



**National Library of Scotland**

**Integrated Collecting Strategy**

**Cate Newton**

**December 2008**

## **Contents**

Executive Summary	1
1. Background and current challenges	3
2. Methods and principles of acquisition	7
3. Guiding principles for collecting	9
4. Material types and surrogates	14
5. Re-shaping the collections 2007-2012	18
6. The distributed national collection	22
7. Conclusion	24

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1 The changing nature of information means that the National Library of Scotland must change the way it looks at collecting, access and preservation. Collecting can now mean simply “giving access to content”, while preservation now offers new forms of surrogates which come with their own preservation requirements. Current divisions between collecting responsibilities are breaking down and an integrated approach to collecting is required. Increasingly the Library has to regard itself as part of the wider collecting landscape – the “collective collection” which includes material available online from a vast range of suppliers as well as material held in the nation’s libraries, archives and other collections.
- 2 The Library continues to regard Legal Deposit as the backbone of its collecting activity, although material is also acquired through voluntary deposit, purchase, subscription, donation, fixed-term deposit and exchange. The Library’s policy has been to retain its collections in perpetuity, but we now recognise that this may no longer always be possible in the online environment, where collecting can mean “giving access to”.
- 3 Our guiding principles for collecting will be that:
  - a) we aim to collect comprehensively everything that we define as “Scottish”, whether published in Scotland, elsewhere in the UK, or outside the UK;
  - b) we will aim to collect or give access to non-Scottish UK and Irish published output which we consider is or will be of interest to Scottish researchers, although we may consider some reductions in what we claim or in how we manage the collections we acquire in this category;
  - c) non-UK and non-Irish material with no Scottish connection will be acquired primarily to meet the needs of present day users;
  - d) when selecting material we will consider the life-cycle impact of acquiring various formats.
- 4 Our commitment to widening access and our life cycle approach to our collecting will require a shift away from traditional formats and towards the digital, and will include presenting more of our collections in surrogate form.
- 5 The changes recommended within this document will require a re-alignment of resources, both within our Collections Purchase Fund and within our infrastructural support for collecting.
- 6 Our approach to the distributed national collection is to work with all relevant bodies over the period of this strategy to enable enhanced preservation of and access to the nation’s library collections.



## BACKGROUND AND CURRENT CHALLENGES

- I.1 In 1925 the National Library of Scotland was established by Act of Parliament. Under the terms of the Act the Faculty of Advocates transferred to the newly-established Board of Trustees '... the entire contents of the Advocates' Library, with the exception of the Faculty's collection of law books, legal manuscripts and papers'. Also transferred was '... the privilege enjoyed by the Advocates' Library under the Copyright Act, 1911' (5. (1)), that is, the right of legal deposit. The Advocates' Library had been in existence since 1682; the National Library's collections have therefore been built over three centuries. It is the largest library in Scotland, one of the country's major cultural institutions and a major resource for the Scottish people. It now has 14 million printed items and large collections of manuscripts. The collections have been built by a variety of methods, primarily by legal deposit, and significantly also by purchase and donation. The recent 2003 Legal Deposit Libraries' Act extended the right of legal deposit to cover non-print publications, although the secondary legislation required in order to carry forward the Act is yet to be put in place.
- I.2 The 1925 Act establishing the Library does not provide guidance on what the Library is to collect (unlike, for example, the Charter of the National Library of Wales). However, among its powers and duties, the Library's Board of Trustees may "... make, revoke or vary statutes for ... preserving the books and other articles belonging thereto' (2.(a)) and '... do such other things as appear ... to be necessary or expedient for furthering the interests and increasing the utility of the Library" (2.(g)). The Trustees, therefore, approve collection policy statements drawn up from time to time by Library management taking account of international guidelines on the functions of national libraries, and after appropriate internal and external consultation.
- I.3 The functions of a national library, as defined by the International Federation of Library Associations include the following:
- "National libraries have special responsibilities, often defined in law, within a nation's library and information system. These responsibilities vary from country to country but are likely to include: the collection via legal deposit of the national imprint (both print and electronic) and its cataloguing and preservation; the provision of central services (e.g., reference, bibliography, preservation, lending) to users both directly and through other library and information centres; the preservation and promotion of the national cultural heritage; acquisition of at least a representative collection of foreign publications; the promotion of national cultural policy..."<sup>1</sup>
- I.4 This definition is agreed by the National Library of Scotland, but with the recognition that within the current geopolitical landscape a definition of "national" is complex. We wish to operate within that complexity for the benefit of the people of Scotland, both striving to reflect everything that is culturally "Scottish" (items published in Scotland, or written by Scots, or relating to any aspect of Scottish life and culture), while at the same time collecting or providing access to as much as possible of the richness of knowledge produced in the UK at large and in the rest of the world.

---

<sup>1</sup> IFLANET National Libraries Section <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s/I/index.htm>

- I.5 This Integrated Collecting Strategy is drafted to reflect the direction of the Library defined in its vision and mission:

“The National Library of Scotland will enrich lives and communities, encouraging and promoting lifelong learning, research and scholarship, and universal access to information by comprehensively collecting and making available the recorded knowledge of Scotland, and promoting access to the ideas and cultures of the world.” (June 2003)

- I.6 It addresses the following commitments made in the strategy document, *Expanding our Horizons*(2008), in relation to collection development.

- We will seek to conserve all NLS collections (physical and digital), preserving them from deterioration and protecting them from fire, theft or any other threat.
- We will aim to collect all Scottish material more proactively, including those in non-English languages (such as Gaelic and ethnic minority languages).
- We will collect non-Scottish material which we consider is, or will be, of interest to users in Scotland.
- We will increase our commitment to the digital NLS and associated ICT infrastructure, by reallocating resources achieved through efficiency gains, and by re-prioritising the use of grant-in-aid.
- We will work to enhance and enable access to those other Scottish library and archive collections which are distributed throughout a wide range of organisations and places, by providing services, advice and support to others.

- I.7 Building the collection is not an end in itself but a means 'to enrich lives and communities', or as the 1925 Act says, 'increasing the utility of the Library'. It follows, then, that the collection must reflect the needs of users, including users of the future, and the Library must promote and facilitate access to the resource it represents. An appropriate balance has to be struck between the demands of access and the need to preserve the collection 'for public use to all posterity'. A fundamental principle is that the Library's collections are to be used. Access to the items themselves, or, if for preservation reasons it is more appropriate, to a surrogate, is determined by admissions policy, but in the case of freely-available material on the Library's website, the notion of an admissions policy is already outdated.

- I.8 *Expanding our Horizons* follows on from the Library's 2004 strategy document *Breaking through the Walls*. As is evident from the titles of both documents a dominant strand of our strategy is to increase access to the Library's collections, both on-site and through remote electronic access. While much progress has been made since the first release of *Breaking through the Walls* the Library's collecting policies have not yet caught up with the pace of change in the way information is being produced and accessed. This pace of change has accelerated in the last two years, with the growing use of blogs, wikis and other methods of interactively networking information becoming increasingly common.

- I.9 While the digital revolution is a key determinant in enabling us to increase access it is also creating challenges of its own with regard to how electronic information should be collected, and by whom, and indeed what “collecting” actually means with regard to information which is held in online formats. In order to reflect the totality of the collecting challenges which we face, a new definition of collecting and a new, integrated, approach to our collecting activities is required.
- I.10 An overview of the collecting strategy and policy documents of other national libraries indicates that many continue, like NLS, to operate a series of separate policies, each designed to deal with specific collections. The national libraries of Canada and New Zealand have developed high level strategic overview documents. Others, such as the British Library and the National Library of Australia, have a high level policy statement linked to specific policies at subject level.
- I.11 The aim of the present document is to produce an agreement on collecting priorities, access and preservation which enables a strategic change of direction in the library’s collecting activities in order truly to reflect the changing formats of the national intellectual output, while protecting and continuing to develop the existing collections which have been built up over the last three centuries and which form the backbone of our stock.
- I.12 The library’s collecting activities currently take place across eight divisions. These each operate well-developed collecting policies that provide curators with carefully worked out guidelines to ensure that material is taken into the collections in a consistent manner. There also exist a number of policies within divisions, catering for specific subject areas or forms of publication. All current policies will be re-examined by curators to ensure that they accord with the overall integrated policy.
- I.13 Taking a new approach to access has sharpened our awareness that our users are often interested in information and knowledge regardless of format. The National Library of Canada has adopted an approach aimed at “the identification and removal of arbitrary barriers and distinctions between collection content in order to improve collaboration in collection development and support improved access to and preservation of the collection”.<sup>2</sup> This document aims to ensure similar collaboration within NLS.
- I.14 We want to make it easy for our users to find information on, for example, their hometown in Scotland, in the form of a printed book, a manuscript, a film, a digitised image, or any other format. It is important that while these resources may be collected and stored in different ways because they demand different kinds of expertise to acquire, preserve and make them accessible, the underlying principles concerning the selection of the items should be cohesive and coherent.
- I.15 Collections in libraries and other cultural institutions acquire their own momentum over time; if an organisation has a strong collection in a particular area this acts as an incentive to continue collecting in that area. In addition, the organisation builds up curatorial knowledge and strengthens staffing resources

---

<sup>2</sup> National Library of Canada Collection Development Framework: Key Directions, 2005-2010  
<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/collection/024/003024-204-e.html>

to support the area, creating the justification that existing structures will be retained. But in the light of the information revolution and other societal change it is important for us, as a national collecting institution, first to decide what we should be collecting, and then decide how to go about it. We should look afresh, rather than be guided by how the organisation is currently configured to collect material.

- I.16 As already noted, “collecting” in the new information landscape, does not always mean adding to our collections – it will also mean delivering access to collections held elsewhere. “Adding” to our collections might include giving access to an item that has been digitised elsewhere, or making available something we already have in print in a digital format.
- I.17 “Collecting” has thus become part of a much wider landscape. Managing the “collective collection” of that landscape, which includes material available online from a vast range of suppliers as well as material held in the nation’s libraries, archives and other collections, is a challenge which we must meet in collaboration with others.
- I.18 In considering a new, strategic, and integrated approach to our collecting, this document sets out four underlying collecting dilemmas:
- Scotland or the rest of the world?
  - form or content?
  - present or future?
  - preservation or access?
- I.19 For each of these dilemmas the strategy produces a “key collecting guideline”. These underlie the structure of the remainder of the document, which considers the collecting needs of different material types, and describes briefly how the collecting guidelines and the analysis of material types might be applied in the various collecting divisions.

## 2 METHODS AND PRINCIPLES OF ACQUISITION

- 2.1 Legal Deposit. As described in the introduction, this has historically been the major means of the Library's acquisition of printed items, and is estimated to be worth at least £3.5m. annually.
- 2.2 Under the terms of the current legislation, the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003, NLS is entitled to the delivery of 'any work published [in the United Kingdom] in print which it requests' (5 (1)), provided that certain conditions are met regarding the timing and form of this request. The Act states:

'1 (3) In the case of a work published in print, this Act applies to-

- a book (including a pamphlet, magazine or newspaper),
- a sheet of letterpress or music,
- a map, plan, chart or table, and
- a part of any such work;

but that is subject to any prescribed exception.'

While the majority of legal deposit material is requested and acknowledged by an Agent acting on behalf of the five Legal Deposit Libraries (NLS, National Library of Wales, Trinity College Dublin, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Cambridge University Library), the Library is responsible for tracing and requesting deposit of items of more specific Scottish interest.

- 2.3 Voluntary deposit. The 2003 Act opened the way for the extension, through secondary legislation, of legal deposit to cover non-print material, including off- and on-line publications, although unfortunately film and sound materials are still excluded. Until the relevant Regulations are in place, the Library may request copies of non-print material under the terms of the Code of practice for the voluntary deposit on non-print publications agreed between the Legal Deposit Libraries and the publishing industry. Use of the code was revived in 2007.
- 2.4 Purchase. One element of the annual grant-in-aid which the Library receives through the Scottish Government is a Purchase Grant (£1.3m in 2007-08). It is the policy whenever possible to restrict its use to the purchase of items for the collection, i.e:
- Current British publications not covered by legal deposit legislation
  - Earlier Scottish publications to fill gaps in the collection
  - Foreign publications
  - Manuscripts
  - Items for the lending collection
- 2.5 The Purchase Grant is supplemented by:
- additional funding made available from the Scottish Government, usually for specific major purchase
  - a number of the Library's Trust Funds, which were established for the acquisition of specific types of material, or of items on particular subjects;

- grants for particular purchases, from bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, Friends of the National Libraries, and the Art Fund
- 2.6 Donation. The Library continues to benefit from the generosity of individual and corporate donors whose gifts enrich the collection. It does, however, have to reserve the right to refuse the offer of a donation, if it is not in line with the relevant collecting policy, and refer the donor to a more appropriate recipient.
- 2.7 Deposit. The Library will agree to the long-term loan of items or collections in the public interest, provided that certain conditions are met regarding questions of indemnity, access and availability; but the Library's strong preference is that such items or collections should be acquired through donation or purchase.
- 2.8 Exchange. A small number of items are received through exchange arrangements with other institutions. In particular the Library receives periodicals from a range of learned bodies under exchange arrangements established by the Royal Society of Edinburgh.
- 2.9 Retention policy. Once the Library has added an item to the collections, whether by purchase or gift, it is usually kept in perpetuity. Deposits are usually made for a fixed number of years. However, any particular claims for cultural restitution of material either owned by or on deposit at the Library will be examined very thoroughly, according to its cultural restitution policy. Each claim will be examined on its own merits, and alternatives, such as long-term loan, digitization, or microfilming, will also be examined. Where deposits are concerned, the opinions of the owners will always be determinative.
- 2.10 The collecting principles proposed in the current document are not intended to be applied retrospectively; the collecting principles applied in the past should be respected and the integrity of existing collections maintained.
- 2.11 Increasingly, "acquisition" does not mean acquiring items for the collections so much as acquiring access to material which is available elsewhere, either freely or under licence. The digital environment brings different ways of "acquiring". Under these new models, some of the material we acquire may not be available in perpetuity as has been the case with printed and other traditional formats.

### 3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR COLLECTING

#### Scotland or the rest of the world?

- 3.1 As Scotland's national library we are committed to collecting comprehensively the output of Scottish writers and publishers; at the same time we are privileged by Legal Deposit legislation to be able to claim a copy of everything published in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland; and we are also committed to providing access to all the knowledge of the world. What levels of importance should be assigned to these three geographical areas of collecting responsibility, and do we have the balance about right?
- 3.2 At present we aim to collect Scottish material "comprehensively". We apply the highest levels of control (for example catalogue records and preservation activity) to this material. "Scottish material" includes items printed or published in Scotland; those written by Scots although published elsewhere; those relating to Scotland, to any aspect of Scottish life and culture, or to individual Scots; and, considering the book chiefly as an artefact, those notable for design, illustration, or binding executed by Scottish artists and craftsmen. To these categories is added also the important class of printed materials that have become Scottish by association, usually through long domicile in Scotland, or ownership by Scots living abroad.
- 3.3 Nevertheless there are gaps in what we are able to collect, and some collecting (for example, of ephemera) is done on a very selective basis.
- 3.4 There are also gaps in what we know of the Scottish national distributed collection. Since the publication of *A National Strategy for Scottish Material*<sup>3</sup> much has been achieved to enable greater access to the online catalogues of public and university libraries in Scotland; but there remains a need for increased collaboration in the identification and collection of Scottish materials across Scotland as a whole, and the need for a recognition scheme for major and minor Scottish collections in order to assure their preservation.
- 3.5 In UK terms, we are at present able to collect about fifty to sixty per cent of available UK monographs. In 2006 115,500 books were published in the UK, of which the British Library collected about 97,000, while NLS collected 63,551. We are addressing the shortfall by working jointly with the other legal deposit libraries to improve processes for claims; but it should be noted that if we are successful this will place further pressures on existing resources, and collecting and processing activities will therefore need to be re-balanced.
- 3.6 In recent years we have been able to extend the range of foreign publications purchased from our Purchase Fund, especially increasing our collecting of Spanish and Asian material. We wish further to extend our collecting to include the countries of origin of the New Scots who are transforming the Scottish demographic picture.
- 3.7 Our aim is to provide a world class library for the people of Scotland, not a Scottish-only collection. This is especially important at a time of increased globalisation. While placing a primary emphasis on Scottish material, we are

---

<sup>3</sup> A national strategy for Scottish material; a report to the Scottish Library and Information Council. Brian D. Osborne and Michael C. Taylor, 1999. <http://www.slainte.org.uk/slicpubs/scotmatestrat.pdf>

also committed to claiming as far as possible the UK–published and Irish material which we are entitled to claim under legal deposit, although pressure on resources means that we may wish to consider setting some limits to the material we claim, or how we manage it. A life cycle approach to the costs of this material will provide useful information on the relative costs and benefits of acquiring different material types. Non-UK and non-Irish material with no Scottish connection should be assessed with care, and should be acquired primarily with regard to the needs of present day users, especially where such material is not available elsewhere in Scotland. In this category too, an awareness of the costs of preserving and giving access to material formats will provide guidance on the level of collection control each format requires, to help us assess whether certain categories might be handled with a lesser degree of cataloguing and other controls.



**Key Collecting Guideline 1:** we should first be guided by the uniqueness principle. No other organisation collects Scottish material as comprehensively as we do. This is our “unique selling point” and has to be our top priority. Any proposed reductions in the levels of collecting or collection control of other UK or Irish material should be approached with care, using a life cycle analysis of their impact and in collaboration with the other legal deposit libraries. Acquisitions of non-UK material with no Scottish connection should generally be aimed at satisfying the needs of present-day users.

### **Form or content?**

- 3.8 Currently the Library groups its collecting activities in several different ways. We group staff according to whether they are collecting by a specific method (for example by legal deposit or donation), or in a certain format (for example digital publications) or in a specific subject area (for example science or foreign books). Needless to say these categories are not mutually exclusive, and nor is it always clear to the library user which collecting activity brought an item to NLS; certainly it should not be necessary for a user to understand our various collecting structures in order to find the information they require. For the purpose of drawing up an integrated strategy it is necessary to think about our collection-related activities in logical categories.
- 3.9 One approach is to attempt to do this along subject classification lines – history, literature, science. In this way the National Library might attempt to emulate the subject acquisition approach often adopted by the universities. This approach is however too inelastic for a national library which seeks to “promote access to the knowledge, culture and history of the world”, where the generosity of the legal deposit intake means that we have information on all subjects, and where items in some formats (for example films, maps or manuscripts) are of relevance to a whole range of subjects, some of which are unclassifiable into single categories. Increasingly, subject matter is available in a wide range of formats and there is a desire to collect everything without first assessing the impact of acquiring and preserving each format.
- 3.10 Similarly, trying to arrange the collection-related activities strategically according to method of acquisition - legal deposit, purchase, donation - while convenient for the Library, is of no great use to the user, reflecting as it does matters of purely internal library housekeeping rather than any fundamental collecting principle.

- 3.11 In order to achieve, as described in section 1, access to information and knowledge regardless of format, we must take a view on which material type or format is the best carrier to deliver the content. It is material type which defines such questions as how an item is used by or delivered to the reader, how it is stored, what its shelf life and life cycle costs are likely to be, and what its particular preservation needs will be.
- 3.12 This document defines our potential intake by examining the essential characteristics of the material we collect, resulting in the identification of eight broad and as far as is possible mutually exclusive categories of material type, i.e. format, each with their own particular problems and issues. It is the arrival of radically different material types – and the rapid growth and diversity of these types – that characterises the information revolution and the requirement that all information repositories accept new ways of collecting while, in the case of national libraries, also continuing to maintain existing activities to support traditional formats. Section 3 describes the eight categories and their specific needs in more detail.



**Key Collecting Guideline 2:** while we collect material primarily for its content, the Library's analysis of format types should underpin selection decisions where content is available, or can be made available, in more than one format.

### **Preservation or access?**

- 3.13 As a national library we are responsible for safeguarding the nation's published heritage and preserving it for the future. To do so we need to ensure that the formats we acquire are capable of surviving for the long term. In some areas the vulnerability of certain formats means that access to their content is difficult or impossible. We should take account of the life-cycle costs of preserving each of the designated formats, as well as highlighting the value of surrogates in providing access in certain collecting areas.
- 3.14 For traditional formats preservation and access are often seen as presenting conflicting demands; the more access you provide to an item the more damage it will receive, either through handling or through exposure to light. These are matters of incontestable fact; our responsibility is to minimise as far as we can the level of damage, while ensuring that we meet our underlying strategy of providing wider access.
- 3.15 For newer formats we face new dilemmas. In some areas (for example web pages) current access is easy but little or no preservation is taking place, so material is rapidly being lost. In other areas access is impossible because of the poor state of preservation of the material (for example, sound tapes). Yet many of the formats which pose the greatest unknowns in terms of preservation are also those which provide the highest level of searchable access to the material within them.
- 3.16 Much of the preservation activity of the library can be defined as passive preservation, that is to say putting the items in a safe environment, whether that is a safe building with appropriate temperature and humidity controls or a trusted digital repository. Other preservation activities involve active intervention, although the remedial treatments used are minimally invasive.

- 3.17 The description of material formats in Section 4 reveals that while preservation activities for certain formats are well developed and implemented, other formats are less well served and in some cases are actively deteriorating and cannot be accessed for that reason. In order to ensure adequate preservation for the totality of our collections we should move the focus of our preservation resources from active to passive wherever possible, in order to enable active intervention where it is most required.



**Key collecting guideline 3:** We should improve access to our collections by extending passive preservation activities and by limiting active preservation intervention to cases where it is needed to ensure survival of the original.

### **Present needs or future expectations?**

- 3.18 Many of the most sought-after items in our collections today are those which were routinely acquired through legal deposit and which, although not greatly significant at the time, have become important after many decades or centuries in the Library's care. Many of the items we currently take into our care could be seen as falling into the same category. Most of the 200,000 – 300,000 books and serials we acquire annually through legal deposit are not currently used – and some may never be used. They remain in our care in case someone should want to see them, and no other body in Scotland is carrying out this comprehensive collecting activity of our documented heritage for the benefit of our future citizens.
- 3.19 Similarly, much of the activity of our heritage collecting divisions is directed towards acquiring Scottish material which was not acquired contemporaneously. While some of this material is enthusiastically used by current researchers a large proportion of it is acquired to support our heritage responsibilities into the future.
- 3.20 At the same time, our collecting activity is paid for by today's taxpayers, and we have to assess the relevance of our collecting activities to today's population as well as for future generations. In particular, we must acknowledge that the items we acquire specifically for present-day users do not require the same degree of preservation as our other stock.



**Key collecting guideline 4:** This guideline depends on key collecting guidelines 1-3. Taking account of format requirements, preservation and access, and national/geographical imperatives, we can say that our top priority for fulfilling future expectations should be primarily those items that are unique to us, that is to say, everything Scottish, followed by where possible the entire UK published output; but building our collections for present day users might mean providing access today to material that we do not necessarily require to preserve for the future.

## Summary

- 3.21 We will remain committed to the acquisition of all Scottish material, and will try to acquire as much of the UK output as possible; any proposals to reduce the latter, or to reduce our collection management of it, should be carried out using a life-cycle analysis model and in consultation with the other legal deposit libraries.
- 3.22 As the key determinants for preservation and access are based on the format of the material we acquire, we will take account of format when selecting content.
- 3.23 Our preservation activities will be based on those areas that we know to be at most risk of active deterioration, implying the need to use passive preservation technologies wherever possible and by limiting active preservation intervention to cases where it is needed to ensure survival of the original.
- 3.24 Based on the previous three guidelines, our priority to meet expectations of preservation for the future will be a central focus on everything Scottish, and as much as we can reasonably acquire of the wider UK material. To meet the needs of present day users we will provide access to as much of the world's output as possible, but we may not preserve material collected for this purpose for the future.

## 4 MATERIAL TYPES AND SURROGATES

- 4.1 Increasingly, as a result of the extended range of formats in which information is being produced, libraries are examining the total life cycle costs associated with each format. These cover not only initial acquisition costs but also ongoing collection control issues such as selection, conservation, preservation, description, means of access and long-term storage. An important analysis of life cycle costing was presented in a study by Helen Shenton in 2003. While acknowledging that for digital materials in particular much research remained to be done, this study usefully demonstrates for a range of formats the rate at which costs are incurred over time.<sup>4</sup>
- 4.2 Subsequently, useful analysis of the life cycle costs of digital publications in particular has been carried out by the LIFE project. While it is not possible at present to make predictions that are as long-term as Shenton provides for print materials, there is sufficient data to enable broad comparisons to be made of the impact over time of acquiring print and digital materials.<sup>5</sup>
- 4.3 The above report asks the question “At what point will there be sufficient confidence in the stability and maturity of digital preservation to switch from paper to digital for publications available in parallel formats?” It suggests that at present the evidence is not sufficiently robust to make the switch but it is very likely that it will become sufficiently robust to make the switch during the period covered by our integrated collecting strategy document – “The finding that no obsolete file formats were discovered in three diverse collections has led LIFE to believe that confidence is rising in this area. LIFE did not reach the conclusion that the decision to acquire or select content based on paper or digital would be feasible, but does feel that it is now the time to have the debates within institutions. There are many benefits to switching to digital delivery from an acquisition and access viewpoint, but there are still many concerns around storage and preservation. Now that LIFE has delivered the model to use, more real data needs to be gathered to establish a clearer comparison.”
- 4.4 The material we collect can be defined according to whether it is published or unpublished, tangible or intangible, and static or timebased. (“Timebased” is a concept which has gained currency in the context of film and other media, and can be defined as applying to works which are dependent on technology and have duration as a dimension). These definitions produce eight broad material types, each with particular characteristics regarding preservation and access, as follows:
- 4.5 **Tangible, static published material:** contemporary and early printed books, printed serials, maps, ephemera, and photographs, printed music, and microforms. The material in this group has well-developed preservation protocols, requires little third-party intervention to make it accessible, but is likely to be accessible to only one user at a time. Items are generally not unique when produced, although the passage of time may render them unique

---

<sup>4</sup> H. Shenton, ‘Life cycle collection management’, LIBER Quarterly 13:3/4 (2003): 254-272.

<http://liber.library.uu.nl/>

<sup>5</sup> McLeod, R., Wheatly, P. and Ayris, P. Lifecycle information for e-literature; full report from the LIFE project. (2006) Research report. LIFE Project London, UK. <http://www.life.ac.uk/>

to the holding institution. Early investment in passive storage and some conservation is required, but low long-term costs per item.

- 4.6 **Tangible, static, unpublished material:** manuscripts, typescripts. The material in this group has well-developed preservation protocols, requires little third-party intervention to make it accessible, is likely to be accessible to only one user at a time, and will be unique to the holding institution. This uniqueness at the point of acquisition creates particular demands. Early investment in passive storage and conservation required, but low long-term costs per item.
- 4.7 **Intangible, static, published material:** e-books, e-journals, blogs, “shallow web”. Material is generally not unique to the holding institution. It needs both passive preservation (digital mass storage) and ongoing active preservation intervention (regular migrating), and protocols are still under development. It requires equipment but little third party intervention to make it available at the point of use, and is usable by many people in many places. Shelf life is uncertain; standards are under development. High early investment in storage is required, and there are possible very high long-term costs per item.
- 4.8 **Intangible, static, unpublished material:** e-mails. Likely to be uniquely held by NLS. This uniqueness at the point of acquisition creates particular demands. It needs passive preservation (digital mass storage) and ongoing active preservation intervention (regular migrating), and protocols are still under development. Requires equipment but little third party intervention to make it available at the point of use. Usable by many people in many places. Shelf life is uncertain; standards are under development. High early investment in storage is required, and there are possible high long-term costs per item.
- 4.9 **Intangible, timebased, published material:** “streaming” movies on web. Likely to be replicated in other libraries. It needs passive preservation (digital mass storage) and ongoing active preservation intervention (regular migrating), and protocols are still under development. Requires equipment but little third party intervention to make it available for use. Usable by many people in many places. Shelf life is uncertain, standards are under development. High early investment in storage is required, and there are possible high long-term costs per item.
- 4.10 **Tangible, timebased published material:** commercial and professional films, audio and video tapes, CD-roms, CDs. Frequently needs active conservation intervention and also requires passive preservation (mass storage buildings and also digital storage and regular migrating if content is transferred). Conservation protocols continue to develop. Items are generally not unique when produced, although the passage of time may render them unique to the holding institution. The material in this group requires equipment and third party intervention to make it available for use and is often usable by only one person in one place. Shelf life is short, and intervention may be required even if standards adhered to. Early investment in storage and conservation is required, and there are high long-term costs per item.
- 4.11 **Tangible, timebased unpublished material:** privately recorded audiotapes, videos, amateur films etc. Items are likely to be unique to the institution. This uniqueness at the point of acquisition creates particular demands. Frequently needs active conservation intervention and also requires passive preservation (mass storage buildings and also digital storage and regular migrating if

content is transferred). Conservation protocols continue to develop. The material in this group requires equipment and third party intervention to make it available for use and is often usable by only one person in one place. Shelf life short, intervention may be required even if standards adhered to. Early investment in storage is required, and there are high long-term costs per item.

- 4.12 **Intangible, timebased unpublished material:** dynamic websites which invite contribution from the user, and where there is a need to preserve that contribution. The base material might be replicated in other libraries but it will have unique contextual applications in NLS. It needs both passive preservation (digital mass storage) and ongoing active preservation intervention (regular selection and harvesting), and protocols are still under development. Requires equipment to make it available for use, and third party intervention might continue to be required after the item is added to the collections. Usable by many people in many places. Shelf life uncertain, standards under development. High early investment, possible very high long-term costs.
- 4.13 From the above summary it can be seen that in general the more traditional and well-tested a format is the less demanding it is in terms of preservation action, but the less accessible it is to a wide range of users. Tangible timebased material presents particular problems requiring both traditional and new forms of preservation. The protocols for intangible material are still under development. In the remainder of this section and in section 5 we explore how we can continue to acquire and preserve traditional formats, make unique items within traditional formats more widely accessible, and work towards protocols for new formats that will ensure long-term preservation and access.
- 4.14 **Use of Surrogates: Surrogates for preservation.** At present the library provides library users with surrogates for some of its more vulnerable material. Microfilm copies of rare items are created in-house, as high-quality microfilm remains a proven preservation medium. Microfilm has been preferred over digital surrogates for preservation purposes as long as there remains some doubt over the long-term preservation of digital media (long-term in this context being measured in centuries).
- 4.15 Nevertheless there has recently been a reduced level of concern over this issue. Non-national libraries have moved to the use of digital surrogates rather than microfilm ones. Two national libraries (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Netherlands and the National Library of Norway) have recently made the same decision. Digital surrogates have the major advantage over microfilm of much better searchability and readability, and, licensing issues permitting, much wider access over the web.
- 4.16 It is recommended that future in-house preservation surrogates should a) consist of a microform and a digital surrogate until such time as the Library's Trusted Digital Repository has completed one or more proven preservation cycles of such material, whereupon they should b) consist of a digital surrogate only. It is recommended that where high-quality digital surrogates exist as described here they should be available via the Library's website and should also be the first choice to offer to readers in the reading rooms.
- 4.17 **Use of Surrogates: Surrogates for access.** In addition to the in-house surrogates described above, the Library purchases surrogate collections of material, in both microfilm and digital form. In several cases these collections include NLS material, and our participation in these commercial surrogacy

projects has enhanced the amount of our rare and unique material which is available online.

- 4.18 It is recommended that we continue to participate in such projects wherever possible, and that for such items the digital surrogate should be the only medium purchased.
- 4.19 It is recommended that wherever possible items designated as unique and unpublished, whether tangible or intangible, static or timebased, should be prioritised for digital surrogacy.
- 4.20 Tangible, static, published material should be prioritised for mass digitisation programmes, probably in collaboration with commercial partners.
- 4.21 Where formats are perceived to be in danger of becoming obsolete, a risk assessment should be carried out to decide whether the Library should attempt to conserve existing hardware and software or should transfer the content to a digital or other surrogate.

### **Summary**

- 4.22 The Library should progressively move towards a scenario where unique or vulnerable items are presented in surrogate form, and should progress as rapidly as possible towards making those surrogates digital ones. Non-vulnerable items should be migrated to digital format where possible, probably in collaboration with partners.

## 5 RE-SHAPING THE COLLECTIONS 2007-2012

5.1 The following section takes the recommendations outlined so far and shows how they might be applied over the period covered by the strategy in specific areas of the Library's collections. These reflect current staffing arrangements for collecting. It is not part of this document to re-align staffing arrangements, although it might be felt over time that the implementation of the recommendations of this document may be better carried out within a different staffing structure. All current policies will be re-examined by curators to ensure that they accord with the overall integrated policy; the following recommendations are a starting point.

### 5.2 Legal Deposit material

- Assign more resources to claiming Scottish material
- Assess which areas of non-Scottish material can be handled with collection-level descriptions in the catalogue, especially where published lists of such material might be searchable through new resource discovery techniques
- Continue to claim North American legal deposit titles which are distributed in the UK
- Assess, in consultation with the other legal deposit libraries, which if any categories we should exclude from claim. At present we do not claim certain categories, such as non-Scottish educational prospectuses. These exclusions could be extended, for example, to non-Scottish leisure journals. We also receive a high proportion of Welsh language material, which we know our sister library the National Library of Wales will keep in perpetuity
- If, under regulation, material is available in a choice of formats and the Library has the option to make a choice, this should be done with regard to the preservation, access and life cycle aspects of the formats in question at that time

### 5.3 Rare Book material

- Transfer some of the use of the purchase fund towards the acquisition or creation of digital surrogates
- Focus the acquisition of donations on Scottish material rather than on building existing printed collections whose content is not primarily Scottish

### 5.4 Manuscripts

- Transfer some of the use of the purchase fund towards the acquisition or creation of digital surrogates
- Increasingly acquire "e-manuscripts" (e-mails, blogs and document drafts) of contemporary Scottish authors

### 5.5 Printed and recorded Music material.

- Increase transfer of obsolete media to digital surrogates
- Reduce purchase of non-Scottish printed music

## 5.6 Official publications

- Continue to work in partnership with government agencies to ensure preservation of both Scottish and UK digital government publications
- Assess which areas can be handled with collection-level descriptions in the catalogue, especially where published lists of such material might be searchable through new resource discovery techniques

## 5.7 Digital collections.

- Web pages: Aim to harvest regularly, under legal deposit, all UK web pages, but make a specific effort to collect important Scottish sites in greater depth; this will require a mixture of themed collecting and UK domain collecting, and will require a collaborative approach amongst the legal deposit libraries
- Use sampling techniques to acquire examples of transient Web2 material
- Purchased digital collections: wherever possible broker deals which permit the online delivery of such resources to remote users

## 5.8 Modern purchased collections

- Focus on items for purchase which reflect the research needs of present day users, using audience research if necessary
- Collaborate with university and public libraries in considering which foreign languages should be acquired
- Use audience research to assist in the selection of items which reflect Scotland's mixed demography
- Select online items which can be delivered remotely
- Transfer our focus from the purchase of printed material to the purchase of digital material
- Assess which areas can be handled with collection-level descriptions in the catalogue, especially where published lists of such material might be searchable through new resource discovery techniques

## 5.9 Modern donated collections

- Focus the acquisition of donations on Scottish material rather than on building existing printed collections whose focus is not primarily Scottish
- Select items which reflect the research needs of present day users
- Select items which reflect Scotland's mixed demography
- Assess which areas can be handled with collection-level descriptions in the catalogue, especially where published lists of such material might be searchable through new resource discovery techniques

## 5.10 Maps

- Continue to work in partnership with government agencies to ensure preservation of both Scottish and UK digital mapping
- Consider the acquisition of digital rather than print mapping
- Consider reducing intake of non-UK mapping
- Assess which areas can be handled with collection-level descriptions in the catalogue, especially where published lists of such material might be searchable through new resource discovery techniques

## 5.11 Science

- Select online items which can be delivered remotely

- Transfer our focus from the purchase of printed material to the purchase of digital material

#### 5.12 Business

- Select online items which can be delivered remotely
- Transfer our focus from the purchase of printed material to the purchase of digital material

#### 5.13 Scottish Screen Archive

- Continue to collect works that have “cultural resonance” for Scotland
- Aim for increased digital delivery over the web
- Increase transfer of obsolete media to digital surrogates

#### 5.14 Newspapers

- Lead or participate in programmes aimed at the digitisation of Scottish newspapers
- When possible move from the use of microform surrogates to the use of digital ones
- Purchase or subscribe to online newspaper collections with remote access

#### 5.15 Lending stock

- Review the use of our lending stock within the wider lending environment
- Choose e-delivery of our lending resources wherever possible
- We may choose to duplicate by purchase or donation some of the items in our legal deposit collections in the lending collection.
- We may also choose to dispose of items in the lending collection.

### **Summary**

5.16 The move towards digital resources, whether born digital or surrogate, will enhance access for our users. At present there remain questions over the long-term preservation of digital resources but we expect that these may be resolved over the period of this strategy document. We recommend a policy change in the use of the Collections Purchase Fund to allow the purchase of both digital resources and digitisation activity. We acknowledge that some purchased digital resources may not be preserved by us in perpetuity. In particular we will give precedence to the long-term preservation of UK and most especially Scottish material, recognising that the preservation of other material is the responsibility of national libraries elsewhere. We expect that changes in the operation of the Legal Deposit Agency will work to the benefit of the Library in increasing the amount of legal deposit material we acquire; we will balance resources to deal with this by reducing the amount of management control we exercise over some of the material, and by selectively reducing our intake of some non-Scottish local material. We are aware that the costs of digital preservation are currently high although advances in technology will reduce these over time; this means decisions will need to take account of life cycle costs at the point in time they are taken. We acknowledge that the costs of the digital infrastructure will require a transfer of overall library funding from

supporting the physical (print-based collections consulted in reading rooms) to supporting the digital National Library of Scotland.

## **6 THE DISTRIBUTED NATIONAL COLLECTION**

- 6.1 Increasingly, owing to financial pressures and the growth in number of publications, the Library is collaborating with partners nationally and internationally, and for this reason accepts that changes in collecting policy should not be taken unilaterally. It is keen to exploit technology both to facilitate this collaboration, and to make its own collections more widely accessible in Scotland and abroad.
- 6.2 The National Library of Scotland is strongly committed to the principle of sharing resources with other libraries in Scotland, and to fostering and encouraging initiatives which allow resource sharing among Scottish libraries to flourish. Scottish libraries collaborate in acquiring, cataloguing, preserving, and giving access to collections, and NLS is strongly engaged with relevant professional groups for all these activities. Currently these include the Rare Books in Scotland group, Digital Access Scotland, the Scottish Council on Archives, Collecting Scotland, IRIScotland and the Scottish Consortium of University and Research Libraries and its associated working groups and projects. In addition the Library works closely with the Scottish Library and Information Council, the independent advisory body to the Scottish Government and Scottish Ministers on library and Information matters.
- 6.3 Within the UK and Ireland, we continue to work very closely with the other legal deposit libraries, including the British Library, to help form legal deposit policies and acquire the legal deposit output. Also at UK level we are keen to work within the JISC framework to enable us to add JISC collections to our NLS stock and also explore their availability elsewhere in Scotland, and we continue to participate in Research Libraries UK, the Digital Preservation Coalition, the UK Web Archiving Consortium, the Group for Literary Archives and Manuscripts, and numerous other groups.
- 6.4 We intend to collaborate with HE institutions in Scotland in the provision of a joint approach to digital repositories.
- 6.5 We are actively working with other libraries in seeking national licences for online resources and in encouraging support for Open Access publishing and archiving initiatives.
- 6.6 If the Library is aware that a local collection has an interest in acquiring a unique item it will always discuss this with the relevant local authority. Equally if a local collection is unable to acquire the item, NLS is always willing to consider purchasing and housing it in NLS. Increasingly it will be possible for digital items to be made available across the country.
- 6.7 We are keen to offer support and advice regarding local conservation needs, including collections held in private hands, if public access can be enhanced thereby.
- 6.8 While the Library is committed to collecting comprehensively 'the recorded knowledge of Scotland' even here its collections cannot, for practical reasons, be complete. It proposes a national strategy for Scottish materials, which will address issues of acquisition, retention and preservation, and the identification

and notification of legal deposit material by local libraries acting on behalf of NLS (including digital material in due course).

- 6.9 The National Library is very aware of existence of other collections of both national and local significance, and recognises the value in a cooperative approach to collection and designation of major and minor Scottish collections in order to assure their preservation and access.

### **Summary**

- 6.10 By definition the management of the “collective collection” has to be done collaboratively. We will work with all relevant bodies over the period of this strategy to enable enhanced preservation of and access to the nation’s library collections.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

This strategy document proposes a new approach to our collecting activity, one which requires a shift away from divisional collecting decisions towards the acceptance of key collecting guidelines and a life cycle approach to our acquisitions. It emphasises our core commitment to collecting and preserving all Scottish material, while aiming also to balance our resources to enable us to collect and preserve as much as possible of the rest of the UK's output, and to give access to selected material from the rest of the world. It requires that our curators will assess material types as rigorously as they assess content, and that decisions over which material types to acquire will be driven by access considerations. It recommends a shift in preservation activity towards those areas where it is most required, which are not the traditional formats. While actions will always need to be tailored to the availability of resources, the strategy has far-reaching implications for the re-balancing of resources over a five year period, at the end of which the Library's collections may look very different. They will, however, be available to a very much wider audience than at present.