



JISC Final Report

***Enriching the First World War Poetry
Digital Archive***

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¹ <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/digitisation/enrichingdigi.aspx>

Executive Summary

This report describes a body of work undertaken to enrich the digitisation project 'The First World War Poetry Digital Archive' funded under the JISC Digitisation Programme Phase II. Implementing a range of approaches the project's primary aim was to embed the archive firmly within teaching, learning and research practices across a range of subjects and educational levels. To do this the project took a number of approaches: Firstly, gaps in the archive's collections were filled through the digitisation of the war poetry of poet Siegfried Sassoon. Secondly, the archive worked with over 30 individual teachers and lecturers of First World War studies to create reusable learning objects, as well as creating a range of audio-visio teaching materials for classroom use. Thirdly the project developed a series of alternative visualisations of the archive's materials using Web 2.0 technologies (e.g. interactive timelines, mind mapping, Google Maps, virtual world modeling). And last of all, the project explored use of social media software such as Flickr, Facebook, Twitter and Google Groups to generate content and place the archive within a social context.

Each approach has shown a positive impact. The digitisation of the Sassoon papers had been a much requested inclusion (which the project was unable to include the first time round due to copyright restrictions). Its launch in the lead up to Armistice 2010 saw the materials used instantly in educational contexts and add new dimensions to the study of existing items in the archive. The digitisation of this poet has brought together and made freely available items spread over six different archives across the world, creating a valuable research resource that would otherwise be incredibly time consuming and difficult to access. By working closely with teachers and lecturers from a variety of areas addressing the First World War, the project has also seen the production of over 30 different reusable learning objects ranging from curated trails through the archive to PowerPoint presentations and resource packs. This approach also disseminated the archive's work and trained employees in the field of learning technology in a variety of educational settings, addressing specific teaching objectives. The Web 2.0 exemplars have explored alternative visualisations and new ways that users can interact with archival content. The exemplars exist to show what can be done to enrich the user experience and address different learning and teaching styles, as well as possible new e-research processes. The use of social media to generate user content and knowledge, and to develop communities has added a 'social' element to the archive. It raises important questions about what we do with the large amounts of data that can be generated by Web 2.0 activities, how and whether we should separate the garbage from the quality, and how do we know when to trust the data contributed? In the field of humanities where researchers generally do not create their own data, does the user of user generated content give rising importance to skillsets of analysis and interpretation?

Enriching the First World War Poetry Digital Archive has been both a development and discovery activity, producing both a vast quantity of rich learning materials and tools and also bringing to the foreground complexities in new methods of presenting, interacting with and producing with archival content. The following report will look more closely at the archive's work to enrich the user experience and address these areas in greater depth.

Background

This project had an established background. Primarily it was a direct continuation of work of a digitisation project that began in 2007: 'The First World War Poetry Digital Archive'² funded under the JISC Digitisation Programme Phase II. The project collected together nearly 13,000 digital objects relating to the poetry of WW1 and specific poets, contextual material from the Imperial War Museum, and WW1 memorabilia donated by the public ('The Great War Archive'³). Alongside the archive a series of educational materials were produced to help learners and teachers use the materials in the archive. A "Path Creation Tool" was also released to enable users to create customised paths through the archive and share these with others. The project was highly commended in the Times Higher Educational Awards, 2008 and the UCISA Awards for Excellence, 2008.

The First World War Poetry Digital Archive, in turn, built on a JTAP funded project (1996-1998), "The Virtual Seminars", which digitised the manuscripts of the First World War poet Wilfred Owen. Under the JTAP project four tutorials were also created. This initial project won several awards (UCISA 1999 'best practice and excellence' in teaching and learning, Oxford's OxtALENT teaching via the web award, etc), and has been used by several national bodies (such as the FERL, LTSN, JISC, BECTA, and NetSkills) as demonstration of excellence.

Since its launch in November 2009 the archive has received over 0.75 million hits (over 1.75 million hits since its first instantiation in 1998) and is being used by lecturers, teachers and researchers worldwide. The writers included in the archive are firmly embedded within courses the on First World War and 20th Century Literature in higher, further, and compulsory education. Additionally the contemporary material (photographs, audio, and video) from the Imperial War Museum, and the material deposited by the public (under the Great War Archive initiative) widens the archive's relevance to a multitude of other subjects including history, military studies, media studies, archaeology, cultural and gender studies, and local history.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the project was to enrich the First World War Poetry Digital Archive to firmly embed it within teaching, learning, and research. This would be primarily achieved through filling gaps in the collection, supplementing existing educational materials, and exploring alternative approaches to disseminating, visualising, and using the archival holdings.

The project thus aimed to:

- Facilitate the creation of teaching material by practitioners (HE, FE and schools), for them to use in their teaching and to share with others.
- Create teaching resources tied directly in to curricula using appropriate "Web 2.0" technologies
- Complete the collection by adding extra digital resources in the form of the manuscripts of the poet Siegfried Sassoon (not included in the original project)
- Enrich the metadata

To achieve these aims the following objectives were met:

- The delivery of two two-day workshops bringing together teachers, lecturers, subject experts, learning designers, and developers to create a bank of reusable learning objects drawing on material from the archive.
- Using three existing "Web 2.0" tools - MIT's Simile Timelines, GoogleMaps, and Tufts VUE mind mapping software – to demonstrate how users can bring together digital artifacts,

² <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit>

³ <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/gwa>

information, and ideas. These were supplemented by a series of 'how to' guides and embedded within the "Education" area of the archive⁴.

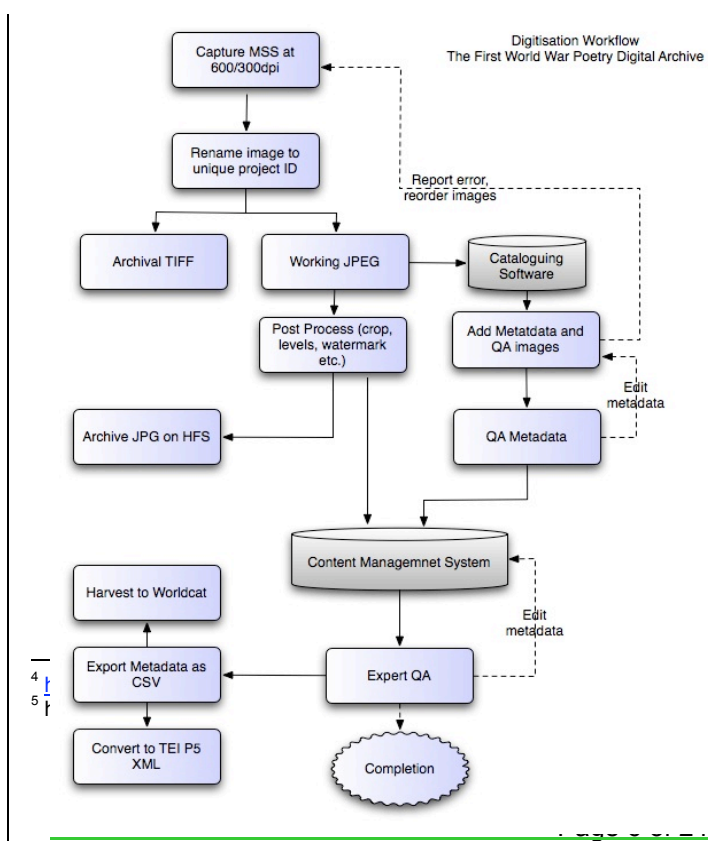
- The creation of a series of 'structured paths' or 'curated collections' using the Path Creation Tool developed under the original project. This allowed for annotated paths or trails through the archive collections to be set up easily and quickly for others to follow. The project team worked alongside experts in the field of First World War poetry and the War itself to create the paths.
- Using a combination of GoogleGroups and Flickr to provide a methodology for users to contribute their knowledge and information about selected items held in the project collections, and to 'contact an expert' (e.g. the project team and steering group and other subject experts).
- The expansion of the digital collection to include the poetical manuscripts of Siegfried Sassoon.

In addition to utilizing the above Web 2.0 tools, the project also aimed to enhance the archive's holdings via Podcasting of content as an open educational resource for use in teaching via applications such as iTunes and iTunesU.

Due to an efficient streamlined digitisation process and reduced costs of digitisation; funds were available to do more than the above. Firstly, the project was able to explore the presentation of the archival holdings in the Virtual World software Second Life⁵. Secondly the project was able to produce another set of educational films to supplement the three highly popular films produced by the archive during the original project. Thirdly, the project could concentrate more resource on the redevelopment of the educational area of the website to showcase the new materials and tools and to firmly embed the archival resources within a learning and teaching context. It was also able to make more places available on the participant workshops.

Methodology

The project utilised a variety of approaches to streamline the different processes. A methodology was used for the digitisation of the material, the technical development of the Web 2.0 exemplars, the running of the workshops, and for the dissemination of the Archive (that implemented user engagement, and marketing). These are described below:



Digitisation Methodology

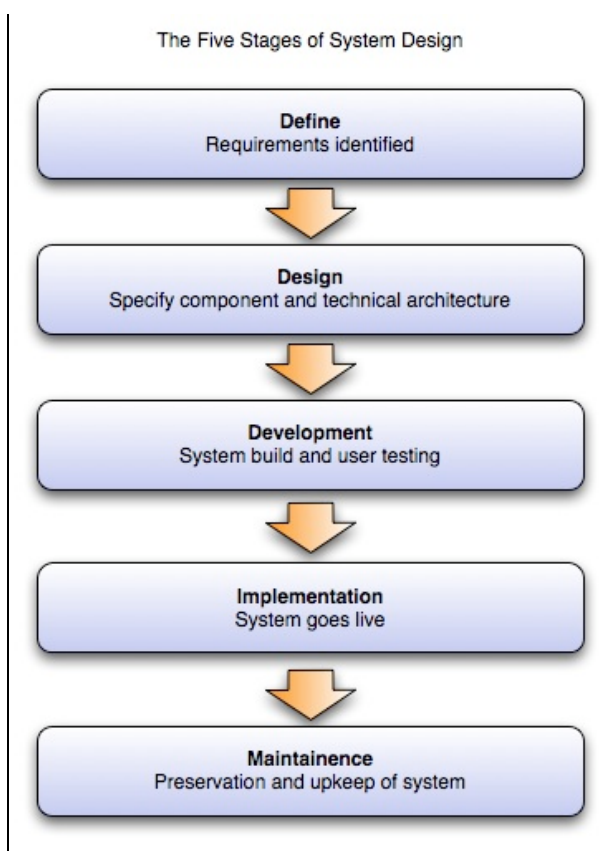
For the digitisation of the Siegfried Sassoon Collection the project followed the same methodology as the previous work done by the First World War Poetry Digital Archive (2007 – 2009). Digitisation was outsourced to the holding institutions where source material resided. In all cases these institutions had in place reprographic services that met the project's requirements.

All primary source material to become images was digitised as uncompressed TIFFs, at 600dpi, 24-bit colour, the standard considered appropriate for preservation. From these working copy JPEGs were produced, post-processed and invisibly watermarked using

DigiMarc tools⁶ (so as not to interfere with often detailed content). Post-processing was kept to a minimum to retain the features of the original document. All high quality content was then archived separately on a Hierarchical File Server for preservation purposes. All images were quality assessed in terms of quality, orientation, firstly by the project manger / researcher upon receipt, then during the cataloguing process.

Once content was received and post-processed it was then catalogued using a set of pre-defined fields using the Portfolio⁷ software. Metadata for the content was largely descriptive rather than conceptual to avoid imposing subjective meaning upon the items. Once completed this was then quality assessed by the project manager and technical lead and migrated, along with the relevant content, to the existing content delivery system (ContentDM⁸).

Development Methodology



As many of the Web 2.0 exemplars were developed used existing technologies (e.g. the Google Groups, Google Maps, VUE software, and Flickr), little input was needed in terms of a development methodology. In these cases it was more important to focus on obtaining user feedback and looking at how the exemplars could be either embedded within the framework of the archive.

For some of the more complicated exemplars (e.g. the interactive timelines) the same five-stage design methodology was implemented that had been previously used by the archive in Phase 1.

1. The *Define Phase*

During the define phase a set of requirements are identified.

2. The *Design Phase*

During the design phase a range of documentation is produced that specifies the component and technical architecture of the archive. The design is closely mapped to the requirements gathered in the phase 1 and takes account of accessibility and interoperability requirements.

3. The *Development Phase*

Using the documentation produced in the design phase the system development takes place. The design is broken down into individual workpackages that are completed, bug tested and signed off. The development phase also contains periods of user testing, the outcomes of which may mark a return to phases one and two to ensure the needs of the user are met.

4. The *Implementation Phase*

The implementation phase consisted of launch, advertising, marketing.

5. The *Maintenance Phase*

Structures put in place, exit strategy, preservation.

⁶ <https://www.digimarc.com/mypicturemarc/>

⁷ <http://www.imaging-resource.com/SOFT/POR/POR.HTM>

⁸ <http://www.contentdm.org/>

Participant Workshops

For the participant workshops a mixed methodology approach was used, combining presentations, break out discussion groups, and hands-on activities. The rationale underpinning the workshop methodology was three-fold and based on responses to an initial questionnaire sent to registered attendees. Firstly that participants were eager to learn about how to use technologies in their teacher; secondly they benefited from bouncing ideas off one another and sharing experiences; and thirdly that they needed the time and space to create learning materials that was specific to their own teaching environments (but which could also be shared with others).

Whilst the project team had an expert overview of the contents of the archive and various technologies that could be utilised to meet to the teaching objectives of the workshop participants, it was the teachers and lecturers who held the most knowledge about the subjects they were teaching and the environments that they would be taught in. It was thus decided that the overall methodology for the workshops would be to facilitate learning designs and materials by bringing together teachers, lecturers, learning technologists and experts in the field.

Marketing and Dissemination

To reach the intended user groups of the archive, the project utilised a range of marketing and dissemination methods. These are outlined below:

Web Marketing

The project made full use of web technologies for its marketing and dissemination activities. From the start visitors could learn about the project's activities via an information page⁹ on the First World War Poetry Digital Archive site and view the latest news and events (delivered via Oxford University's newsfeed system OxITEMS). The archive's Facebook fan page¹⁰ also disseminated information, as did a Twitter feed¹¹ which highlighted various items and resources and delved into some of the more hidden aspects of the archive. The archive also had a page on the Culture24 portal¹², providing a portal to the UK's museums, galleries, archives and libraries, and their learning resources.

Friends of the First World War Poetry Digital Archive

During the original project links had been established with other prominent organisations (e.g. The Western Front Association and The War Poets Association) and individuals (authors and historians). These were named as 'friends of the project'¹³, advertising activities of the project on their website, and disseminating materials at their events.

Conferences and Events

The project was represented at a range of conferences spanning both the fields of technology and e-learning (e.g. DRHA 2009, Shock of the Old 2009 Conference, Europeana Conference 2009 and Museums and the Web Conference 2010) and the First World War (e.g. the International Society for First World War Studies Conference 2009). The project was also represented at a number of symposiums on Web 2.0, both inhouse and externally (e.g. the Museums and Social Networking Seminar hosted by Renaissance West Midlands).

Press

Following the success of the launch of the First World War Poetry Digital Archive in November 2009, the enriching project continued to work with the University of Oxford Press Office and also the JISC Communications Office to gain coverage in the national press.

⁹ <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/about/enriching.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.new.facebook.com/pages/The-First-World-War-Poetry-Digital-Archive/47396039756>

¹¹ <http://twitter.com/ww1lit>

¹² <http://www.culture24.org.uk/am66750>

¹³ <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/about/friends.html>

Implementation

The project followed the five stage system development methodology and the digitisation model simultaneously as described previously. During 2009 the two workshops, entitled "Creating First World War Teaching Materials" were also run.

Overall Project Management for Digitisation and Development

To ensure that the project met its milestones and to allow time for important user engagement processes, a series of detailed workpackages were developed using the supplied JISC template. Basic workpackages were implemented from the start of the project and became more detailed throughout the Define and Design Phases. They were revisited at key times, for instance after the teachers' workshops, to address user requirements. Two key processes were used to monitor the progression of workpackages. All of the project team were required to submit a weekly report to outline their tasks completed during the week and their tasks for the following week in relation to the workpackages. In the report they were also able to address any risks or concerns they had. A task based report was much more appropriate for this project due to the diversity of the project team which included contractors and graduate students who worked remotely, part time, and full time staff. For the technical workpackages the web-based bug tracking software Mantis¹⁴ was used. This not only allowed for the reporting of issues but also allowed for the input of use cases and milestones and for the project manager to sign off workpackages. Bi-weekly meetings with individual members of the project team were held. Full team meetings were held every three months to which the contractors were invited.

Contingency was built into the workpackages. This allowed the project to address unexpected occurrences such as delays in the delivery of images by holding institutions and staff absence, whilst some milestones were pushed back (e.g. the launch of the Sassoon Collection), it meant that resource was still available to deliver the workpackages successfully. Due to extensive user testing and expert QA sessions in the previous project, it was felt that formal user testing of the web interface for the Siegfried Sassoon Collection and redevelopment of the Educational Area were not necessary this time round¹⁵. However, informal possibilities for user engagement and feedback were expanded upon at every opportunity; the teachers workshop provided an excellent chance for testing and gaining feedback on the Web 2.0 exemplars and the improvements to the Path Creation Tool.

The workshops

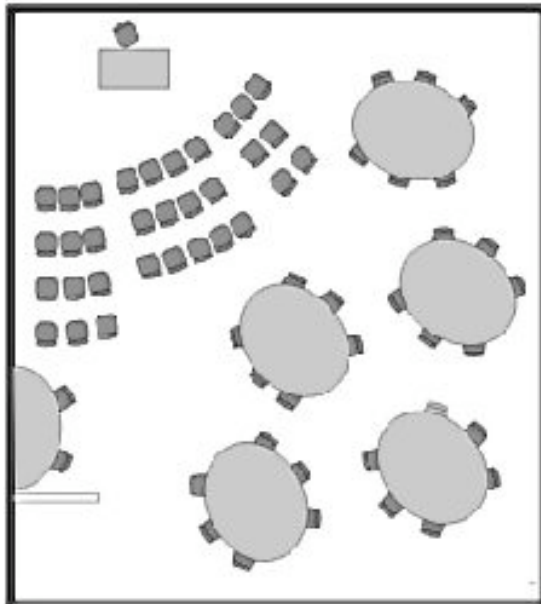
Finding an appropriate time to run the workshops was a challenge. At university level many lecturers were too busy during term time to attend, out of term time also proved difficult for some who wished to take vacation or concentrate on non-teaching commitments, e.g. research. Similarly many teachers in compulsory education found it very difficult to take time out during term time and to arrange paid cover for their classes. Others were reluctant to spend time during their vacations at the workshop. We took the approach of running one workshop in March '09, at the end of the school term with aim of primarily attracting school teachers, and the other in September '09, just before the start of the academic term with the focus being to attract more university lecturers. Generally this approach was effective, however during both workshops we had participants drop out at the last minute, or even during the workshop due to commitments back in their institutions and problems with cover.

The workshops were run over two days. In line with the methodology day one consisted primarily of presentations and break out discussion groups. The project was fortunate enough to have a keynote talk at each workshop delivered by two of the First World War poet's children: William Graves, the son of Robert Graves, and Margi Blunden, daughter of Edmund Blunden. These were then followed by presentations on the archive, and introductions to various technologies that could be used in conjunction with the archival materials. These technologies included the project's own Path Creation Tool, the interactive timelines and the VUE mind mapping software. For the break out sessions participants were split into groups. For the first workshop groups were very mixed, combining representatives from different educational sectors and disciplines. However, after feedback from this

¹⁴ <http://www.mantisbt.org/>

¹⁵ Lindsay, K (2009) The First World War Poetry Digital Archive: JISC Final Report. Available online at: <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/about/documentation>. P. 8 - 9.

workshop it was felt that participants would benefit more from being in groups based on subject area



The layout of the room was conducive to the conceptual framework used by the workshop. With computers clustered around tables and a traditional presentation and audience area.

and this approach was taken in the second workshop. Each group had a chair and a scribe who would feedback the key discussion point to the rest of the groups. An official note taker was employed to record this feedback. Discussion topics were based upon shared experience, for instance the challenges of teaching the First World War and First World War Literature and resources commonly used to teach the subject. Participants also discussed what they would like to design and produce during the workshop and what technologies they were going to use.

The second day focused upon the development of teaching materials. Participants were organised into groups developing materials on similar topics and sat together. Four project members were on hand to answer any queries or give technical support where needed. For the final hour of the day participants presented their materials to the group and these presentations

were filmed for reference by the project team. A timetable can be found in Appendix A.

Outputs and Results

The Siegfried Sassoon Collection

<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/collections/sassoon>

The Siegfried Sassoon Collection was launched on the 9th November 2009 in the lead up to Armistice. The collection is embedded within the First World War Poetry Archive and sits amongst collections relating to other major British poets of the First World War.

Visitors to the site can choose to search the collection via a series of basic and advanced options, and also browse the material (drill-down) by popular headings such title of poem, holding institution, and content type (e.g. photographs, poems etc.). The user can build up a favourite list (akin to a shopping cart), browse through multipage objects item by item (e.g. page by page in a notebook), magnify images, or compare objects side by side (especially useful when looking at the manuscript variants of a poem).

The screenshot shows the website's layout. On the left is a search sidebar with a search box, radio buttons for 'First World War Poetry Digital Archive' (selected) and 'Great War Archive', and an 'Advanced search' link. Below this is a vertical navigation menu with categories: Home, The Collections (listing various poets like Edmund Blunden, Vera Brittain, etc.), The Photographic Collection, The Audio Collection, The Film Collection, Publications of War, Education, The Great War Archive, News and Events, About, and Permitted Use. The main content area features a header with the title 'The First World War Poetry Digital Archive' and a collage of images including a soldier, a woman, and a soldier in a trench. Below the header is the title 'The Siegfried Sassoon Collection' and a quote: 'I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that this War, on which I entered as a war of defence and liberation, has now become a war of aggression and conquest.' Below the quote is a 'Declaration against the War' link. A 'on this page' sidebar lists links for 'biography', 'search the collection', 'find a specific poem', 'find other items', and 'related resources'. The main text area contains a 'Biography' section for Siegfried Loraine Sassoon (1886–1967), detailing his birth, education at Marlborough College and Cambridge, his military service in the Royal Welch Fusiliers, and his injury at Gallipoli. To the right of the biography is a portrait of Siegfried Sassoon in 1916. Below the portrait is a caption: 'Siegfried Sassoon, 1916. Image © The Harry Ransom Center / The Siegfried Sassoon Literary Estate'. Below the portrait is a section titled 'Died of Wounds' with a handwritten manuscript snippet and a caption: 'Died of Wounds' manuscript. Image © The Harry Ransom Center / The Siegfried Sassoon Literary Estate.

All content in the archive is freely accessible for educational use under the JISC-HEFCE Model Licence¹⁶ and items can be downloaded and incorporated in teaching materials such as power points and handouts at the click of a button. To support use in teaching and learning the web site also provides an 'Education Area', containing online tutorials, downloadable resource packs, educational podcasts and films, and a gateway to other relevant resources on the World Wide Web that have been catalogued by the Intute service¹⁷. The Education Area also offers a 'Path Creation Tool' that enables users to create their own annotated paths through the archival content which can then be published and shared.

¹⁶ http://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/model_licence.aspx

¹⁷ <http://www.intute.ac.uk/>

Digital Content

The content of the Sassoon Collection of 275 items of poetical manuscripts and photographs related to the First World War poet Siegfried Sassoon. This is the first time these have gone online and they present a comprehensive collection of his war poetry, reassembled from six different archives across the UK and the United States.

Siegfried Loraine Sassoon (1886–1967) served, for the most part, on the Western Front in the Royal Welch Fusiliers (the same regiment as the writer Robert Graves). In reaction to what he witnessed there – especially at the Somme – he produced some of the most damning and critical poetry of the war, culminating in his 'declaration' which saw him narrowly avoiding a court-martial and instead being sent to Craiglockhart hospital with 'neurasthenia' (shell shock). It was here that he met fellow patient and poet Wilfred Owen, forming one of the most important literary relationships of the twentieth-century.

At the heart of collection lies Sassoon's poetical manuscripts. One poem can have many variants and the user can view these to see the workings and processes that the poet engaged with to produce their work.

The launch of the Sassoon collection attracted significant press, including reports by *The New York Times*, *Guardian Books*, BBC Oxford, and *The Oxford Mail*.

Web 2.0 Exemplars

Google Maps

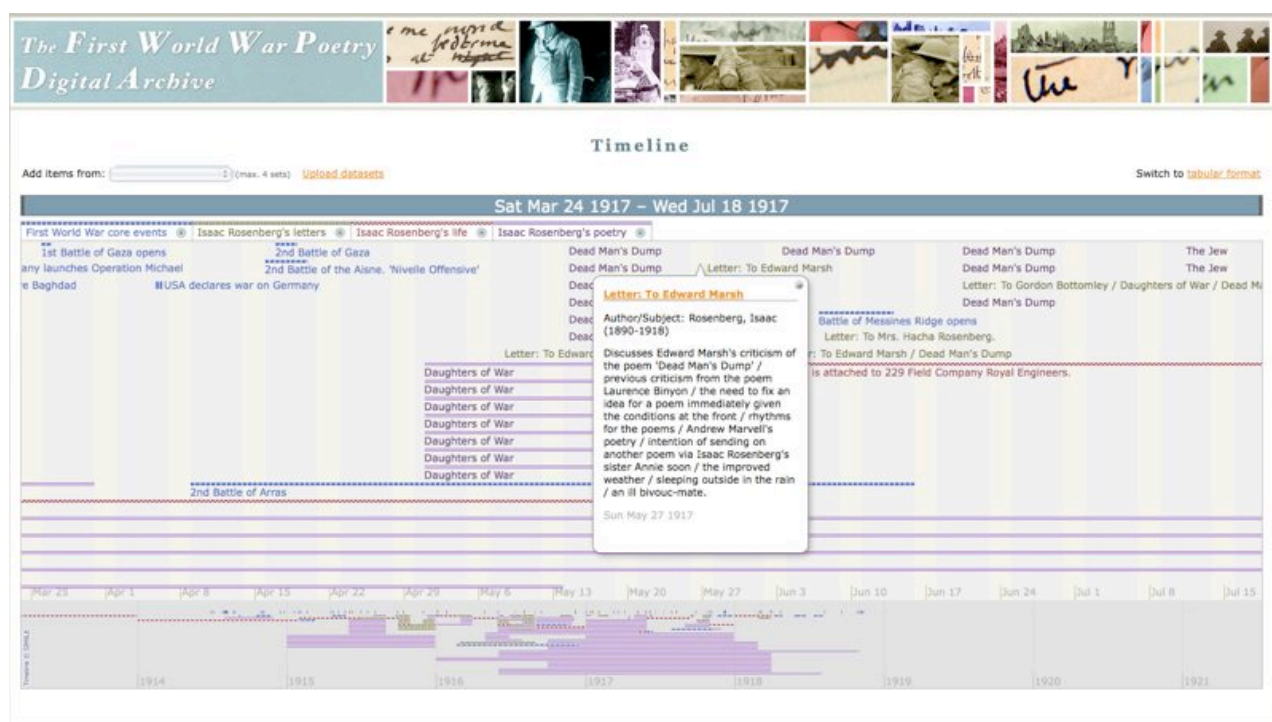
For all items in the poetry archive where the location their creation is known, metadata was enriched with longitude and latitude data. This enabled the items to be represented within the Google Maps software.

The screenshot displays the 'Letter To Susan Owen' page within the 'The First World War Poetry Digital Archive'. The page layout includes a search bar at the top left, a navigation menu with options like 'Home', 'The Collections', 'Education', 'The Great War Archive', 'News and Events', 'About', and 'Help'. The main content area is titled 'Letter To Susan Owen' and features a 'Document contents' section with a list of four items. Below this, there is a 'Previous page' and 'Next page' navigation. The central focus is a document viewer showing a handwritten letter on aged paper. The letter is dated 'Oct. 31. 1918' and is addressed to 'Dear Susan'. The text of the letter is partially visible, mentioning 'the first packet of the writing paper' and 'I ate the chocolate in the cell'. A Google Maps overlay is positioned over the bottom right of the letter, showing a map of a rural area with a road and a field. The map includes a search bar and navigation controls. The overall page design is clean and functional, with a focus on presenting the original manuscript and its geographical context.

Interactive Timelines

<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/education/timeline>

The interactive timelines allow users to select up to four of 17 different date datasets and view them simultaneously on a timeline. Datasets can refer to either key events of the First World War, biographical information of a particular poet, or when they produced particular written materials e.g. poetical manuscripts, letters, or diary entries. Nodes on the timeline either represent a specific date of a date span, and each is hyperlinked to further information and a relevant artefact in the archive.



Users also have the facility to upload their own datasets using a supplied template; they can then view these alongside the existing timeline datasets.

Mind Mapping

<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/education/getcreative/mindmaps>

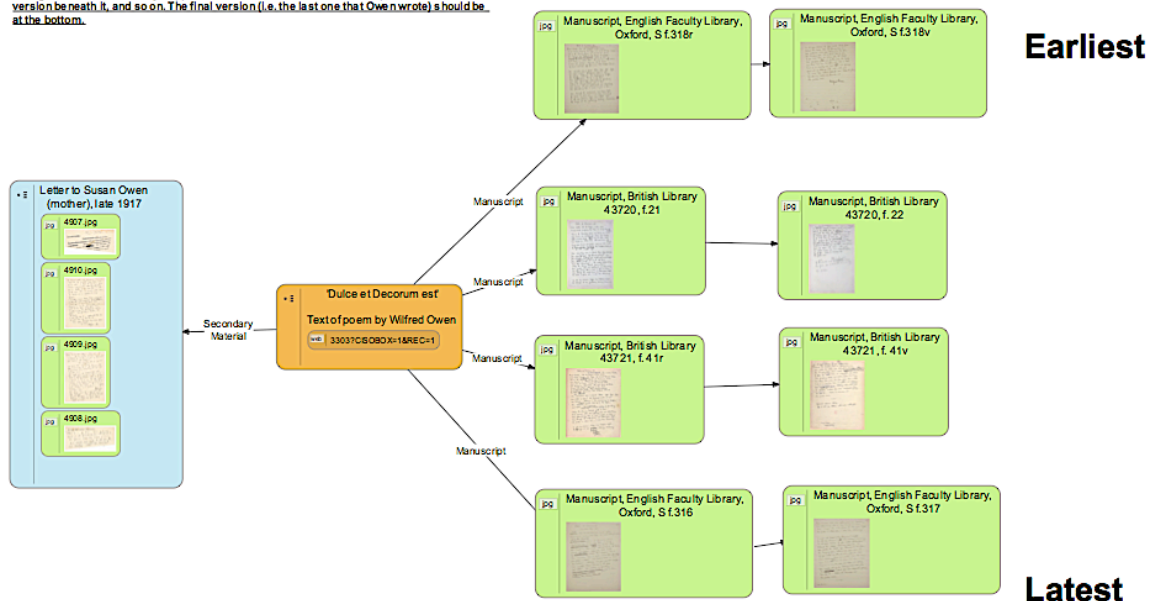
Mind maps are visual representations of words, ideas, tasks, or topics showing relationships between people, places, and objects, that can be manipulated on screen. Mind maps can provide an environment for structuring, presenting, and sharing this information in a graphical, non-linear manner, similar to a brainstorming approach.

Three exemplar mindmaps have been created using the content of the First World War Poetry Digital Archive. The first shows the relationships between the poets and their contemporaries, the second and third are tutorials of varying difficulty exploring the process of writing and manuscript studies (one based around Robert Graves' poem "When I'm Killed", the other around Wilfred Owen's poem "Anthem for Doomed Youth").

Exercise: Here you will find the text of the poem *Dulce et Decorum est* (Orange), the four manuscripts it survives in (Green), and a letter from Wilfred to his mother in which he mentions the poem (Blue).

The manuscripts are written on two pages (or folios).

Arrange the manuscripts of the poem (green boxes) in the order they were written by dragging them. To do this you will need to look at the images and see if you can work out the changes, and the order they happened in. Put the first version at the top, then the next version below it, and so on. The final version (i.e. the last one that Owen wrote) should be at the bottom.



Torn Fields: An Exhibit in Second Life

<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/secondlife>

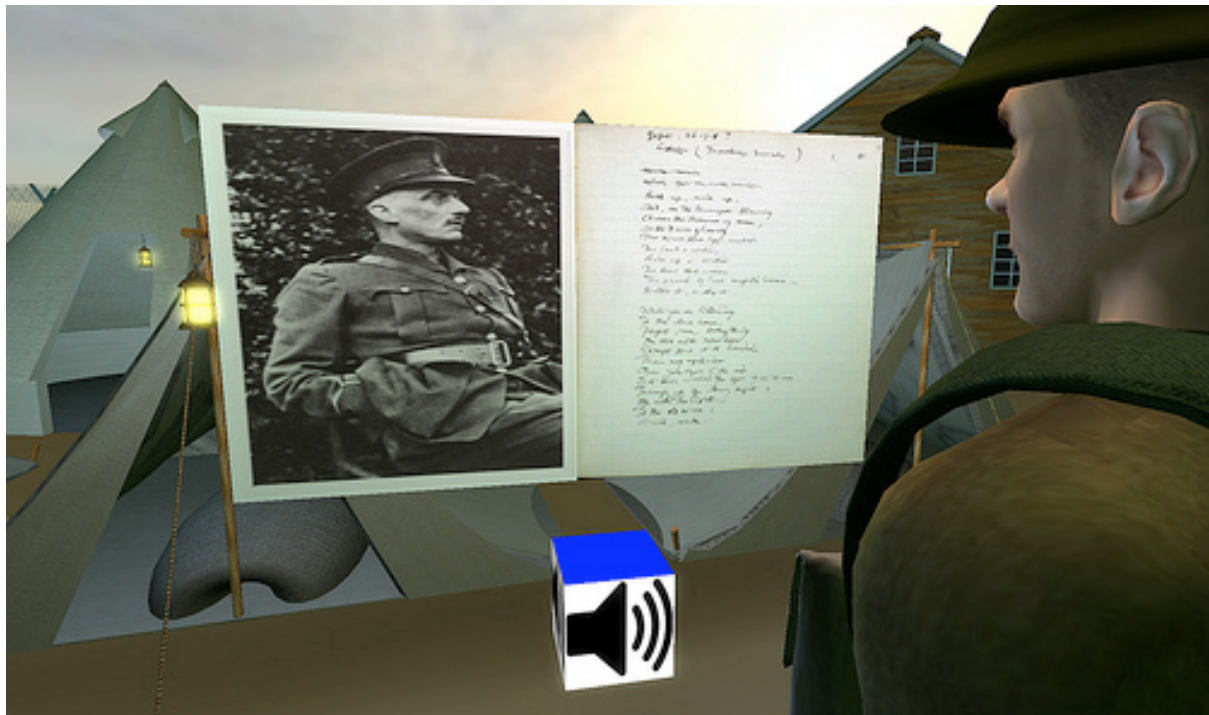
Second Life is a three-dimensional virtual world where users can interact with each other through avatars (3D versions of themselves) called 'residents'. These can travel the world, socialize, visit museums or attend events, concerts and lectures to name just a few activities.

The enriching project, in collaboration with the Learning Technologies Group, University of Oxford and members of the Second Life Community, has used this virtual environment to model areas of the Western Front 1914-18. The environment has been supplemented with archival materials and interpretative content from the First World War Poetry Digital Archive, and a spectrum interactive tools and tutorials, streaming video and audio effects.

Visitors to the model are given a unique immersive experience where they can explore a training camp, dressing station, a trench network and No Man's Land. The terrain is waterlogged and difficult to navigate, rife with rats and littered with poppies. Moving nearer to the front line the clamour of shell blasts and artillery fire becomes louder and louder.

As visitors explore the simulation, they can listen to the voices of veterans recounting their experiences of the War, watch original film footage from the time, and learn about life on the Western Front. Within this context they can encounter some of the most powerful poetry in English literature by handling the original manuscripts, turning the pages of the poet's war diaries and letters, and listening to readings.

At the end the visitor is teleported out of the trenches to a teaching area. Here they are asked to consider the memory of the war, and to confront their own prejudices and stereotypes - was the war really all about trenches, mud, and rats, or are there other aspects to it that we now need to consider? Should it only be remembered as mass slaughter, a gross act of futility, or more a collective act of unparalleled heroism that ended ultimately in a victory for Britain and its allies?



Above: Training Camp Poetry Station: Edward Thomas and “The Trumpet”
The model contains over 20 information stations which either focus on poetry or the history of the war. Each station contains audio poetry readings or historical descriptions illustrated by slideshows of photographs, poetry manuscripts and film footage.



Above: In the Trenches: Wilfred Owen’s “Dulce et Decorum Est”
The floating word cloud is made up of phrases from Owen’s famous poem to represent chlorine gas. Nearby audio stations give background to the life of Owen, his famous poem and the horrors of gas warfare.



Above: Ghosts

Throughout the sim visitors met by ghosts. Using original audio materials from first world war veterans recounting their experiences the ghosts are an effective vehicle for telling first hand tales of the trenches.

By piloting the use of Second Life, the First World War Poetry Archive has innovatively approached the concept of the museum as a physical space, and moved beyond the standard archival web site. More importantly it is showing how new technologies (virtual worlds) can be utilised to provide more interesting access to key archival materials for teaching, learning and research.

The launch of the Second Life exhibition generated a great deal of online press, including reports and reviews in over 20 blogs, Second Life TV and *Guardian Technology*.

The Great War Archive and Flickr

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/greatwararchive/>

Between March and June 2008 The First World War Poetry Digital Archive asked members of the general public to scan any items they held originating from the Great the War and upload them to purpose built system along with some basic metadata. All items were licensed under the JISC-HEFCE model licence. The result was an online archive of over 6,500 items that had never before been accessible for research or teaching. Project resource meant that items could only be collected for a period of four months, so as an exit strategy the project set up a Flickr Pool to enable members of the general public to keep sharing their First World War holdings. The Flickr RSS was fed through to the GWA website.

What Flickr afforded, that the formally led GWA did not, was the ability to be able to comment and tag contributed items. For the period of the enriching strand a member of the project team was assigned to promote the group, to monitor and respond to comments, and effectively facilitate the community.

Not sausages on sticks, but Model 1914 fragmentation rifle grenades

ALL SIZES



Nothing on reverse.

Two types of fragmentation grenades existed in 1914, each weighing approximately 1kg. Both had a long rod attached to its base, which was inserted into the barrel of a rifle, a blank cartridge was then used to launch the grenade towards the enemy lines. When required, a range disc could be attached to the nose of the model 1913 grenade or at the base of the model 1914.

The grenades lacked accuracy and were soon replaced.



gwyliecoyote pro says:

Cool!

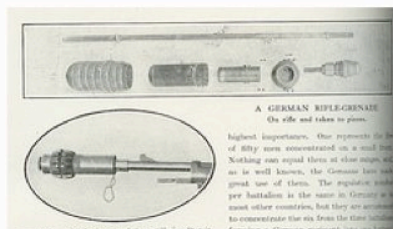
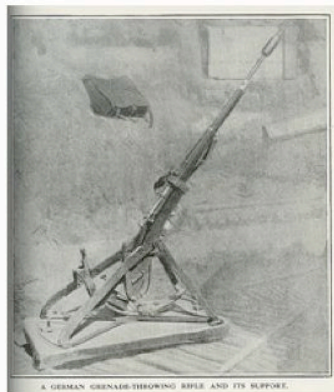
Check out the pickelhaube on the right. M92 uberzug, spikeless ersatz filz cover & helmet. Post June 1915? Next to it looks like a metal mess kit.

Posted 4 weeks ago. ([permalink](#))



fulvue pro says:

Et voila!



Posted 4 weeks ago. ([permalink](#))



drakegoodman pro says:

And this is exactly why I love Flickr. Cheers fulvue!

Posted 4 weeks ago. ([permalink](#))

The image and comments to the left represents a typical example of knowledge sharing and user generated content using the Great War Archive Flickr Group.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/29007475@N08/3599369642/>

To date the Flickr Group has received over 2000 contributions, many of which have attracted discussion and knowledge sharing, for instance identifying regiments, artillery, and other objects within the pictures. To help answer commonly asked questions links to two tutorials in the Path Creation Tool (see below) and the archive's set of YouTube instructional films were provided. These gave visitors tips on how to decipher their wartime photographs and find out information about their relatives who served in the war.

After a series of communications with Flickr, unfortunately the project was not able to expose items from the GWA in the Commons. Flickr regulations stated that all items submitted to the commons must be on no known copyright, whereas copyright for the items in the GWA remained with the contributors who had licensed them for non-profit educational use.

Structured Paths and the Path Creation Tool

<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/education/pathways>

The Path Creation Tool enables users to create their own annotated paths through the archival content which can then be published and shared. Implemented in the previous project this project sought to develop a number of high quality paths on themes tied into compulsory and HE curricula, and adult education as rich teaching and learning materials and inspire others to do the same.

The project team worked with experts in the field of First World War history and Literature studies, including participants at the Creating First World War Teaching Materials workshops and members of the project steering group to create over 15 new paths. These paths cover a range of subjects including literature, history, and creative writing, for instance:

- Wilfred Owen and Classical Allusion
- Women in the War – A Portrait of Vera Brittain
- German First World War Writing
- Archival Material: drafts, communal writing, and affective experience
- Women and Families During and After the War
- First World War: texture and context. A project for creative writing students.
- WW1 Propaganda and Morale
- Conflict in Context: Journey's End & The Spring Offensive

During the course of the project the team found that many queries to the archive concerned similar themes, specifically how to trace information on relatives who fought in the First World War. In response to this two new paths were created to address these queries on family histories:

- Deciphering your WW1 Family Photographs
- Find Army Service Records

These were linked to from the education area of the website, the Great War Archive Flickr Group and the Great War Archive itself.

Surplus funds also enabled the team to enhance the path creation tool to include an admin UI and release the web service, generic WUI client, and exemplar instantiation of the WUI client as open source¹⁸. This enables other archives to implement similar functionality in their own sites.

Educational Films

Six new educational films have been produced for the Archive.

- The town of Ypres: Then and Now
- Trusting historical resources
- J.R.R. Tolkien and the First World War

¹⁸ <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/about/documentation>

- Ernst Junger and the First World War
- War Memorials of the Western Front
- Battle Tactics

In addition three new podcasts have been produced:

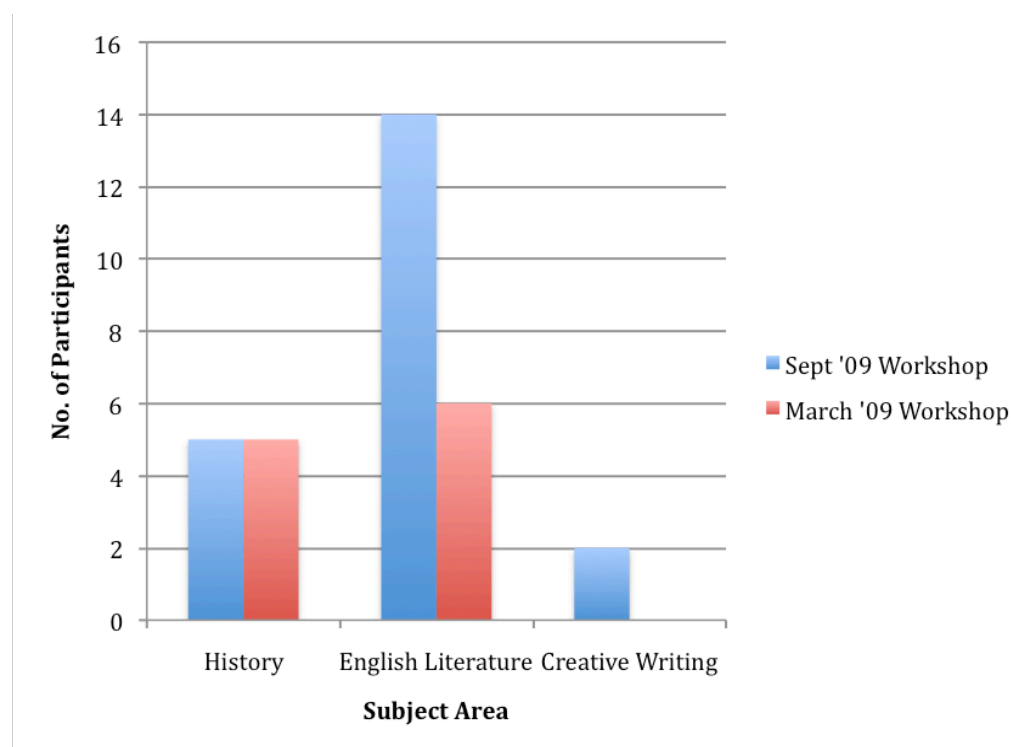
- Prof. Tim Kendall: 'Ivor Gurney: First War Poet'
- Alisa Miller: 'Selling Patriotism: Rupert Brooke in the First World War'
- An interview with Colin Hughes

All materials will be made available as Open Educational Resources and disseminated via the project Website, You Tube and the University of Oxford iTunes U Portal.

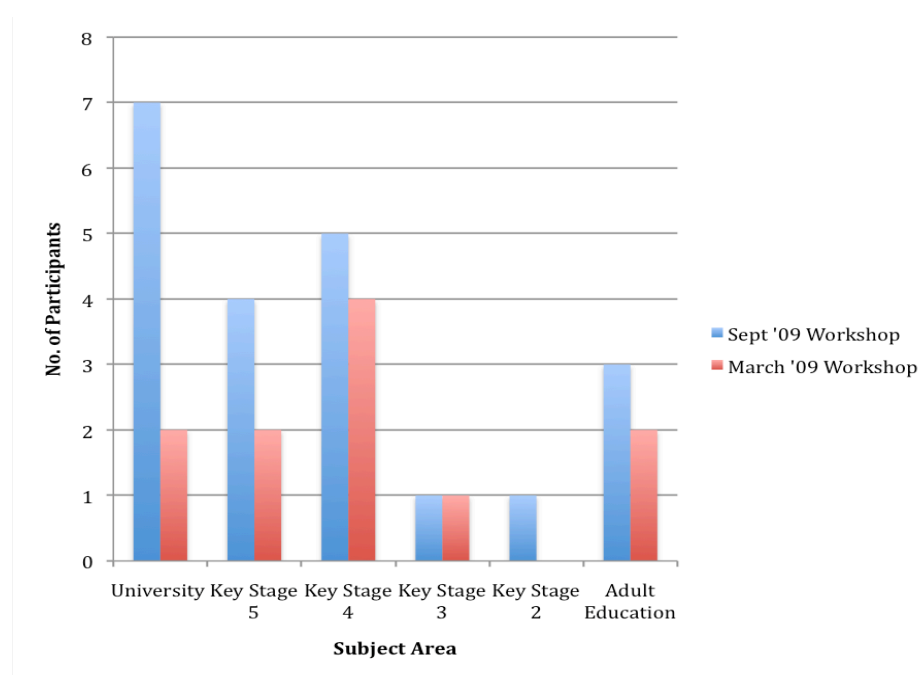
Creating First World War Teaching Materials Workshops

In total, 32 participants attended the Creating First World War Teaching Materials Workshops, spanning a range of disciplines and educational sectors. All participants were brought together by their shared activities of teaching the First World War and its literature and their enthusiasm for using technology to help them produce new and engaging teaching materials and learning designs.

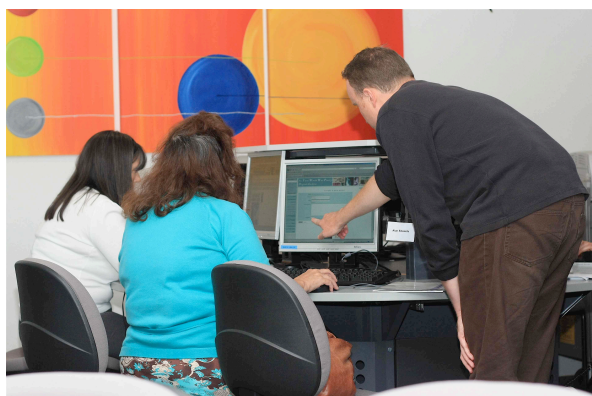
Participant spread by Subject Area



Participant Spread by Educational Sector



Each participant created one or more educational resources (such as a pathway, Power Point, podcast, lesson plan etc.) using the materials in the archive, many of which were subsequently made available on the web site.



Feedback was collected at each workshop using a feedback form, and the overall response was excellent. Participants particularly valued the keynote talks by William Graves and Margi Blunden, remarking that it “enthused” them to be excited about the archive and its resources. Break-out discussion activities were also popular, enabling participants to share their experiences and ideas and the project team also found these sessions helpful for providing a greater context to our own design

processes. However, most valuable of all was having so much time dedicated for hands-on development of educational resources and familiarisation with new technologies. The participants felt that after the workshop they could use what they (and others) had produced “straight away” in their teaching. For many the First World War Poetry Digital Archive has become a core part of their teachings, and in some cases forming research activities for the students. Follow up indicates that the workshops have had a lasting impact as teachers and lecturers implement the following activities:

- Use of the Timelines tool to upload datasets about boys who served in the Great War from a particular school and map them against the lives of the poets and key events of the War as a class project.
- Creation of paths as pre-reading for lectures.
- The listing of the archive as a key reference point for dissertations on manuscript studies
- Use of the Path Creation Tool by students to create revision paths
- Giving students the research project of using the archive to research, author, and build their own War Literature Wiki in the school's VLE.

The conceptual framework underpinning the workshops, bringing together practitioners, learning technologists and subject experts proved highly successful and provides a model for other such projects.

Outcomes

Realisation of aims and objectives

It is noticeable just how much the project has achieved beyond the original scope. Largely due to an unpredicted underspend in the digitisation of the Siegfried Sassoon Collection, the project could expand its activities to enrich the content in the archive by providing further visualisations, additional contextual materials, and more places on the teachers' workshops. In addition to the Web 2.0 exemplars outlined in the original proposal the project was able to model a presence in Second Life with has been met with high acclaim, and is now one of the exemplars of best practice for using virtual worlds in Education. It was also able to offer a further series of educational films in support of key First World War topics taught in compulsory and higher education. The Siegfried Sassoon Collection offers a wealth of material that is of direct use to research. The items that make up the collection are dispersed across the world and it would be impossible to place items physically side by side. This project then has led to a major reassembling of these key research resources for the first time since they were produced making this the main resource for researchers working on Sassoon, his contemporaries, and this genre. Further more the continuation of the development of the archive through the Enriching project has enabled it to “stay alive” for a further year. Being able to dedicate staff time and resource to dissemination and marketing activities proved valuable in embedding the archival resources, and its tools in teaching, learning and research.

Through realising its stated aims and objectives the project's work has been showcased as an example of excellence at the institutional level (being included in the University of Oxford 2008/9 University Review), as well as featuring in the national and international press.

Embedding archival resources in teaching and research – the importance of user engagement

It became clear early on in the preceding project that simply making a plethora of content discoverable and viewable is not sufficient when aimed at the educational community. The project was keen to make its educational resources available via as many routes as possible to widen the project's reach, for example through other educational websites and popular digital media repositories. For example film and audio resources developed were fed into iTunes U and YouTube. However, engagement with teachers defined certain ways that they wished to both discover and visualise content for educational purposes. Films that the project produced had to be made available for download via the web site in a common format as many schools did not have access to the iTunes software or YouTube. Likewise many Web 2.0 tools (e.g. Flickr and Second Life) were not accessible within schools.

The methodology used to run workshops with the teachers was highly successful and made this component one of the highlights of the project. Working collaboratively with classroom practitioners produced a rich set of materials quickly, supported professional development and IT training, and also became invaluable to the project team in informing knowledge on the use of the archive, driving the redesign of the Educational Area. As reported previously, early evidence of take-up suggests that some workshop participants have used the archive in their teaching to great benefit. Participants will be continually surveyed to assess the impact of the workshops and the archive in practice.

The Use of Web 2.0

The development of Web 2.0 exemplars has showcased alternative routes to accessing and visualising archival resources and can act as a road map to other projects. As long as metadata is in a format whereby it can be “mashed up” with third-party technologies the possibilities are many-fold, from using existing technologies to enrich existing material (e.g. placing items on google maps), to exporting data to interactive technologies (e.g. timelines, Second Life), to using social media applications to generate discussion, knowledge sharing and new content (e.g. google groups and Flickr). The use of these technologies however relies strongly on two features: trust and tolerance. Unlike the GWA which used a QA process, this time the archive has trusted users to not upload inappropriate content; if they did, the archive trusted other users to report it. Web 2.0 applications however are so popular that it is difficult to monitor everything that is created. This is always going to be a problem for projects wishing to incorporate user generated content, but the decision has to be made whether having increasing numbers of people access the archival content, negotiate, interpret, and share it is a problem they might be willing to take on. The skillsets required from the when address this content also need to be considered as interpretation of reliability and validity become increasingly important.

The use of social media applications has also brought a more ‘social’ element to the archive. Users stay connected with the archive in a medium with which they are familiar. While the archive does not target a specific demographic, defining the audiences most likely to take advantage of Web 2.0 applications and marketing specifically to them helps drive traffic and the all-important word of mouth. This was especially the case during the launch of the Second Life exhibition when Twitter became the fourth largest refer of traffic to the sim and the web site in general.

As mentioned above there are potential problems with using Web 2.0 when it comes to compulsory education, for instance some institutions may block access to some applications and issues of trust of content abound. However, importantly content is not limited to being viewed in these applications – it all exists in the archive itself (with exception of the Great War Archive Flickr Group). Additionally, aside from the technological tools the project used to reach its users, we were fully aware that some groups were more likely to find out about the archive via other means, such as press publications, reading lists, and information disseminated through local education authorities and word of mouth. User profiling early on in the initial archive project helped us to identify key dissemination routes and create networks amongst relevant organisations that we could use during the enriching phase.

Conclusions

From its launch the First World War Poetry Digital Archive, together with the Great War Archive, has had a genuine impact upon the teaching, learning, and research of the First World War and its literature. This further project has enabled us to continue to design an archive and create a user experience that is of relevance to many different subject areas and educational levels, as well as different research arenas.

The release of the Siegfried Sassoon collection has added an immensely important anthology of work to the archive, brought together and preserved dispersed collections, and generated rich primary source material for teaching, learning and research. The creation of a comprehensive body of learning objects through working closely with practitioners has meant that the archival can be easily embedded within many different subject areas at many different educational levels. This project has also played a part in exploring possible uses of Web 2.0 technologies to visualise and interact with archival

materials and worked with social networking technologies to build communities. In doing this exemplars have been made available to other projects wishing to undertake similar initiatives. Together these approaches have enriched the archive significantly. Whether these approaches can be sustained without further funding resource is yet to be seen, however it is anticipated that the establishment of user communities will continue to breath life into the archive after its completion and reinforce its place in the fields of teaching, learning and research of the First World War and its literatures.

Implications

This project has laid the foundations for further work, specifically:

- User created content. The success of the Great War Archive has shown that involving the general public in the digitisation and curation of collections can produce both collections of worth, and produce economies of scale. Investigating this further through the use of Web 2.0 technologies (e.g. Flickr) has looked at alternative approaches for harvesting user created content and lessons learned can be disseminated. Funding received for project RunCoCo¹⁹ under the JISC e-Content Programme, Institutional Skills and Strategy strand will proceed to do this in its training of projects to undertake community collections.
- The importance of user engagement. The two workshops run by this project provide a methodology for building focused and intensive engagement with target user groups that can generate reusable learning resources and professional development. It would be interesting to see if this model used elsewhere was equally as successful.
- Building sustainable communities. Through using social media and Web 2.0 technologies the project has begun building established communities of users. However, the monitoring and control of such communities can pose as an issue should institutions wish to control and oversee contributions after the project funding has ended. Can these communities be 'kept alive'? The sustainability of communities after funding is an important issue that requires further investigation.

¹⁹ <http://runcoco.oucs.ox.ac.uk>

Appendix A – Example Timetable for Workshop

Creating First World War Teaching Materials 22nd – 23rd September 2009 Isis Room, Oxford University Computing Services, 13 Banbury Road, OX2 6NN

Tuesday 22nd September

9.30 – 10.00	Registration and Coffee
10.00 – 10.15	Welcome (Dr Stuart Lee, Director, First World War Poetry Digital Archive)
10.15 – 10.45	Overview of the First World War Poetry Digital Archive and The Great War Archive (Kate Lindsay, Manager, First World War Poetry Digital Archive)
10.45 – 11.30	In Groups: Coffee and Introductions
11.30 – 1.00	A close reading of 'Undertones of War' (Margi Blunden)
1.00 – 2.00	Lunch
2.00 – 3.00	Using ICTs to create First World War teaching and learning materials (Kate Lindsay, Alun Edwards, David Shakespeare)
3.00 – 5.30	In Groups: Brainstorming and Planning, Creating First World War Teaching Materials
7.30	Dinner (Café Rouge, Little Clarendon Street)

Wednesday 23rd September

9.30 – 12.30	Creating First World War Teaching Materials
12.30 – 1.30	Lunch
1.30 – 3.30	Creating First World War Teaching Materials
3.30 – 5.00	In Groups: Presentation of materials created
5.00	Workshop Close