

The processes and procedures for establishing and embedding a
Digitisation Strategy for UCA

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Background

The University for the Creative Arts (UCA) is a specialist university for the arts that delivers a wide range of courses such as fine art, film-making, three dimensional design, journalism, animation, fashion and architecture, across five campuses at Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester. There are many potential uses for digital materials in the University's teaching, learning and research, and the Library and Learning Services Department is keen to provide a policy-led framework for the creation and use of digital resources through the development of a digitisation strategy. A strategic approach to digitisation could offer many benefits to the University, such as:

- Value for money - ensuring funding spent on staff, equipment and technical infrastructure for digitisation is effectively targeted and that digital resources are delivered through the most efficient means possible.
- Increased visibility and use of digital resources - ensuring resources produced as a result of digitisation are targeted at, and meet the needs of, their users.
- Supporting the Research Excellence Framework (REF) - ensuring digital assets produced in University research are standards compliant and accessible thus helping to raise the University research profile.
- Promoting the university - attaining recognised leadership in digitisation, enhancing the reputation of the University and increasing access to external funding for digitisation and related IT infrastructures.

The library has demonstrated its commitment to strategic digitisation by being awarded funding through the University Modernisation Fund and the Strategic Development Fund to set up a digitisation unit. This unit has the potential to deliver the library's strategic vision for digitisation, and to provide support for all university digitisation activity and university collections.



Male Nude in Nature, by Charlotte Jonsmyr, 2007, Fine Art Graduate.
Gallery Collection, University for the Creative Arts at Farnham.

The collections currently available for teaching, learning and research at the University for the Creative Arts include:

Un-Digitised

- Special collections such as:
 - Architecture and Fashion Slide Collections
 - Canterbury College of Art Archive
 - Artists' Book Collection
 - Herbert Read Collection
 - Audio Visual Animation Collection
 - Artists Film and Video Collection at Maidstone
 - Bande Dessinee collection
 - Tessa Boffin Archive
 - Karen Millen Collection
 - Medway College of Design Archive
 - Microfiche Collection
 - Students' Sketchbook Collection
 - Urban Fox Press
 - Periodical and Magazine Collections and multiple Rare Book Collections from various campuses
- Moving image collection of broadcast material

Part Digitised / Digitised

- Collections from the Animation Research Centre and Archive (ARC), and the Crafts Study Centre (CSC).
- Teaching collections that have been built up by individual academics and departments, such as an extensive textiles collection.
- Academic departments, such as Fine Art Printmaking, which archive images of previous student work.
- James Hockey Gallery which has built up an analogue UCA Collection and a large collection of digital images of exhibits and gallery shows.
- Various library collections, subscribed to, or bought outright, of electronic theses, articles, journals and books.
- The university's institutional repository, UCA Research Online.
- Collection of student work used by the Marketing Department.
- UCA digital image collection, the UCA Image Bank, which is currently in development by the University Library for use by academic staff in their teaching.

The University for the Creative Arts is also unique in that it hosts the Visual Arts Data Service (VADS), a research centre of the Library and Learning Services Department. VADS specialises in the management, storage, and presentation of digital images and other arts-based assets, and is licensed to provide access to over 120,000 free digital images and other electronic teaching resources. The knowledge and expertise available at VADS could be of enormous benefit to the development of any future digitisation strategy.

The aim of the case study was to engage with university digitisation activity and assess its breadth and the various digitisation methodologies being deployed

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within the university. This background research and auditing of digitisation activity will form the basis for the development of the proposed digitisation strategy, ensuring that the proposed strategy is founded squarely on current university digitisation practice and needs.



Enchanted Poppy, by Susie Lidstone, 1980.
Printmaking Collection, University for the Creative Arts at Farnham.

Expectations

It was expected that the case study would uncover a fragmented set of collections and digital resources that made sense in isolation, or within an individual department. Similarly the case study expected to find a digitisation practice that was not always compliant with recognised standards, perhaps lacking rigorous analysis of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) or secure archival methods and practice.

In terms of the visibility of digital collections and resources, the expectation was that digital collections did not maximise their use, as collections can be hard to find, or are not targeted to specific teaching, courses or staff. This lack of awareness amongst users as to what digital resources are available could, it was thought, lead to unnecessary duplication of resources, or, conversely, make it difficult for planners to identify and fill gaps in resource provision.

These expectations were to some extent borne out by the findings of the case study, especially in localised teaching collections where sometimes even academics working in the same department were unaware of what resources were commonly available to colleagues. However pockets of excellence were also found, for example in the digitisation carried out by the Crafts Study Centre and the Textiles Department. In these collections, standards had been adhered to throughout the workflow and images were professionally captured, catalogued and stored. Moreover, large scale ongoing digitisation projects such as those undertaken by the Animation Research Centre were producing a wealth of experience in digitisation methods and substantial digital resources.

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Part of the remit for any future digitisation strategy therefore is in enabling sustainable and useful policies that can underpin and inform all digitisation activity and encourage the sharing of good practice when it is found across the university.



Porcelain saucer by Lucie Rie.
Crafts Study Centre Collection, University for the Creative Arts at Farnham.
© Mrs. Yvonne Mayer/Crafts Study Centre.

Approach

1. Evidence Gathering

The first task of the case study was to identify a broad range of digitisation activity and interview potential digitisation stakeholders at the university. These were:

- Various library staff including senior managers and those responsible for the university's institutional repository (UCA Research Online), special collections, the new university digital image collection (UCA Image Bank), and staff responsible for off-air recordings.
- The James Hockey Gallery at Farnham.
- University research centres including the Animation Research Centre, Crafts Study Centre, and VADS.
- The Marketing Department.
- The Learning and Teaching Department.
- The Printmaking Department.
- Academic departments / faculties / schools.

The case study also drew on previous related research undertaken by the UCA Image Bank. This included evidence from a questionnaire that was circulated in May 2010, and from subsequent interviews with academic staff as regards digital image provision for learning and teaching. Similarly the development of the institutional repository, UCA Research Online, involved wide ranging engagement with university researchers, research clusters and research centres, and produced a final report which proved useful as a background to this case study.

Meetings were mainly face-to-face and typically lasted for an hour. The face-to-face approach, while taking more time than, say, posting an on-line questionnaire,

allowed staff involved in the case study to analyse activity in some depth and to glean greater understanding of the idiosyncrasies of the departments' digitisation needs than would not have been possible using a less personal method of engagement.

Staff involved in the case study also made contact with other institutions to assess their digitisation methodologies. In particular the British Library, an institution that remains at the leading edge of digital resource provision for learning, teaching, and research, was very helpful in arranging a visit to their digitisation facilities and staff at Boston Spa, Yorkshire, and also in providing detailed accounts of their digitisation studio at Euston Road. Similarly the University of Southampton, historically a UK leader in research repository implementation and research, was visited to view their digitisation facilities. Telephone conversations were also held with the National Maritime Museum's Digitisation Department and with the National Registry of Scotland, who carry out extensive digitisation of ancient and rare books and manuscripts. This research was augmented by evidence gathered by the Look-Here! project itself, which carried out various events and workshops with libraries, museums, and archives in arts-based institutions.

2. Summary of Digitisation Activity

The process of user engagement undertaken for the case study revealed a significant amount of varied digitisation activity across the university. The Animation Research Centre, Crafts Study Centre, and the James Hockey Gallery already undertake a lot of digitisation and have well established workflows in place to continue production. The Animation Research Centre and the James Hockey Gallery employ a rolling programme of digitisation that is overseen by managers, and in some cases student volunteers, to capture and catalogue work. The Crafts Study Centre has already digitised a significant part of its collections and is often involved in fundraising to digitise the remainder. It has digitised around 6,500 items from its collection and paper archive, and typically aims to digitise approximately 200 further items annually.

There are potentially many thousands more digital objects available through the University's Learning and Teaching programmes. The University is in the process of developing a comprehensive digital image collection for use in learning and teaching, called the UCA Image Bank. The Learning and Teaching Department was also recently involved in an Open Educational Resources (OER) project funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), which gathered together materials such as lecture podcasts, video, still images and other teaching aids, and also funded some digitisation. While this short term project concentrated its efforts on a few courses and tried to gather a representative range of teaching material from these, by doing so it began to unravel the complexity and depth of digital learning resources used at the university. The project pointed firstly to the enormous potential there is to make available many more such digital learning materials, and secondly to the fact that many lecturers are often creating and using digital resources in their teaching, but lack a co-ordinated, sustainable policy framework and support within which to do it.

All of those interviewed expressed a desire for more digitisation and digital resources, and typically highlighted lack of funds, expertise and time as reasons for not doing more. For example, the UCA Image Bank is currently going through a process of gathering image material from academic courses, including Architecture, Photography, Fashion Journalism and Printmaking. The end result

will be an initial collection of 500 or so images that are available internally to support learning and teaching. This is intended as a proof of concept period which will allow academic staff to use a fully functioning online image collection that they can contribute to and use in future.

Moreover, there is a wealth of analogue material held at the university that is effectively waiting to be digitised, user need, funding, and IPR permitting. The strategic need for the digitisation of these analogue resources could include, for example: reducing handling of fragile material, their inherently inaccessible nature, or to promote cross collection synergies and raise new research questions. These potential resources include the long list of university special collections which comprise a range of materials such as books and periodicals, slides and photographs, VHS film, sketchbooks and large quantities of archival paper documents. The strategic and sustainable digitisation of these resources, currently un-digitised and accessible only from the campus in question, would open up a wealth of new teaching material accessible both across all campuses and nationally and internationally as appropriate.

Similarly there is a need to support the work of UCA Research Online and provide digitisation expertise in the capture of university research output which includes theses, academic papers, events, exhibitions, catalogues, and still and time based media. While the aim of the repository is to encourage a self archiving culture at the university, whereby academic research staff capture, upload and catalogue their own material to the repository, as things stand there remains a need for both practical and advisory digitisation assistance for staff. The final report from the repository start-up project highlighted, in a section on 'Repository Implementation', that not all the university's research outputs were readily available in appropriate digital formats. The report went on to say that this 'suggested that in order for an arts repository to be successfully embedded within an institution, some extra provision would have to be made to support researchers in digitising their work.' The report also provides a useful assessment of the sometimes complex management requirements of the many forms of arts research, including multiple and layered IPR, and also the sometimes complex application and use of visual resources requiring, for example dual projections, 3D modelling and other non-standard software applications.

In addition to the various digitisation capture methodologies, potential future digitisation, and the development of services like UCA Image Bank and UCA Research Online, the digitisation activity taking place at the university uses a wide mix of cataloguing and resource description methods, some standards-based and others not. Similarly, IPR management differed markedly across the university. Any future digitisation strategy would need to provide policy direction in these areas and set clear guidelines for collection managers and digitisers to follow.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The University for the Creative Arts has a large amount of digitisation activity taking place and tremendous potential for providing future digital resources from its as yet untapped wealth of special collections. However, despite pockets of excellence being evident, a coherent, holistic and strategically led approach to digitisation across the university is lacking.

In a worst case scenario this lack of strategic planning for digitisation can result in materials not being fully utilised, potential for duplication of resources, equipment

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and systems, varying levels of adherence to recognised standards and best practice, possible IPR infringements, opportunities for collaboration and interoperability being missed and, ultimately, a failure in proving value for money.

The development of a university wide digitisation strategy will help to alleviate these potential pitfalls and provide the solid base from which the university can begin to grow its digital resources in a way that meets the needs of its learning, teaching and research communities. In so doing, the university will be able to provide better resources for its staff and students and be well placed to develop its name as a recognised leader in digitisation in the arts nationally - opening up new routes for funding and enhancing the university's reputation for excellence.

The case study has identified nine requirements for establishing and developing a digitisation strategy at the University for the Creative Arts. These are:

1. To facilitate more digitisation

All of those interviewed for the case study expressed a need for more digitisation, and highlighted time, expertise and funding as reasons for not doing more. The strategy should facilitate more digitisation by investigating and implementing a series of digitisation enablers including an assessment of time, resource and incentive requirements of relevant staff, and to provide framework support to identify, plan and manage future digitisation activity.

2. To provide digitisation advice and support

The curation of existing digital resources tends to be fragmented across the university. Pockets of activity tend to lead to many different methods of resource creation and management. There should be better utilisation of economies of scale, the setting of appropriate university digitisation standards, and better access to advice and support to enable more effective management of digital collections.



Designed and made by Barron & Larcher, 1950s.
The Textiles Collection, University for the Creative Arts at Farnham.

3. To fully exploit existing digitisation expertise held within the university

The University for the Creative Arts is unique amongst UK arts institutions in that it hosts VADS as a research centre of the university. VADS has a wealth of experience and has produced internationally accredited guidelines in all areas of digitisation,

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including creation and capture standards, cataloguing and resource description, digital archiving, planning and running projects, usability and accessibility. Similarly there are clear overlaps with the work of the Learning and Teaching Department and their Learning Technologists, UCA Research Online staff, Visual Resources Librarians, other library staff, and those academic and support staff who have undertaken successful digitisation projects, such as the Crafts Study Centre and the Animation Research Centre. This wealth of experience and expertise should be better harnessed through more formal channels.

4. To provide digital archival services

The back-up and storage of the university's digital resources does not currently follow recognised best practice. The university should begin engaging with international digital archiving standards, otherwise it risks losing many of its digital resources over time. A digital preservation framework should include policy on archival file formats, format migration, version control and deletion criteria.

5. To raise awareness of external and internal sources of funding for digitisation

Funding for digitisation has been gained by some departments and VADS also has a good track record of successfully seeking external funding. More should be made of this knowledge across the university and departments should be encouraged to apply for grants and made more aware of funding sources for digitisation.

6. To maintain awareness of and contribute to developments in the creation and use of digital resources in the arts nationally and internationally

Sector leading digital repository work is being carried out and facilitated by the university through its work on the JISC-funded Kultur and Kultivate projects, and the university hosts valuable collections through its research centres (Animation Research Centre, Crafts Study Centre, and VADS), and its various special collections. More could be done to build upon and innovatively exploit these resources for learning, teaching and research and increase both their profile and the university's reputation for excellence.

7. To facilitate a 'user-led' approach to the provision of resources

UCA's digital resources are under used, and to date there have been minimal attempts to engage with users on a wide scale. The Library and Learning Services Department, UCA Image Bank, UCA Research Online and the research centres have begun to make headway in this area and should be encouraged to maintain an engagement with users as to the digital resources they want and how they expect to be able to access and use them. User-led activity should include a review of current collections' dissemination, outreach, advocacy and promotional work.

8. To implement a university-wide IPR policy in regards to digitisation and to provide practical mechanisms for the management of IPR

Digitisation in the arts can have many copyright and other IPR implications. All of those currently engaged in digitisation activity expressed the need for more obvious copyright policy documentation, practical assistance and advice. The university should develop an IPR system that includes model licences, copyright

statements, clear policy guidelines and an IPR diligence database that can be used by all relevant staff.

9. To place the digitisation unit at the heart of university digitisation

The Library and Learning Services Department recently received funding for the setting up of a digitisation unit. The unit is currently at a developmental stage and is seeking digitisation requirements across the university with a view to purchasing appropriate digitisation equipment, allocating permanent office space and formulating staff requirements and roles.

The digitisation unit is an ideal vehicle to act on the recommendations of this case study and to lead in the development of the university digitisation strategy. Furthermore it will be a place in which to identify, plan and begin the digitisation of future learning, teaching, research and special collections, and to provide support to university legacy digital collections, the UCA Image Bank and UCA Research Online. While the Digitisation Unit will incur set-up costs (already funded) and ongoing staff resources, it is highly likely to provide net cost savings for UCA in the long term, by:

- **Ensuring cost benefits** achieved through economies of scale for future digitisation by reducing the unnecessary duplication of digitisation equipment, hardware, software and staff time in departments.
- **Ensuring better use of systems**, for example, in reducing network file storage costs for obsolete digital files, reducing wasted departmental resources on underused and unfit for purpose systems and facilitating better targeted spending on future systems.
- **Making digitised resources more visible** and ensuring they are accessible to and meet the needs of end users, providing resources that help to attract and retain staff and students.
- **Ensuring that gaps in digital resource provision are identified and filled** in response to clearly defined user needs thereby enhancing the quality and standard, and hence value, of university teaching and learning.
- **Ensuring external sources of funding for digitisation are more attainable** through the expertise and networking capabilities of the unit, and through the increased profile of the university made possible by the work of the unit.
- **Providing increased strategic and practical support** for research centres, UCA Research Online, UCA Image Bank and all learning, teaching, research and special collections thus raising the research, learning and teaching profile of the university.

Key Points

The key points from the case study are as follows:

- The University for the Creative Arts has a wide range of digitisation activity taking place across its five campuses, which includes many internationally renowned collections, idiosyncratic teaching collections, student work, the UCA Image Bank and UCA Research Repository, as well as much potential for future digitisation of special collections and other teaching and learning material.
- This digitisation activity has come about through many varied methods of digitisation, including from excellent to poor practice, and there is a lack of a holistic, policy led approach to digitisation.

- The lack of strategic policy for digitisation can result in digital resources not fulfilling their intended purpose; potential for duplication of resources, equipment and systems; varying levels of adherence to recognised standards and best practice; possible IPR infringements; opportunities for collaboration and interoperability being missed; and, ultimately, a failure in proving value for money.
- The development of a university digitisation strategy is the first step to alleviating the potential for these problems.
- The newly funded digitisation unit is ideally placed to lead in the development of the digitisation strategy and to offer practical advice, support and digitisation facilities for the university's legacy digital collections and future digitisation activity.

References

Kultivate Project

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<http://kultur.eprints.org>

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