

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This research investigated how the knowledge of digitisation practices could be transferred from a large organisation, the NLW, to a small organisation, the CCA. Chapter 1 introduced the nature of the research: the aims, objectives and methodology, the management of the project and the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 outlined the various organisations involved in the research. These were primarily the CCA and the NLW, as well as SAGM, Culture Colony and the ICF. Chapter 3 was a review of literature relevant to the research area in the form of books, websites, e-books and e-journals. Chapter 4 described the knowledge that was acquired for this research. This knowledge primarily came from the researcher's work experience at NLW, as well as attendance at other events and courses. Chapter 5 explained how the acquired knowledge was transferred to the CCA through the development of various outputs. Chapter 6 discussed the impact of these outputs in light of the literature review and the acquisition of knowledge. This chapter, Chapter 7, overviews the research and discusses its meaning as a contribution to other research. Following this there is a bibliography and appendices.

This research was implemented in four stages (outlined in section 1.6): learning from various sources, developing outputs from knowledge, applying the outputs to the CCA and reviewing them. My work experience at NLW resulted in the development of several instructive documents to aid the CCA in digitisation work. It was useful and interesting to compare the different digitisation workflows in the DSU and the PCW. Although the DSU's process was much more advanced, and therefore a very high quality, the PCW's process was more realistic in terms of my project and the capabilities of the CCA. I tested the documents I developed and supervised undergraduate students who used them in a digitisation project. The vast majority of digitisation and metadata was completed accurately and the students reported a general increase in their understanding of the topic. The CCA received digitisation and metadata work on their ICF collection, specifically the festival programmes and the demonstration videos. The documents can be used by CCA staff and others to

carry out digitisation and metadata work un-aided. With the support of KESS, the CCA also received equipment to support digitisation work in the form of a Macbook Pro and a flip camera. Throughout this research, reading literature and attending relevant events supported my understanding of the topic. The limitations, as described in section 1.5, imposed by the research boundaries on the transfer of digitisation knowledge were mitigated. This is because:

- The funds available through the KESS budget were sufficient to allow the CCA to acquire suitable equipment and equipment was also available for use at the School of Art, Aberystwyth University
- The funds available through the KESS budget were sufficient enough to provide the researcher with relevant training
- Digitisation activities and future requirements were considered throughout the research by the researcher and CCA staff
- The materials pre-selected by NLW for the work experience were similar in nature to those at the CCA
- The materials selected by the CCA were representative of their collection
- The researcher maintained constant contact with the CCA and the research supervisors.

As stated in section 1.1.1 it was hoped this research would contribute to the Digital Economy of Ceredigion, Wales, as part of the European Union's Convergence Programme. As two cultural organisations for members of the public, the CCA and the NLW both benefit from this research. Other organisations involved in this research were: ICF and Aberystwyth Arts Centre, SAGM and Aberystwyth University, Culture Colony and KESS. Through the National Centre for Ceramics in Wales, the research can benefit other universities in the group. The research could also contribute towards the CCA's educational work by using digital works as teaching materials.

One of the key principles of this KESS MPhil was the transfer of knowledge from a large organisation to a small one. During the work experience at NLW the researcher was made aware of the difficulties that can arise when transferring knowledge

between organisations of different sizes. “Large” and “small” organisations have differences in capabilities, facilities, finances, staffing, work targets, types of users, and many other factors, on both a long-term and a short-term scale. The researcher saw the PCW’s smaller-scale work as being most easily and suitably transferrable to CCA. The DSU’s workflow was more stringent to ensure the numerous staff involved in the work accurately digitised the large amount of material. However, in the case of anomalies and exceptions to instructions, it may be more desirable to have less stringent rules and to give the individual worker more control. In NLW, managers make decisions during benchmarking meetings and then individuals perform specific tasks. However, the CCA has only 4-5 staff, most of who do numerous other tasks, and so would benefit from giving more control to these individuals.

Digitisation is a solution to increasing access to a collection and ensuring long-term preservation of materials. However, digitisation is costly and therefore should not be undertaken without careful consideration of the implications. Technology is developing at a rapid pace and organisations must keep up-to-date on this matter to ensure digitisation is implemented accurately and effectively. The face of libraries, archives and museums has changed drastically since the birth of the World Wide Web but certain fictional neurotic librarians are not so optimistic about this change:

“... I’m from the old school now. When you come into this library, what’s the first thing you see? Kids wet behind the ears in front of the comic book shelves. And alongside them, Music. Just behind that, D.V.D.s, that’s where cultural democracy has got us. It’s not a library anymore, with silence reigning over shelves full of intelligence, it’s a leisure centre where people come to amuse themselves.”

- The librarian, *The Library of Unrequited Love* (Sophie Divry, 2010: 54)

Through the lessons I have learned throughout this research, I would argue that the introduction of technological developments to paper-dominated libraries could only mean deeper and more varied access to collections. Historically speaking, our

ancestors communicated through paper-based materials, by reading books and writing letters, however, nowadays communication is largely centred around technology: mobile phones, laptops and tablet devices, amongst many others. Libraries, archives and museums are institutions where knowledge should be shared and this knowledge is more likely to be shared in a format that is familiar and popular with contemporary society. The unnamed librarian from *The Library of Unrequited Love* symbolises a knowledge institution of yesteryear, when such institutions were only accessible to academics and those of a wealthy status. Knowledge knows no class; it is free and accessible to all in increasingly varied forms, and all the better if it also *amuses*.

7.1 Further Work

This research can be expanded in numerous ways. As stated already, the research contributed to a grant application with the CCA and the ICF (sections 5.11 and 6.9). Increasingly so, grants are a primary source of funding for digital projects and arts projects. If digitisation becomes a more mainstream activity in the CCA, it may be advisable to have two Digitisation Strategy documents: one for born-digital material and one for digitised analogue material. All documents produced in this research can be used as a basis for future digitisation and metadata projects. During work experience at the NLW, the researcher came across many different documents that support digitisation work. Only some of these were developed for the CCA during this research, while others can be developed in the future, such as risk analysis or crisis management documents. JISC also produce numerous guidelines and documents on the subject of digitisation and these are an excellent source of reference. More research can be done into how different materials can be published online and how users can access and interact with them. This research focused on digitisation of 2D materials but since ceramics are 3D objects, 3D digitisation was briefly investigated in the literature review. 3D scanning is a key area of interest to the CCA, as well as the NLW (which holds a 3D scanner as of December 2013), and so this aspect might offer an additional collaborative project or avenue of exploration.