Collection or content? Developing a social science proposition in the British Library

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Disappearing disciplinary borders in the social science library - global studies or sea change?

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Abstract:

The British Library was founded in 1972 by an Act of Parliament which brought together eight institutions, including the British Museum Library and the National Lending Library for Science and Technology. The Library has a 250-year history of collecting, with over 150 million items from oracle bones to digital ephemera. Our traditional strength is in arts and humanities, but, in 2006, the Library decided to invest in the development of its social science proposition. Activity to date has concentrated on creating a new department, developing relationships with the research community, alongside the identification and mapping of material across the Library (by discipline and research themes) and creating a coherent social science collection.

Collaboration and the development of relationships with the wider social science research community are key priorities as we aim to play a significant role in knowledge transfer, particularly the exchange of ideas and experience between researchers, practitioners and policy makers. Engaging with the public is a longer term goal, with the intention of highlighting the role and value of research.

This paper discusses the process and issues involved in developing the social science proposition and moving from a collection to content-focused approach in a major national research library.

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Collection or content? Developing a social science proposition in the British Library

1   Introduction

This conference is addressing the issue and implications of disappearing disciplinary boundaries in the social science library. Our work on the development of a social science proposition in a major national library suggests that:

- the age of multi-disciplinary research is indeed upon us, and, moreover, social scientists are eclectic in their use of research material and methodologies – the best of them, very much so;
- but, there are considerable variations in the attitude and approach of researchers in different disciplines, including their desire to collaborate;
- funding pressures create intense competition, which mitigates against collaboration; and,
- there is a tendency to launch into primary research without adequate review of previous research. Emerging evidence suggests that the ease of access to material via internet search engines creates researchers who 'view' rather than 'mine' information.

It is also worth noting that many of the disciplines sitting under the social science umbrella are relatively new. This is particularly the case in the British Library, which began its formal life in 1753; inevitably, social scientists are viewed as the 'new kids on the block' and there is little knowledge about what they research, study and contribute.

This background forms some of the context to the task of developing a social science proposition in the British Library[1]. My paper discusses the processes and issues involved in developing the proposition, and moving from a collection to content-focused approach. The views expressed in it are mine alone; any errors my responsibility.

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[1] The British Library is abbreviated to 'the Library' and the BL through the paper.

2   The British Library

The history of the British Library as the national repository of the UK's social and cultural life began in 1753, when the British Museum Act charged the British Museum to care for books, manuscripts and papers acquired by the State and make them available for *'publick use to all prosperity'*. The content of the Library evolved organically, rather than systematically until the mid 19th century, when legal deposit was actively enforced.

The British Library itself came into formal existence in 1972 via another Act of Parliament which brought together a number of national information institutions, with a wide range of functions and cultures. The Library did not have a significant physical presence until 1998 and, even now, activity is split over a number of geographically disparate sites.

The range of content in the Library is vast. There are some 170 million items, including over 13 million books, 57 million patents, almost 5 million items of grey literature, nearly 60,000 newspaper titles, and 3 million sound recordings. There are comprehensive collections of UK, US and European official publications, medieval to modern manuscripts, oral history, and, extensive collections from a range of inter-governmental organisations (e.g. UN, OECD). The Library has wide-ranging historical and contemporary international collections, and is building a UK-domain web archive.

There is also a significant public space, including exhibition areas and a conference centre.

The Library exists to support all researchers, whatever their background and purpose. This policy was implemented in 2004; until then use was dependent on proving a significant research

need and tended to be limited to scholarly researchers. Demand for reader passes since 2004

has increased year-on-year, but significant parts of the research community still know little

about the resources available.

3   Development of a Social Science Proposition

In 2004, a review was carried out of the Library's services to social science researchers. It

pointed to the existence of strong foundations such as plentiful research-level material, a

dedicated reference team and reading room. Researchers could access inter-library loan and

document supply services, and key collection development partnerships were in place.

Less positively, the review found that the Library had few links with social science research

communities and that their knowledge of the Library was minimal. It also concluded that there

was only patchy internal awareness of social science research and the needs of researchers,

and, that the Library was not using its resources as much as it could to support the research

community with dissemination.

The report recommended that the Library place emphasis on collaboration with key partners,

and on:

- exploitation of our collections, expertise and resources to promote and enrich cross-disciplinary exchange within and beyond the social science disciplines;
- strengthening resource discovery; and,
- building the expertise and skills available within the Library to enable us to understand and meet researchers' needs.

The British Library Board approved the recommendation for the creation of Social Science

Collections and Research (SSCR) at the beginning of 2006, and a new head of department

joined the Library at the end of September the same year. The first task was to build the team –

which grew from four full time equivalents in October 2006 to 15 in January 2008.

3.1   The Content Development Strategy

Alongside development of the social science proposition, the Library has been looking more

generally at how it presents its collections to the outside world. With the exception of SSCR,

collections are grouped primarily by format and geography and a recent decision has been

made to overlay this structure with a content based approach. Consultation on this approach

was carried out in 2006, when the Library set out its strategy for collecting by the UK's Research

Assessment Exercise (RAE) disciplines[2]. In essence, the Library began to move to a

disciplinary focus.

4   The Scope of the UK Social Science, Research and Academic Environment

As a major national research library we have a wide user community – actual and potential -

and need to be aware of their requirements. We also need to be aware of the major policy and

funding drivers for research as they influence need and demand for information. The following

section gives an overview of these key factors.

4.1   Disciplines, themes and researchers

Our scope of social science includes[3]:

- Business and management
- Economics, economic development, geography, environment
- Education, psychology, cognition and linguistics

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[2] The RAE is the current method by which contributions to research and funding are assessed within higher education.
[3] List created by combining the RAE disciplines and those listed by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

- Sociology, social policy, social work, anthropology, social development, social psychology
- Politics, law, international studies, government
- Culture, media studies, sport
- Statistics, computing, infrastructure, demography
- Research methodology and capacity building

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)[4] identifies eight research themes in its delivery plan for 2008-11; alongside these are a number of – mostly complementary - UK government concerns set out by the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit[5] (Table 1).

Table 1 Key UK research themes

ESRC Delivery Plan themes 2008-11	UK Government Concerns
Succeeding in the global economy	Globalisation
Migration and Population Change	Ageing and population diversity
Understanding individual behaviour	Economic prosperity
Energy	Family life and communities
Living with Environmental Change	Climate change
Terrorism, Security, Global Conflict and Uncertainty	Crime and public safety
Lifelong health and well-being	Life chances, talent and social mobility
Digital Economy	Modernisation and renewal of the constitution and democratic institutions

UK research is carried out in a wide range of organisations including higher education institutions (HEIs[6]), government and related bodies (central and local), research institutes, as well as in the third[7] and private sectors[8]. Many social science researchers also move to work in professions like market research, advertising and public relations. Market research organisations in the UK are an important supplier of social research services.

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[4] The ESRC is responsible for the development of research and capacity building for UK social sciences, and a major funder of research activity in the UK university sector.

[5] The UK government is a key funder of research, in the university sector, but also in the wider research community – including not-for-profit research institutes, the private sector, market research and so on.

[6] The size of the academic social scientific community was estimated at between 14,000 and 30,000 in a report published by the ESRC in 2006. The lowest figure refers to research active staff in the core social sciences; the higher figure to academic staff engaged in teaching and research in all social science related disciplines. According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, in 2005, some 588,040 undergraduates were studying social science and 294,935 post-graduates.

[7] The third sector includes charities and other similar not-for-profit organisations.

[8] As examples of the numbers: in Government Social Research alone there are some 1,000 researchers in 20 government departments; the Social Research Association has around 1,000 members across central and local government, higher education, market research, in independent institutes and in the CVS.

The review of social science carried out in 2004 found that knowledge of the British Library was highest among academic researchers. This was not surprising as at this point access to the Library was dependent on proof of research need – most non-academic researchers simply assumed that its services were not for them.

*4.2   Funding source*s

Research funding for social science issues in the UK comes from a number of different sources, including: the ESRC; philanthropic foundations; central and local government bodies; and, some major corporate organisations, who support research activity through their corporate social responsibility arms.

Access to funding is uneven – and competition is fierce – within the academic sector, between the academic sectors and others. Researchers outside academic institutions tend not to have access to resources available from the ESRC and the major foundations so tend to be even fiercer rivals for research commissions.

4.3   Current issues for the UK social science research community

Key issues for the UK social science research community include:

- the tension between a thematic, policy-driven, evidence-based research funding regime and 'pure' research; some researchers (particularly academic) resent fitting their interests to this agenda in order to obtain funding. Conversely, the use of evidence-based research and evaluation over the last 10-15 years has created a huge increase in the size of the non-HE based research community;
- the increasing amount of information 'out there' and easily accessible, vs the loss of dedicated information services as non-academic institutions cut back on information and library services – one researcher recently commented that her own use of the British Library had increased with the closure of her in-house library. Conversely, other researchers may simply do less systematic background and contextual research on issues as a result;

- the growing trend for researchers to be 'time poor' and liable to want information immediately, to their desks;
- managing the behaviour and expectations of the internet generation, in particular how to promote awareness of the need to check the credibility and validity of information, ensure methodological rigour and draw on the lessons learned through earlier research activity. The Library recently carried out research on the behaviour of the 'e-generation' and found that researchers as a whole – no matter what their chronological age – have developed a 'viewing' rather than 'mining' tendency when using the internet;
- growing concerns about recruitment and retention of researchers, against an ageing research community in some disciplines, pointing to the importance of capacity building and knowledge transfer; and,
- increased emphasis on dissemination and the impact and value of research, in particular, how to enhance public understanding of its purpose and outcome.

5   The British Library and Social Science in 2008

Two thirds of existing British Library readers are from academic institutions, but our share of the potential population of social science post-graduates is small; just five per cent of over 300,000 post-graduates are readers, compared to almost a quarter of the eligible population in Arts and Humanities.

We carried out a survey of the users of the social science reading room in February 2007. This found that almost three quarters of its users were from higher education; a quarter were undergraduates; a fifth research postgraduates; around one in ten taught postgraduates; and the same proportion, teaching staff. Just a quarter of users were not from the academic community, and only a very small proportion of them were from the broader research community in government, non-governmental organisations, research libraries and professional associations, plus consultancies, funders and so on. This had been an untapped audience in 2004 and remains so.

Findings from a scoping study of the collections[9] and our focus groups with social science researchers[10], reinforced the earlier evidence from research carried out for the review in 2004[11] that awareness of the content – and potential - of the Library was minimal among researchers as a whole, no matter what type of institution they were based in. Furthermore, many of the researchers we have spoken to over the last year or so – academics and others – still do not realise they are **entitled** to use the Library.

Another issue emerged from our initial information-gathering activities: academic researchers are not interested in using the Library to access conventional e-resources such as journals and datasets – they have easy access to these through their home institutions. Conversely, researchers in non-governmental organisations have a much greater need for this type of material as they have less economic capacity and 'clout', but are time-poor and more likely to want remote access. This poses a real conundrum for the Library as most access to e-resources is through license and can only take place on site.

Our initial development work identified a vital additional audience, our colleagues across the Library. While some have a general over-arching idea of the concept of social science, their awareness of the wide range of research themes, how researchers in this field research and the potential use of the collections is limited.

5.1   Scoping Study of the Collections

In late 2006, we signed a strategic partnership agreement with the ESRC. The purpose of this agreement is to:

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[9] A scoping study of the collections – use, awareness and future development, focusing on globalisation and population change – was funded by the ESRC and carried out in summer 2007.
[10] This includes researchers also involved in teaching.
[11] From the research carried out for the Review of Social Science in the BL in 2003/04. In fact, our impression when carrying out the focus groups was that awareness had changed very little since this work took place. Having said this, usage of the social science reading room has increased at a greater rate than that in other reading rooms in the last year. At least some of this increase must be attributable to our activity in the research community.

> *'…. promote effective interaction between the BL and the ESRC in the development of their activities and plans for the improvement of information services for researchers.'*

One immediate output of the partnership was the funding for the scoping study of the collections already mentioned. It was carried out in the summer of 2007 and involved:

- three workshops, attended by 34 researchers from a variety of research interests; and,
- a quantitative survey completed by some 200 researchers[12].

The study confirmed that levels of awareness and familiarity with the Library and the potential of its collections was low; little use was made of the broad range of resources (Table 2) and just a fifth of the respondents had a readers pass. Levels of awareness were low even among these researchers who might be expected to draw on the Library's extensive collections of UK official publications and those of inter-governmental organisations such as the European Community, the World Bank, UN and OECD. In fact, one of the workshop participants was writing a book on the World Bank and had not known about the Library's holdings.

The study identified a number of additional barriers to, and constraints on, use of the collections at the Library. These included the physical locations, time, distance and cost of access, plus the lack of easily accessible information about information and services provided. Many of the respondents to the study felt that the range, depth and organisation of the collections[13] were daunting and did not offer an 'easy way in'; finding aids and resource discovery were described as inadequate.

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[12] Researchers were from the two main fields of globalisation and population studies. About five per cent of those who took part were not from the academic sector.
[13] That is, according to format and geography, not subject, discipline or research theme.

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Table 2: Use of the British Library's resources
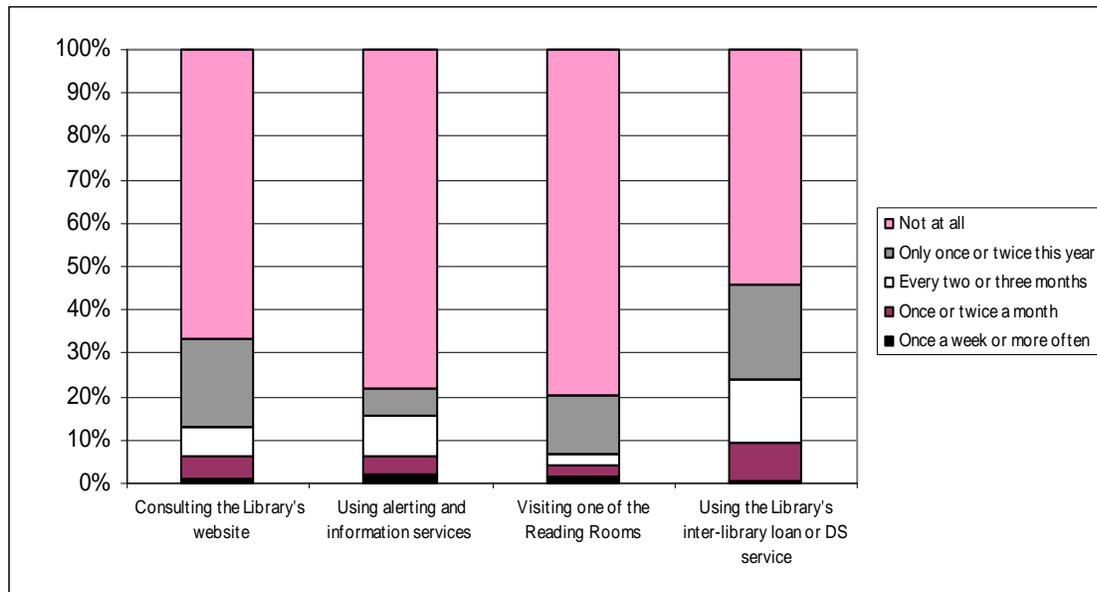
Not all was gloomy - even participants in the study with little experience of the Library identified its strengths. They recognised the possibilities inherent in the historical depth and geographical strength of the collections, plus the range of subjects and formats. The availability of official publications, government statistics and publications from international and multi-national organisations was also valued.

Table 3 Developments to encourage use of the British Library
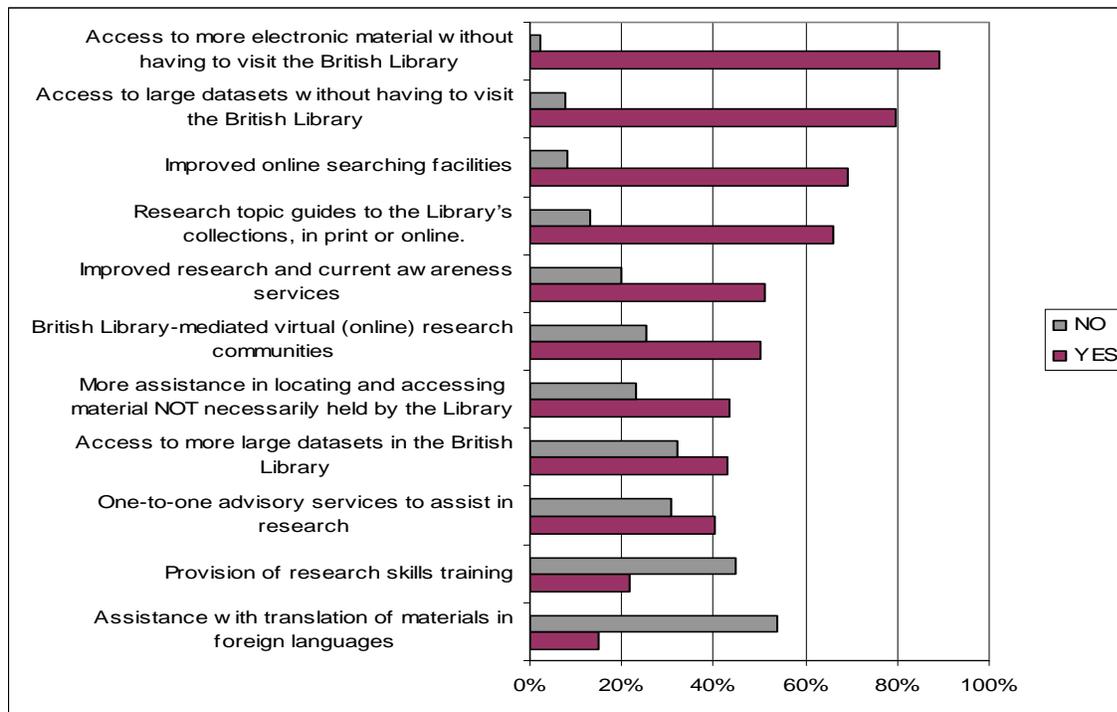
The research collected views on developments that would encourage use of the Library (Table 3). Not surprisingly, enabling remote access to material was at the top of lists but:

- around six out of ten were keen to see improved online searching facilities;
- the same proportion recommended the production of research-led topic guides to the collection (both print and online);
- about half were interested in improved research and current awareness services, and almost half responded positively to a suggestion of BL mediated research communities;
- four out of ten were interested in receiving information on collections not held by the BL, and a similar proportion in one-to-one advisory services to assist with research.

Only a fifth were interested in research skills training.

The study recommended we needed to:

- improve publicity and promotion aimed at researchers, funders and university libraries to increase awareness and knowledge of the BL;
- establish BL-ESRC fellowships programme linked to ESRC Programmes and Networks to interpret and exploit the collections, opening up the less accessible areas;
- develop web-based topic and theme based guides for 'e-scholarship', and work on the provision of remote access through licensing for holders of a BL Readers Pass;
- develop more detailed indexing of all new social science material, with metadata for content as well as provenance and form; and,
- establish a resource development programme, perhaps including retrospective cataloguing, but also exploring the possibilities of social tagging and web 2.0 technologies.

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6   Our Response

We have agreed that the main purpose of Social Science Collections and Research within the British Library is to:

> *Support social science researchers by enabling access to, and exploiting, our collections and content; collaborating with key research and information service players; and, by connecting with the content and collections of others.*

So, within five years, our aim is to be:

- playing a leading role in the management, provision, transfer and generation of information social scientists need and use;
- actively exploiting aspects of the Library's collections through collaborative research-led activities, as well as building collections for future researchers;
- an active – and sought after – hub and facilitator for the exchange of ideas and information between researchers, practitioners and policymakers – both within and across communities of interest and sectors;
- contributing to the development of the next generation of researchers; and,
- engaged in promoting the public understanding and awareness of the value and role of social science research.

In short, it is not sufficient for us to simply say that social science has reached the British

Library; we need to entice our potential users in and contribute to knowledge exchange as well

as knowledge creation.

This is against the background of:

- a number of major fans who understand the point of the Library – whether as a primary or secondary research source - and are very enthusiastic about collaboration;
- the requirement to build a new 'business' within the Library, developing our 'hook' for non-users and improving access to the collections; and,
- crucially, improving knowledge and awareness of social science across the Library.

6.1   Strategic Priorities

We have established five strategic priorities to direct activity for the next three to five years:

- team creation and development;
- defining and developing a Social Science Collection;
- relationship and awareness building;
- improving accessibility; and,
- supporting, and working with, the research community to build capacity.

6.1.1   Team creation and development

Team development has taken place in three stages, starting with the appointment and

establishment of the head of the department (end September 2006), and concluding with the

final phase of recruitment of content specialists in January 2008.

The head of department comes from a research background. The Library felt this was

necessary to build credibility with the research community and improve the profile of the Library.

The disadvantage of appointing someone without a library or information service background

was the steep learning curve required on systems.

The team was deliberately recruited to include a mix of skills, from those with a research

background to those with qualifications in, and experience, of, library and information services.

Given the mix of potential users, the emphasis on engagement, interpretation and exploitation of

content, selection was guided by:

- the ability to communicate, influence, put together an argument and respond to challenge;
- evidence of subject/discipline knowledge; and,
- evidence of the ability to transfer and apply skills and experience to different environments and audiences.

The jobs were billed as 'content specialists' rather than 'curators', 'librarians' or 'subject

consultants'. The purpose of doing so was to emphasize the outward facing aspects of the role,

place emphasis on active knowledge and awareness of research issues and the needs of

researchers, and the ability to draw out relevant resources from the disparate collections held by

the Library.

The designation of 'content specialist' has certainly been an advantage with external researchers and our ability to work with the range of researchers, information specialists and librarians has given the Library a tangible form. Less positively, it has caused some confusion and perhaps set the team apart from their colleagues within the Library, whose main primary responsibilities are around the acquisition and curation of collection areas.

6.1.2   Building a Social Science Collection

Material of potential use for social science researchers is dispersed across the Library. Initial activity has concentrated on mapping it by discipline, regardless of format or geography. Content teams, with representatives from all curatorial departments, formed to implement the content strategy are supporting this activity. The scale of the task makes it essential to prioritise work within discipline. For example, the lead content specialist for business, management and economics has started detailed mapping with business history. Mapping by research themes is also featuring where team members have an existing expertise.

6.1.3   Relationship and awareness building

This paper has highlighted the importance of engaging with the key social science research communities – researchers and information providers. On the whole, we have met with an enthusiastic response, with people happy to give their time and support our activity. There have been some exceptions, often defined by discipline, who simply do not think we are relevant to them. For the moment we are concentrating on those who are interested; this provides an easy – and fruitful way – of narrowing the scope of our activity. Additionally, we suspect that building momentum will itself attract the more hard-to-attract/reach communities.

With our general success and warm welcome we have become more and more conscious of the need to manage expectations – not promising more than we can deliver – while maintaining momentum. In our initial development phase it has been essential to get out there to as many institutions as possible; there is no doubt that this has been invaluable for the team in enhancing their awareness of researchers and the concerns of the research community. Our next task is to draw up more systematic engagement strategies and prioritise particular groups.

6.1.4   Improving accessibility

Improving accessibility to the collections and content of the Library – and other collections – is a key aspect of developing the social science proposition. As format and geography has taken precedence over subject (whether topic, research theme or discipline), it would be a massive task to attempt to improve accessibility through cataloguing. In fact, within the Library as a whole we are devoting considerable efforts to improving our current cataloguing so the researchers in the not-too-distant future will be able to use a very wide range of search criteria. This leads to a key issue for the team, how to identify issues they can influence and separate them from those which are completely outside their control. Most cataloguing, for example, takes place in another directorate and location; decisions about the type of access software are made corporately; licensing arrangements for remote access are also corporate issues.

Within Social Science Collections and Research we have adopted various approaches:

- developing and expanding existing indexing and abstracting services;
- reviewing and updating existing collection guides and bibliographies according to discipline and research themes, and providing subject pages;
- as recommended in the scoping study, identifying a number of web-based topic and theme guides for 'e-scholarship';
- exploiting the potential of events such as the 2012 London Olympics and the 2011 UK Census as a way of (a) highlighting the breadth and diversity of the work of social science researchers and (b) the multi-disciplinary potential of the Library's collections; and,

- exploring ways of enabling remote access to material. Activities include a feasibility study for a subject portal[14]; initial talks with the Economic and Social Data Service to open access to non-HE users registered as readers with the BL; raising the issue of more general remote access for readers to material held elsewhere, including publishers.

We are also identifying opportunities to exploit and interpret parts of the collection. For example, we hold sound recordings of children's games and rhymes from the 1950s and 1960s. An initial idea to digitise the collection with the aim of improving access has developed into our collaboration in a substantial research proposal looking at the role of children's play and games more widely. Additionally, we have taken advantage of two three month placements funded by ESRC, where Phd students are based in the Library to carry out specific projects.

A key issue for the team – and, of course, the library world as a whole - is the capture and management of e-print formats. A particular focus is the move of UK government material to web publication. We are involved in a government-led initiative on web continuity[15], and a feasibility study[16] to assess the potential of establishing a virtual reference desk service for e-born government material. We will also be looking at the issue of e-born grey literature and are setting up a project to monitor publication and deposit over the next year or so.

6.2.4   Supporting, and working with, the research community to build capacity

One of the principles agreed by the British Library Board in 2006 was to focus on research skills training. However, the UK social science research community is relatively well provided for in this area – our scoping study and focus groups suggested that only a minority of researchers is

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[14] The proposed subject portal will enable readers to access relevant subject material by working in collaboration with publishers but, importantly, will also include editorial provided by leading academics in the field and aim to make most use of the interactive ability of web 2.0.

[15] This is an initiative run by TNA on behalf of the Cabinet Office, which has developed a solution to the issue of 'broken links' across government. We are working with the project team to ensure that the short term solutions for the broken links also facilitate our role in long term preservation and maintaining the continuity of the OP collection.

[16] With the London School of Economics and Oxford University's Social Science Library.

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interested in such provision. We have, therefore, widened this principle to encompass knowledge transfer, exchange and more general capacity building.

We have decided to place emphasis on the issues of methodological rigour, quality and validity, but we also want to promote the Library as a venue (actual and virtual) for multi-disciplinary, cross-profession/function knowledge exploration and information exchange. Initially our strategy has been to deliberately host events; building relationships, raising the Library's profile and opening the door to those who would not necessarily have thought to use us. This has also increased our profile and awareness of the Library as we feature on publicity material and give an overview on our activities.

As two examples: during the UK's annual festival of social science we jointly hosted an event called *Making policy – Making social research*, attended by over 100 researchers; and, in July we are hosting the British Sociological Association's Food Studies Group conference, providing access to at least 150 researchers. As the team becomes more established we aim to generate and lead our own events.

We are also in the early stages of developing a long term studentship and fellowship programme, and are supporting two bids to the ESRC for seminar series, one on the influence of multi-modality and e-learning on nature and format of doctoral theses in education and social science (with the Institute of Education and others); the other on corporate social responsibility (with CASS Business School and the University of Sheffield). Internally, members of the team are supporting the Library's Learning team with workshops for schools e.g. on history, citizenship, language, food and geography.

Another initiative includes working in collaboration to develop a public engagement programme (in the medium term). The aim of this will be to contribute to activity around the theme of *'why research matters'*.

7   Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to give a flavour of, and outline, the challenges and opportunities involved in developing a cross-collection, multi-disciplinary social science proposition in a national library.

Traditionally, the British Library's focus was on collecting and safeguarding the nation's cultural and historical memory, but the last decade has seen increasing emphasis on interpretation and supporting research. Consequently, the Library is moving toward a content-focused approach, but this process is new and challenging for the staff concentrated into format and geographical remits. A further challenge then arrived in the shape of SSCR, where a team with a clear requirement to look across the Library at content, access and interpretation, was added to the collections-focused structure. An essential, but not always easy, task for SSCR has been to develop relationships with our colleagues in the format and geographical collections.

Identifying material relevant to the social scientist held by the Library is a major task, added to by the fact that some of the non-users we have spoken to do not perceive the Library as of contemporary relevance. It has, therefore, been essential to break the process into bite-sized chunks, focusing on specific categories of researcher – here looking mostly at research themes as opposed to disciplines. We have concentrated, on identifying research issues which will facilitate this process, but there is a tight balance between developing thematic knowledge and mapping content as a whole by discipline. We have found it necessary to do both.

Looking at the make-up of the team, our recruitment strategy proved successful. It is clear that it was essential to have a team with (a) strong communication skills and (b) an understanding of social science and social science researchers and (c) a subject interest. All have helped us develop links into the research community. The latter want to work with people who talk their language (which differs by discipline), know what the issues are, and can make the connecting links. At the same time the team includes members with long experience of the British Library; this has been of immense importance during our early development and while we are still 'the new kids on the block'.

One of the great joys of the British Library is the historical sweep of the collections and the fact that it contains both primary and secondary research data. For this reason we have (a) placed emphasis on collaboration, (b) prioritised capacity building around the rigour, validity and credibility of information and (c), focused on our potential as a hub for knowledge exchange. Academic libraries to some extent have a 'captive' audience and are driven by the interests of the academic staff in their institutions, though in the new digital world libraries as a whole are facing considerable challenges as to how to stay relevant to their users.

As a national library we cannot rely on attracting social scientists without substantial 'hooks'; identifying these is, and will continue to be, a major challenge. At the same time, we have the opportunity to support efforts by the social science research community to raise public awareness of the role and importance of their research. We also have a key role to ensure that the Library's collections continue to include such a rich and diverse source of material for future researchers. We must therefore, be able to work both within and beyond disciplinary boundaries. The key challenge for the Social Science Collections and Research team is to manage this matrix of themes, disciplines and audiences to best effect.