἐὐκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί.
ἦ τοι ἐγὼν εἶμι προτὶ Ἴλιον ἠνεμόεσσαν.
Il. iii. 304, 305.

νῶϊ δ', ἐγὼ Σθένελός τε, μαχησόμεθ', εἰς ὅ κε τέκμωρ
Ἰλίου εὕρωμεν· σὺν γὰρ θεῷ εἰλήλουθμεν.
Il. ix. 48, 49.

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221. h. 144.

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A Romance.

BY

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"THE TRUMPET MAJOR," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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LONDON:
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1843.

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OF THE

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OF THE

MADRAS CIVIL SERVICE,

LATE MEMBER, AND SECRETARY,

OF THE

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FOR THE

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Madras:

PRINTED AT THE COLLEGE PRESS.

1821.

306. w. 42.

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HISTORY OF FASHION

IN FRANCE;

OR,

THE DRESS OF WOMEN FROM THE GALLO-ROMAN PERIOD TO THE PRESENT TIME.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

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Present Fashions
1875 and 1876

HISTORY OF FASHION

Present Fashions
1877 and 1878

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THE ART OF MONEY-GETTING

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FOR

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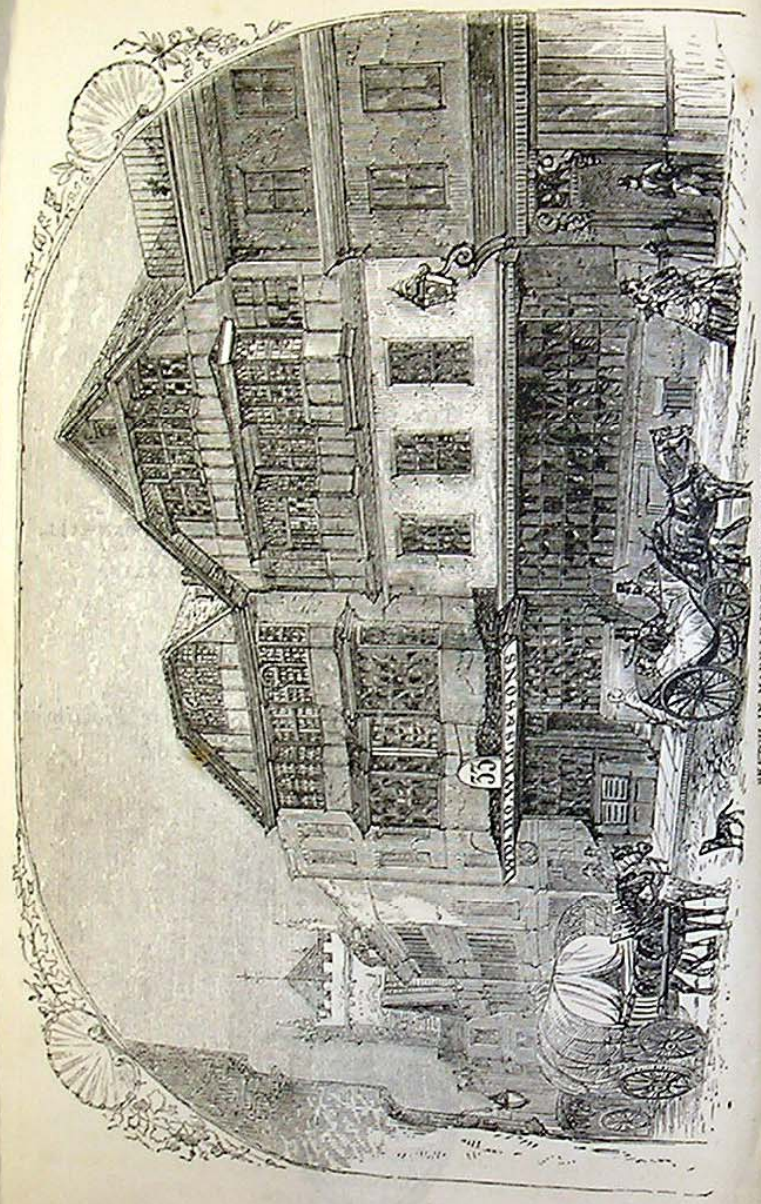

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AUTHOR OF THE OFFICIAL ILLUSTRATED GUIDES TO THE
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Benefits of mass digitisation projects

- Available to anyone, anywhere, on the Web
- Access is free
- Saves the time of researchers, particularly in closed access libraries
- Ability to search full text a huge advantage to researchers
- Mass digitisation projects represent a step-change in the dissemination of information
- Potentially a transforming agent in learning, teaching and research
- Creating a new universal library (?)

Google Library Project:

Duplication among libraries, and language: collections analysis

•Analysis of holdings on WorldCat

•Collection overlap among the 'Google Five': 56% of works are held uniquely by one 'Google Five' library

•When comparing only two libraries out of the five, eight out of ten books are held uniquely

•On average, about 50% of 'Google Five' libraries' holdings are in English

•Over 430 different languages represented

•See: Lavoie, Connaway and Dempsey: Anatomy of aggregate collections: the example of Google Print for libraries, *D-Lib Magazine,* 11 (9) September 2005
www.dlib.org/dlib/september05/lavoie/09lavoie.html

Voyage historique et littéraire en Angleterre et en Écosse by Joseph Jean M.C. Amédée Pichot (1825)

VOYAGE
Historique et Littéraire
EN ANGLETERRE
et
EN ÉCOSSE

Par M. Amédée Pichot D. M.

.....You, and I cannot be confin'd Within the weak list of a country's fashion.

SHAKSPEARE. Henry V.

TOME PREMIER.

Paris

chez les Libraires-Éditeurs,

LADVOCAT ET CHARLES GOSSELIN.

1825

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TALES OF A VOYAGER

TO THE

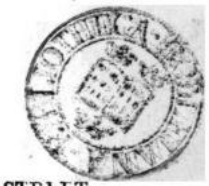
ARCTIC OCEAN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

"In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice."

Shakspeare.

VOL. III.



LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1826.

226.

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Some strategic issues

• Danger of establishing a canon of digitised works ie. future researchers would use these and only these as source materials (cf any book that is not on the online catalogue is not held by a library)

• Loss of contact with the physicality of the object which can contextualise the information it carries

•National or international strategies for digitisation?

•What does mass digitisation mean for the future of traditional libraries and information supply?

Fewer people physically visiting libraries? Anecdotal evidence suggests not, but this may be for all sorts of reasons.

Conclusion:

The Demands and Opportunities of the Digital Age

•Library and Librarian part of 19th and 20th century intellectual infrastructure. What is the role for the 21st Century?

•Google-generation researcher very different to ourselves – social networking, mobile computing, collaborative working, basically anti-Intellectual Property Rights, expects everything free and equates what's free with everything. But behind them, a generation born after the digital revolution.

•Is there something special the librarian can still offer – mediation, trust, guardianship of authenticity etc. Do we have the necessary skill sets?

•Information supply in the digital age: we need to hold physical items, connect to subscription and free content, work together through collaborative schemes to provide our users with the material they require.

•With the advent of mass digitisation, is it possible, in the digital age, to create a new type of 'universal library' to which everyone has access?

Ronald Milne
Director of Scholarship and Collections
The British Library
96 Euston Road
LONDON
NW1 2DB

T +44 (0) 20 7412 7530
F +44 (0) 20 7412 7093
ronald.milne@bl.uk