

Appendix M

Prioritising First World War Resources: Methodology

The project team was managed by King's College London Archives and Information Management staff, Patricia Methven and Geoff Browell, who also lead the AIM25 aggregation project that brings together descriptions of archives from 130 institutions in London. Survey work and administration were undertaken by Lynelle Howson and Daniel Whittingham who both have significant academic backgrounds in World War One. This report reflects a synthesis of academic and information professional findings.

The project was overseen by an academic steering committee. Deliberately cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral in scope, the Steering Committee was led by Professor William Philpott of the Dept of War Studies and included the following academics according to specialism:

Medicine and psychiatry: Professor Edgar Jones and Simon Wesseley, KCL
English including poetry and life writing: Professor Max Saunders and Hope Wolf, KCL
Naval and maritime history: Professor Andrew Lambert, KCL
Military history: Professor Ian Beckett, University of Kent
Socio-demographic history: Pierre Purseigle, University of Birmingham.

The steering group met three times during the course of the project to agree the questions and themes for the survey conducted and focus groups described below, circulation strategy, hosting, gap analysis, and nature of the conclusions of the work and recommendations.

Research was conducted through a blended methodology of online surveys and focus groups, in order to gain best quantitative and qualitative indicators of teaching and research themes around the study of the First World War. Running parallel to this was desk research undertaken by the project team to scope and report on collections available in digital and analogue form held around the UK pertaining to the First World War.

Understand teaching, learning and research priorities for the effective study of the First World War so that the content included addressed specific need/s within education.

Three online surveys were conducted (see Appendices [A](#), [B](#) and [C](#)), in order to elicit responses from academic teaching staff (with university teaching and research responsibility), secondary teachers (with college and school teaching responsibility) and information professionals (archivists, librarians, museum curators, educators within curatorial institutions and galleries) across sectors and disciplines. These different surveys were employed to gain greatest understanding from a range of perspectives in terms of the on-going use of digitised resources and information about unmet demand. All encouraged additional comment for qualitative assessment in addition to quantitative responses intended to provide evidence for structured comparison.

The teaching surveys were comparable but with some differentiation to reflect approaches at undergraduate, taught post graduate and postgraduate research levels in HE and syllabus requirements for GCSE, A level and equivalents for secondary. The key foci for both surveys however, were the range of programmes of study, courses, modules or units that concentrate on or feature the First World War, the extent to which digital resource are used and the obstacles faced when including digital resources.

The survey of information professionals, focused on the scale and availability of relevant digitised resources, catalogued and un-catalogued material, and technical challenges faced when attempting to provide access to these digital resources.

All questionnaires were widely disseminated on popular e-mail lists and blogs relevant to each community.

Of the 108 teaching survey (from academic and secondary teaching staff) questionnaire returned:

- 51 were from academic teaching staff
- 47 were from college/ school teachers
- 10 were from others.

122 returns were received from information professionals.

Teaching disciplines represented included History, History and Politics, Art History, Naval History, Military History, War Studies, English, Life Writing, Modern Languages, Film, broadly focused Humanities, History of Medicine, History of Nursing and Psychiatry.

From the survey returns it was possible to map HE teaching themes compared to available digital resources ([Appendix D](#)), current teaching themes in HE and secondary sectors ([Appendix E](#)), educators and information professionals' priorities for digitisation by material type ([Appendix F](#)), educators and information professionals' wish lists for digitisation by theme ([Appendix H](#)) and present use by educators of a select list of sites ([Appendix I](#)).

To complement the findings of the surveys, three focus groups were conducted. The first was held at University of Exeter at the beginning of the project and served as a pilot for a further two, hosted after the results of the teaching surveys had been collated. These covered medicine and nursing specifically, and cross-disciplinary study more widely. It proved impossible to convene further groups at short notice within the teaching calendar; so online respondents who had indicated a willingness to participate in focus groups were followed up with an offer of an individual telephone interview. Telephone interviews had already been adopted as the means for developing responses to the survey of school teaching. A focus group of information professionals was also held which included representatives from the Imperial War Museum and The National Archives and simultaneous telephone interviews conducted. The focus groups and telephone interviews were used to tease out the implications of the findings of the surveys and form the recommendations and conclusions.

Survey and report on collections available in digital and analogue form held around the UK pertaining to the First World War.

The [Guide to World War One Collections report](#), originally sponsored by the JISC and Wellcome and undertaken by the Imperial War Museum (IWM), to map the range of digital and analogue resources in the UK, was passed to the project team as a baseline for further expansion.

A systematic review of all entries and inclusion of new entries against originating sites was conducted and further detail and updates added as appropriate. Each entry was noted under a number of criteria from the nature of the collection held, to the terms of use by which the content could be re-used or re-purposed with access details and URL. These range of collections are in the process of being entered into an online database that, due to its license and hosting, can be updated by all interested in contributing to the commemorations of the

First World War. This shall be made available at <http://www.jiscww1discovery.ac.uk> in May 2012.

In the meantime however, the updated collections mapping spreadsheets are included in the appendices to this report. [Appendix J](#) outlines digital content available to view on websites of UK repositories. [Appendix L](#) additionally includes analogue material while [Appendix K](#) describes the 'top' (as defined by Google search returns and survey/focus returns) websites excluding those listed in J but including foreign and non repository based sites.

Synthesis these findings in order to locate and prioritise suitable content for aggregation.

Follow-up telephone and email conversations were held with selected holders of digital resources with a view to assessing their readiness to be included in a JISC World War One Discovery aggregation layer and the nature of any significant licensing issues. A separate list, not supplied as an appendix, has been forwarded to JISC for further consideration. Criteria for inclusion, also listed above, included academic relevance (including fit to existing and future requirements); technical availability (including the existence of an API), accessibility (based on whether the resource is openly licensed) and economic viability (based on whether the content sits behind a pay wall or is it only available via a subscription).