The Marketing of Special Collections in the Digital Age: An Investigation of the Marketing of Special Collections in Academic Libraries in the Consortium of University and Research Libraries

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Abstract

Marketing has become a concern for academic libraries as they are facing considerable pressure to justify themselves and ensure that their value is recognised. This trend is particularly important to special collections, as they have traditionally been the least accessible and most misunderstood part of a library. The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the marketing of special collections in academic libraries in the Consortium of University and Research Libraries (CURL).

To investigate this subject both a qualitative and quantitative approach was taken which obtained both figures and perceptions. A comprehensive literature review was undertaken which established what aspects of the subject should be researched. Questionnaires were sent to special collections librarians and interviews were undertaken with a small number of these respondents. Interviews functioned as a follow up to these questionnaires and a way of gaining new knowledge. An evaluation of special collections websites gave a detailed perspective on the most popular method of promotion.

The findings are split into five chapters which each relate to an objective. The chapters are: Knowing your market, Promotion, Web methods of promotion, Attitudes to marketing and Effects of marketing. Participants’ responses are compared and are grounded in the context of the literature. The findings confirm that marketing is important to special collections. Collections are found to be made relevant to the user group by librarians taking steps such as tailoring acquisition policies to internal audience needs. They can be useful to all levels of academic activity. Promotion is a way of increasing awareness and use of collections. Web methods have particular benefits such as aiding the finding and use of material. Attitudes to marketing are overall positive and it is seen by many as necessary and as a core function by some. Marketing has the positive effect of ensuring collections are well used, core resources of a library but it has negative effects in that it is a drain on resources and can have a harmful impact on the condition of material. However these effects can be offset by protective measures such as digitisation which protect as well as facilitate access to material.
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Introduction

1.1 Background

This dissertation investigates the marketing of special collections in the Consortium of University and Research libraries. This is a topical subject as demonstrated by the growth of literature within the last five years emphasising the need for special collections in academic libraries to be more accessible and to market themselves. Special collections have traditionally been regarded as the most inaccessible and are the most misunderstood of library collections as they are usually access controlled and ‘closed off’ from the rest of a library (Traister, 2001). This has been due largely to practical reasons such as ‘rarity, physical condition, unprocessed/uncatalogued status and limited staffing’ (Henri, 2003:58). In addition access to material has necessarily been limited to on-site visitors as rare books, documents, manuscripts etc are too fragile and valuable to loan out on inter-library loan (Chepesiuk, 2001). These factors have contributed towards special collections being regarded as the most difficult and forbidding part of a library to use (Traister, 2003). However this is beginning to change. In the past fifteen years special collections librarians have ‘been increasingly exhorted to be proactive about getting the word out about their holdings’ (Abraham, 2001). Byrd (2001) believes that promotion will decrease the ‘marginalisation of special collections’. This drive toward greater accessibility and marketing is in part due to the fact that academic libraries are under pressure to justify themselves and special collections have to follow suit (Traister, 2003).

1 These libraries are: University of Aberdeen Directorate of Information Systems & Services, University of Birmingham Information Services, University of Bristol Information Services, Cambridge University Library, Cardiff University Information Services, Durham University Library, Edinburgh University Library, Glasgow University Library, Imperial College London Library, John Rylands University Library (University of Manchester), King's College London Information Services & Systems, Leeds University Library, University of Liverpool Library, University of London Research Library Services, Library of The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), Newcastle University Library, University of Nottingham Information Services, University of Oxford Libraries, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), The University of Sheffield Library, University of Southampton Libraries, Trinity College Library Dublin, UCL (University College London) Library Services, University of Warwick Library.
1.2 Rationale

The idea for this dissertation arose out of a presentation given by a guest speaker on the academic libraries module who spoke of the need to market the special collections in her institution more effectively and to a wider audience, particularly to undergraduates. This sparked an interest in who the user group of special collections were, for what purposes material is used and in what ways collections promote themselves. The reading of relevant literature provided various perspectives on the subject and these have influenced the formulation of the objectives below. The literature on the issue of marketing of special collections is predominantly from the US and this dissertation is aiming to result in more UK and Irish information on this subject being available.

1.3 What are special collections?

A wide definition of special collections, formulated by surveying relevant literature, is used in this project. As Phillips (2002) points out it is difficult to find a ‘comprehensive definition’ of special collections. It is telling that in a special issue of Journal of Library Administration devoted to special collections Roberts (1993) felt the need to define what his concept of a special collection was at the beginning of the articles. Roberts (1993:17) states that they consist of ‘rare books and manuscripts which were originally current stock and which have become special by reason of age. That is not to say that you cannot have perfectly valid and useful collections of modern fine printing or the papers of a contemporary, even a living, writing or politician’.

Special collections therefore encompass a range of types of material – manuscripts, archival documents, rare books and so on. There are many other articles where authors feel the need to give a definition of the term before they begin their main discussion (e.g. Love and Feather, 1998; Prochaska, 2003) which indicates that it has many definitions and there is much scope for interpretation. Another way of defining special collections is that it is material which requires special housing and access arrangements and is kept in a separate department from normal, mainstream library material (Love and Feather, 1998). From surveying the literature the researcher created her own definition, which was in the information accompanying
the questionnaire sent out to the target group. The definition used is that special collections encompass a broad range of material from rare books to manuscripts to collections of modern ephemera such as political leaflets.

Although all collections surveyed are understood by the researcher to be special collections in terms of the wide definition used there is some variation in nomenclature. Just over half are called special collections. The other departments have different titles including rare books and archives and archives and manuscripts. Some are called special collections and archives, whereas in other institutions special collections and archives are entirely separate departments. There seems to be varying ways of organising and naming collections of the types of material on which this dissertation focuses.

1.4 Definition of marketing

Definitions of marketing abound and it was necessary to define what marketing is to establish what to research. Marketing is often perceived to be synonymous with promotion (for example Ennis, 2000) but in fact promotion is just one aspect (Weingand, 1999). The traditional paradigm, which seems to be regarded as an overall theory of marketing, is the four Ps: place, product, promotion and price. However Gronroos (1994) argues that the concept of ‘relationship marketing’ is becoming more prominent and is a more helpful way of regarding marketing. He believes that the four Ps is a production orientated definition of marketing rather than a market-oriented definition and relationship marketing is useful as it pays more attention to customer needs and wants. Gronroos’ (1994: 9) definition of marketing places customer focus as a key component of marketing: ‘Marketing is to establish, maintain and enhance relationships with customers and other partners at a profit so the objectives of parties are met. This is achieved by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises’.

This definition is echoed by Armstrong and Kotler (2005:34) who state that marketing is ‘the process of building profitable customer relationships by creating value for customers and capturing value in return’. The idea of marketing as a customer driven process has attracted librarians. Gupta and Jambhekar (2002:25)
state that marketing is a simple and appealing premise for libraries as it means ‘the customer is at the centre of every library activity’. Its position in academic libraries is discussed in the literature review.

Marketing is a vast subject and it is impossible to cover all aspects within the confines of a dissertation. Therefore a basic view of marketing has been taken in this dissertation, focusing on two broad aspects: knowing your market and promotion. Knowing your market encompasses knowing who one’s users are and how their needs are served. Promotion is the name given to communication techniques which advertise the existence of services or products (IFLA, 1998). It was thought most appropriate to focus on these wide aspects as the literature concerning marketing in special collections deals with marketing in these categories.

1.5 Aim and objectives

In order to investigate the marketing of special collections it was decided to explore key areas related to this. These were identified from the literature and this influenced the formulation of the following aim and objectives.

**Aim:** To investigate the marketing of special collections in academic libraries in The Consortium of University and Research Libraries in the British Isles (CURL).

**Objectives:** 1) To establish the different market segments of special collections and how the needs of these users are served and to ascertain whether there are intentions to attract non-traditional users.

2) To ascertain methods used to promote special collections (exhibitions, seminars, etc) and to establish the particular advantages of each method with a particular focus on the way in which websites function as marketing tools.

3) To explore the attitudes of special collections staff towards marketing.

4) To investigate the consequences of marketing special collections.
1.6 Structure of the dissertation

The next chapter, the literature review, gives an overview and discussion of literature relevant to the subject of the dissertation. Chapter three focuses on methodology and gives an account of the research methods used and of how the data collected was analysed. The findings of the research are presented in chapters four to eight and each chapter is themed by an objective. Objective two has been split into two chapters, chapters five and six. Both deal with promotion but the second chapter focuses on websites as this merited very detailed attention. Discussion of the results and the contextualisation of them within the literature is incorporated in the findings chapters. The final chapter draws conclusions and makes recommendations for further study.
2 Literature review

In this chapter the literature relevant to the subject of this dissertation is reviewed. First the American bias of the literature is discussed, then the general importance of marketing to academic libraries and particularly special collections. The following sections deal with the themes raised by the objectives, beginning with special collections’ user group and their relevance to it, promotional methods, attitudes to marketing and finally the consequences of marketing. The amount of literature dealing with the first two issues is markedly higher than that dealing with the latter. Due to the large amount of resources available on the consequences of using websites as marketing methods this last section has been divided into consequences of marketing on the web and overall consequences of marketing.

2.1 US bias of literature

The heavy American bias of literature of special collections has already been noted and one reason could be that there is a far greater emphasis on marketing special collections in the US than in the UK. As Bengston (2001) points out ‘outreach’ or promotional activities are, in general, more highly developed in the US in contrast with the UK. However another possible reason is that, as almost 50% of US librarians have academic status (Peacock, 2001) they have considerably more incentive and time to publish.

2.2 Marketing and academic libraries

The issue of marketing and academic libraries features prominently in the literature. However, as Brewerton (2003) points out, librarians, particularly academic librarians have not always been proactive in marketing their services. Reasons for this include the widespread misperception that it is only suitable for businesses and not for non-profit organisations, the misunderstanding that it is primarily about selling something, that it has been viewed as in inessential ‘add on’ and that it had been regarded unnecessary because of the idea that there is a captive audience in that students and staff had to use the library (Brewerton, 2003). In
addition Olson (2002) mentions the fear some librarians hold that marketing may create an overwhelming demand for services. As recently as 2001 Marshall (2001:119) found that many academic library directors ‘were uncomfortable with the public relations aspect of the job’. However there is some evidence to indicate that that this situation is changing. Sykes (2002) believes that academic libraries are adapting to changing times and making a concerted effort to ascertain, understand and serve users needs. Relationship marketing seems to be at the centre of many libraries marketing activities (Rowley 2003). As Besant and Sharp (2000) and Singh (2003) highlight relationship marketing is an ideal approach for libraries to take as relationship building can enable them to meet their goals and serve the parent institution’s mission successfully.

Rowley (2003) believes that marketing is now widely accepted in academic libraries, and has become a key concern. There are many reasons why it has become important. One reason is the need for librarians to justify their existence by establishing the value of themselves and their libraries. De Saez (2002:xlll) believes that it is crucial to pay attention to marketing as ‘the real value of marketing is to ensure the survival and growth of the libraries and information services’. As Soules (2001) states the drive towards increased efficiency in organisations impacts on librarians. She points out ‘even universities and governments will not support the cost of providing resources and services if they are not used and if librarians cannot articulate how their roles add value’ (Soules, 2001:340). The stark truth is that there is a financial imperative for libraries to market themselves. As Brewerton (2003:268) points out ‘Without marketing we are in danger of losing demand and hence funding’.

Furthermore there is a need to define the role and function of a librarian as these are often misunderstood (Soules, 2001) and/or undervalued (Shamel, 2002). In addition the issue of competition has recently come to the fore. The appearance of ‘information marketplace competitors’ such as ebrary means that a library must prove that it offers a better service than these commercial companies to avoid having its primacy as a resource centre challenged (Bell, S. J., 2002).
Gronroos (1994) highlights the issue of who is responsible for marketing. He believes separate marketing departments with marketing specialists may be detrimental to the successful development of customer orientation in organisations. As he points out it ‘alienates’ the rest of the organisation from marketing. Goldman (In: Soules 2001:344) echoes this, believing that marketing is everyone’s responsibility: ‘it is a philosophy, not a job – a way of thinking, not a department’. This idea seems to have taken root in libraries. Bell (2001) and Corfield (2001) argue that marketing is a mindset, and should be a routine duty embedded into a library’s structures and goals.

2.3 Marketing and special collections

Traister (2003:102) believes there is ‘an imperative to make special collections increasingly user-friendly, functional and actively used parts of the larger library and educational institutions they serve’. There is a general need to be accessible because, as Van Camp (2003) points out, providing access to collections is one of the highest priorities for cultural institutions and is an important measure of their success. Cobb (2001) echoes this, arguing that improving access to materials should be a goal for all libraries and part of this is making public exactly what material and services special collections offer. Price (2001) detects hostility towards special collections as some feel they do not earn their place and are superfluous to the main aims of academic libraries. In addition they are resource heavy – the storage, conservation and providing of access to special material incurs substantial costs (Joint Funding Councils, 1993). In this context special collections have to show that their collections are relevant to the user community, and are well used. There is a sense that they have to prove their worth – as Brewerton (2004:9) states ‘Space in the library is at a premium. If these weird and wonderful collections of old books, letters and other ephemera are to earn their shelf space they need to be used’. Normore (2003) agrees, arguing that the value of a collection derives from level of usage – it must be well publicised as if a collection is not used then ‘it will not be valued’. Furthermore there is the feeling that special collections must be made attractive to a world to whom books are becoming less important. There are ‘fears that ‘elite collections of materials may increasingly come to seem useless’ to students and academics ‘dazzled by web based and other alternatives to traditional, older
forms’ (Traister, 2003:103). Thus special collections must be marketed to avoid becoming irrelevant and becoming, as Gundersheimer (2000) puts, it ‘road kill on the information highway’.

2.4 Special collections and their user group

The issue of by whom and for what purpose collections are used is a key theme in the literature. A key aspect of marketing is knowing your market and Nelson and Frantz (1999) believe that ‘librarians who work with closed collections must analyze their users’ information needs and develop philosophies and strategies for meeting them’. Crowe (2002) asserts that special collection librarians and archivists have a uniquely good relationship with their users as they have far more personal contact with library users than librarians in other departments.

The traditional user group of special collections are scholars and researchers (Henderson, 1999) but it is suggested that special collections need to widen access to their holdings (Bengston, 2001, Feather, 2004a). A major dilemma preoccupying special collections librarians is the issue of who special collections are for - if they are to be used by a wider audience the problem is how to identify this wider audience and how to serve it (Feather, 2004a). The idea of special collections being accessible and relevant to the general public is discussed by Feather (2004a) and Liew (2005) who point out there is a rapidly growing audience for heritage, and special collections can be regarded as part of the increasingly popular heritage industry. Liew (2005) highlights the popularity of genealogy as an indication of the rise in people interested in their own heritage. Special collections can serve a role in helping further this interest (Liew, 2005).

2.4.1 Relevance of special collections to user group

Special collections have always attracted external scholars and Matthews (1998) asserts that for most special collections over 50% of research use is by external users. Special collections may give a library a national or international profile and mark the library as an ‘important research centre’ (Phillips, 2002:10). However this may result in tension as heavy external use may ‘conflict with its
primary institutional mission’ (Feather, 1994:26). This external use may cause managers to question the high cost of maintaining special collections. Internal use must be greater than external for this expenditure to be supported and they must prove their use to the ‘immediate academic community’ (Cullen, 2001:88). The needs of the internal audience are paramount. As Chodorow and Claassen (1994:145) state ‘Users generate both the need and justification for continued acquisitions’. In order to be used collections must be relevant to the main research and teaching interest of their parent institution (Auchstetter, 1990). Casey and Flannery (2003:85) agree, arguing that a special collection, though valuable in itself must be linked in ‘meaningful way to campus life’. This can be achieved in two ways, First by linking one’s collecting policy with the university’s academic interests (Chodorow and Claassen, 1994, Byrd, 2001) and secondly by promoting the collection as a core academic resource (Schuchard, 2002). Byrd (2001) believes this can be achieved by librarians being proactive and ensuring their collections’ relevance by establishing academic contacts, developing knowledge of academic courses, identifying resources useful to these courses and publicising these resources to academics and students. Special collections must not be regarded as treasure houses, they must be regarded as ‘academic resources, not precious stones’ and must have a symbiotic relationship with the development of the academic programmes in their universities (Chodorow and Claassen, 1994:144). Traister (2003) also believes that special collections must be functional, working collections. However the changing nature of research and teaching can be a problem – what is a core resource at the moment may become marginal if the direction of scholarly research changes (Chodorow and Claassen, 1994). Maintaining a relevance can therefore be very difficult.

### 2.4.2 Special collections as teaching resources

This idea of special collections as teaching resources is gaining prominence. Traditionally, they have been used largely as resources for researchers and their role as teaching materials has been limited – however many (e.g. Bengston, 2001; Feather, 1994; Schuchard, 2002) see scope for this role to be increased. On a specific subject level the increase in history of the book courses has increased the use of special collections as teaching resources (Bengston, 2001). But Bengston (2001:195) feels that there is also the need for greater access to special collections for ‘students who
are not specialists for class projects, exhibitions and general consultation’. Articles dealing with successful incorporation of special collections into the curriculum indicate that close librarian-academic collaboration is necessary. Schmiesing and Hollis (2002) discuss a librarian-academic collaboration and believe that use of special collections materials created a unique learning experience for the student – the physical format of a book can reveal much about a text and illuminate research in many disciplines. Casey and Flannery (2004) believe that linking collection materials with the curriculum ensures that they justified their existence in terms of the context of the university’s educational mission. They argue it can result in ensuring that special collections librarians have ‘strong allies in their efforts to make budgetary justifications to administrators who may be less appreciative of ‘old books’ and their value to the university’ (Casey and Flannery, 2003: 88).

The provision of digital surrogates has also increased student usage of special collections. As Smith (1999) points out ‘Digitizing these types of primary source materials offers teachers at all levels previously unheard-of opportunities to expose their students to the raw materials of history’. Using primary material can advantage students - Wendorf (2002) believes that use of primary materials has improved the quality of students’ essays and examinations and D’Arms and Marcum (1999) argue that use of primary materials can encourage critical thinking in students.

### 2.5 Promotional activities

Many collections take a very proactive role towards promotion. Casey and Flannery (2003:85) state there are many methods of raising awareness about the value of special collections to staff and students: ‘Outreach efforts are varied and legion: history clubs, lecture series, symposia focusing on one or more aspects of the collection strengths, tours, media coverage and so on’.

However the three most common methods discussed in the literature are exhibitions, seminars and websites, and these shall now be discussed.
2.5.1 Exhibitions

These appear to be the most common and longest established method of promotion reflected in the fact that Allen (1999) regards them as a traditional way of attracting students to special collections. Morris (1991) states they can make collections more accessible for both scholars and non-specialists. Auchstetter (1990) believes them to be successful as they appeal to many different groups of people because of their visual appeal and the way they capitalise in people’s curiosity about ‘rare and antique materials’.

What should be exhibited is the subject of debate. Allen (1999) believes that librarians should plan exhibitions according to ‘undergraduate interests’. Casey and Flannery (2003) designed an exhibition to fit in with a specific course which therefore had distinct pedagogical benefits. It was a course requirement that students visit the exhibition and write an essay about it as a learning experience and this resulted in a rise in student use of special collections. However, this is difficult to do in many universities considering how many different academic subjects undergraduates study. Hutton’s (1999) recommendation that exhibitions have broad appeal is more attainable. Exhibitions can vary from the simple and inexpensive to the complex and expensive. Hutton (1999) makes the case for a multimedia approach to exhibitions, arguing that ideas such as video presentations would make an impact on visitors to a collection.

Exhibitions have been referred to as ‘the illegitimate children of academic libraries’ (Bowen and Roberts, 1993:407) as is asserted that they are non-essential to the library’s mission. However Prendergast (2003) and Gifford (2002) argue that they can play an important part in both public relations and educational goals and asserts that they can be both entertaining and educational. They have other advantages – they provide public outreach to user groups, they can acknowledge past donors and attract new ones, they make rare material publicly accessible, advertise the collection and allow the librarian to increase their knowledge of the featured collection (Prendergast, 2003).
Many special collections have space specifically intended for exhibitions. It is telling that when facilities were designed to house a newly acquired special collection at Florida Atlantic University libraries a gallery area to showcase the collections was included (Cuttrone and Ferrari, 2004). When exhibiting items the materials must be very carefully displayed – there is a British standard which focuses on the correct conditions for the storage and exhibiting of archival material (British Standards Institution, 2000).

2.5.2 Seminars

Organised visits to collections can take many forms, for instance they may be a research seminar or an introductory session on special collections. Traister (2003) believes ‘show and tell events’ which involve a class visiting special collections to see materials relevant to their course to be very effective as a means of promotion. Schmeising and Hollis (2002) believe that this is the standard way special collections promote themselves and such events are successful in making potential users aware of the department. Henri (2003) believes that incorporating a tour of special collections in general library orientation tours can be an effective way of publicising what special collections have to offer. Such sessions can also have pedagogical benefits (Traister, 2003) and can establish a strong line of communication between librarians and academics (Schuchard, 2002). In addition they can be a way of inspiring interest in special collections – the majority of undergraduates will never have encountered special collections material and seeing such material can have a considerable impact. Schuchard (2002) is almost evangelical in his description of students’ reaction to handling primary material: ‘There is no more magical teaching moment than seeing sophomores or juniors in utter awe when they are handed a manuscript or a rare book …their imaginations struck, their intellectual excitement flowing’.

2.5.3 Websites

Love and Feather (1998) found that special collections websites functioned mainly as methods of promotion and provided both basic information such as access policies and sophisticated features such as virtual exhibitions. Special collections
websites vary enormously in terms of amount of content, with some sites containing major digital collections and others providing basic information of the type that would be found in a simple brochure (Ferguson and McGrath, 2000). The web is regarded as having opened up access to special collections (Abraham, 2001). A comparison may be drawn with national libraries – they too are traditionally seen as elite and aloof, intended only for researchers. But many of them are attempting to widen access and be more user friendly (Green, 2002) and a major aid in this is the skilful use of their websites. The web enables national libraries to maximise use of their resources, as Brindley states:

‘we can make the resources we have stretch further – it is viable for us to reach students, lifelong learners and the general public via digital channels, in a way that is not possible through a single physical location’ (Brindley, 2004).

Zanish-Belcher (2003:163) believes that the web has had a major impact ‘Digital access and the web have altered the landscape of archives and special collections permanently and allowed increasing numbers of users to locate and access archives and other rare materials’. This quote identifies two main issues –the location of and access to resources which shall now be discussed.

### 2.5.3.1 Websites aid location of material

The web has allowed special collections to advertise their materials in a way which was impossible before. Many special collections departments’ webpages contain access aids in the form of online catalogues and finding aids, and information about how to visit the collection (Abraham, 2001). As Price (2001) points out this has been positive in that it allows patrons confused by closed stacks to investigate the websites for background information –it seems to make special collections less intimidating.

The growth of online catalogues is a key aid for researchers to discover useful material (Henri, 2003). However the problem of ‘hidden collections’ is highlighted by Yakel (2005) and has been the subject of an American Libraries Association task force for special collections white paper (Jones, 2003). This term means ‘materials that cannot be found in the online catalogue or may be found there only under a collective title or un- or under-processed primary sources’ and is a particular problem
for special collections (Yakel, 2005: 95). It means that scholars are denied access to potentially very important resources which could aid their research (Jones, 2003). This is a recognised problem which many libraries are taking steps to remedy (Russell, 2004, Gray, 2000).

### 2.5.3.2 Websites and access to services and resources

Many departments offer reference services via email, and many have seen dramatic rises in enquiries made via email (Lavender et al, 2005). But more significantly the web has increased access to special collections material as many departments have digital versions of some of their collections online (Chepesiuk, 2001). This obviously allows for far greater access as the barriers of geographical location and fragility of materials are overcome (Srivastava, 2004). It is pointed out that digitisation is a way of dealing with the ‘challenges posed by the dual responsibility of maintaining access to the books while ensuring their preservation for future generations’ (Library of Congress, 2003:226). However there is some concern that ‘formats used for a digital collection may become obsolete, rendering the whole collection inaccessible’ but there is research on how technological obsolescence can be avoided (Balas, 2002:41). There have been some questions about whether the growth of digital collections will mean a decline in the physical usage of collections. Zeidburg (1993:76) fears that original special collection material may ‘disappear’ both in terms of public awareness of them as a physical artefact and from libraries as they ‘no longer see the value of keeping the original collections when they can provide a selection from them on optical disk’. However it has been found that many are of the opinion that physical and virtual collections will ‘operate in tandem as a hybrid collection’ (Phillips, 2002:40). As Hobbs (1998) and Cullen (2001) point out scholars will always prize handling the originals, and digital access will never totally replace physical use. Digitisation is likely to continue to grow in importance and Hobbs (1998) believes that if special collections departments wish to remain at the ‘forefront of scholars’ attention’ they must be active in digitising their materials.
Value can be added to digitised material if materials are placed in some contextual framework – this is preferable to having material without any explanation or interpretation (Traister, 2003). Many collections take care to present digitised resources in an interesting way often be in the form of online exhibitions, which are becoming more common. Kalfatovik (2001) discusses the increase in virtual exhibitions and points out they can either be versions of a physical exhibition or be specifically designed for the website. Their benefits include the ability to exhibit objects too fragile for physical display, the fact that they can display multiple pages of manuscripts in a way not possible in physical exhibits, that there is no need for exhibition space and they function to promote the collections (Kalfatovik, 2001). In addition they have a greater reach than physical exhibitions (Kalfatovik, 2001).

2.5.3.3 Collaborative projects

Little has been written about collaborative website projects although they have proliferated in recent years. For example the Research Libraries Group (RLG) formed the cultural materials alliance which has the objective to widen access to resources from its members which are from the library, archives and museum sectors and one of its goals is to ‘increase awareness of the institutions and their special collections’ (Erway, 2004). A large number of these projects were under the aegis of the Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP), and this includes projects such as AIM 25, the RSLP 19th century pamphlets project and the ‘Palaeography – developing the national resource’ project. A key benefit of projects like these is that access to and use of featured resources is increased. An impetus behind the RSLP 19th century pamphlets project was the conviction that ‘use of … collections increases significantly as resource discovery is made easier through networked, computerised cataloguing’ (RSLP, n.d). Another benefit is that such initiatives can widen the user group of special collections and this is the objective of the Britain In Print project: ‘A central objective of the Britain in Print project is to identify ways of utilising the wealth of printed material that exists within the collections of the partner libraries, to the benefit of as wide an audience as possible’. As part of this they have piloted a project which involves using digitised material to support learning for school pupils.
2.6 Attitudes of special collections staff towards marketing

There is little mention of staff attitudes towards marketing of special collections in the literature. Bernstein (1998) suggests a reason for this may be that marketing has been regarded as an unsuitable approach and found evidence for this in her research. One respondent believed that special collections should not be judged on how well they were publicised as this was inappropriate for collections of this sort. But, as discussed above special collections departments seem to be under pressure to market themselves. The fact that many articles on promotion of special collections are written by senior figures in special collections, many of them managers indicates that marketing is regarded as a necessity by those at a high level of the profession (e.g. Traister, 2003, Byrd, 2001). Byrd (2001) stresses that it is imperative for the continued survival of special collections: ‘the key to eliminating, or at least decreasing the marginalisation of special collections has been active promotion of access to, and use of, those collections’. There is now some indication that marketing is now regarded as a major part of the job of being a special collections librarian. Schreyer (2004) points out that it is beginning to take a much higher priority in special collections departments. On the University of Arkansas Library Special Collections website (University of Arkansas libraries, 2005) it is stated that ‘promoting awareness and use of the collections’ is a major responsibility of senior staff. The recent job advert for the post of Head of Special Collections at the University of Birmingham gives an insight into what management regards as the essential responsibilities of the post. Emphasis is laid on raising awareness of the collections, stating that the post holder must ‘raise the profile of a rare resource within a prestigious institution’ and that a key role is promoting the collection and attracting new users (University of Birmingham, 2005). Significantly the University of North Carolina State University Libraries (2005) have created a new post of ‘Librarian for exhibits and Outreach’. Outreach and promotion of the collection must therefore be a significant concern within the department, enough to merit outlaying a salary for a full-time position.

Traister (2003) believes that promotion is a new core function of special collections alongside the established key functions of acquisition and cataloguing. Price (2001:38) too argues that ‘working in the field now demands rigorous..."
dedication to access and use – online, virtual, digital….along with the traditional collecting, care and preservation that are the hallmarks of the profession’. Henderson (1999) believes that outreach activities should be integral to special collections and can ensure that a service suited to the needs of its users is delivered.

This widespread tendency towards promoting collections has led to many librarians wholeheartedly embracing the web as a ‘crucial function’ of the special collections department (Price, 2001:39). Price (2001) believes that having a strong website is of paramount importance in promoting the services and functions of the department to researchers and library staff.

2.7 Consequences of marketing

2.7.1 Consequences of web marketing

The web has widened the audience for many special collections departments due to its global reach (Abraham, 2001). Online finding aids have ensured that items can be located far more easily by external researchers and it has made historical or literary research easier (McKay, 2003, Hobbs, 1998, Attar, 2003). As Attar (2003:148) states ‘the desirability of retrospective conversion of catalogue holdings for improved access is generally accepted’. Digitised material, a feature of many special collections websites, can result in increased use of collections (McKay, 2003) and as Henri (2003:67) points out ‘material that might have seemed obscure in hard copy can become a core resource once digitised and widely available’. Another major benefit is that it serves established users by providing better access at the same time as attracting new users (Chepesiuk, 2001). Gorran (2005) suggests that new users can be people such as ‘armchair’ historians’ and schoolchildren and argues that digitisation ‘truly democratizes special collections and brings history to everyone’, an advantage also emphasised by Poll (2005). In addition it can help researchers see features of the text previously impossible to see because of the ability to zoom in on an image (Smith, 1999 and Cullen, 2001). Evidence of the major effect digitisation has had on the use of special collections is illustrated by the success Cornell and the University of Michigan have had with their making of America collections (Hirtle,
The contrast between level of access to printed material and digitised material is marked – prior to digitisation a few 100 items a year were circulated but now the traffic to the website is on average 5000 hits a day (Hirtle, 2002).

2.7.2 Justification of existence

Traister (2003) believes that a major benefit of marketing is that it results in more use of a collection which proves that the collection is a much needed part of the university. Price (2001) agrees, arguing that showing what special collections have behind their ‘closed doors’ will counter arguments from their detractors who are uncertain of the true functions of special collections. Bengston (2001:198) believes it will have a positive effect on how collections and the library as a whole are perceived:

‘an active and creative special collections outreach program can greatly enhance the perception of the entire library by the rest of the university and the outside world’. Knowing your market can pay dividends – Sambrook (2005:29) argues that making teachers and researchers aware that special collections are there to support their needs can result in ‘embedding an appreciation of the value of your special collections in the institutional psyche’. A strong programme of marketing can result in special collections being regarded as a core rather than a marginal part of a research library (Byrd, 2001).

2.7.3 Negative effects

There is a concern that in some ways a special collections department will be a victim of its own success if it encourages greater access and use. The tension between preservation and access is highlighted by some authors. Traister (2003) points out that if marketing is successful and more people access collections material may become damaged through general wear and tear, a thing that their storage in special collections departments is supposed to protect them from. This is seconded by Lavender (1997) who states that there is a paradox between the need to increase the level of use of special collections to ensure the continued existence of such departments and that danger that this may actually hasten the destruction of these materials. He points out that this situation may be worsened by the increasing
availability of information about such collections available via the web. In addition as Sheridan (2002) points out new users such as students are likely to be inexperienced in handling fragile special collections material and are thus more likely to cause wear and tear. However this situation can be mitigated by taking protective measures such as providing guidelines and advice on use, supervising users and producing digital surrogates (Sheridan, 2002).

2.8 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature relevant to the subject matter of this project. Marketing has become a significant concern in special collections departments and academic libraries as a whole. There is a pressure within higher education for every department to prove its worth to the institution and its users. Libraries and special collections are feeling this pressure and making use of marketing to meet this challenge. The bulk of the review concentrated on highlighting issues pertinent to the objectives. It emerged that knowing and serving your market is a major concern in special collections and there was much emphasis on making them working collections which were useful to the academic interests to the university. Promotion varied from the complex and sophisticated to the simple and inexpensive and was regarded as having major advantages in increasing the use and profile of collections. The web was regarded as a very important method, with very particular benefits of facilitating the location of and access to material. In terms of attitudes to marketing it was found that it appears to be becoming a prime responsibility for special collections managers, regarded by some as a new core function. The consequences of marketing can be both positive and negative. Positive effects include an increased profile, with websites regarded as particularly successful promotional tools. Negative effects include increased use of collections leading to the deterioration of the condition of material and the potential for marketing activities to divert time from the other important functions of the special collections department.

The next chapter discusses the methodology for this project, upon which the findings of the literature review were a major influence.
3 Methodology

To ensure that the results of this study were valid it was necessary to give ample consideration to what methods of data collection should be used, to plan in detail how they would be carried out and to ensure that the data collected was analysed. This chapter gives an account of this process, beginning by discussing the overall approach taken to research methods turning then to discussing ethical issues and sampling. The four methods of investigation used are described; these are the literature review, the evaluation of special collections’ websites. Finally the techniques used for data analysis and the timetable for the project are discussed.

3.1 Overall Approach

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of research were used. Qualitative research was an appropriate method for this study as it focused on a specific group of libraries, and required subjective data such as perceptions and attitudes. However, it is complemented with quantitative data –figures on such things as how many libraries have digitised material available on their website were obtained. Combining these two approaches can arguably result in more valid results, and as Denscombe (2003:231) states ‘good research tends to use parts of both approaches’. Gorman and Clayton (2005) believe that it improves the quality of research findings.

3.2 Ethical issues

In undertaking research it is critical that researchers consider ethical issues (Denscombe, 2003). To ensure that the research was ethical the researcher obtained ethics approval by going through the formal procedures set by the University Ethics Review System. Part of this involved completing the relevant documentation and having this vetted by the committee. This was the application form, the participant information sheet (attached in appendix I) and the consent sheet. The latter two were intended to ensure that the informed consent was obtained from the participants. Informed consent means that participants participated voluntarily and were ‘given
sufficient information about the research to arrive at a reasoned judgement about whether or not they want to participate’ (Denscombe, 2003: X). In addition the information sheet provided confidentiality and anonymity information. The information sheet was sent out with the questionnaires, at the end of which the respondent was asked to confirm that they had read the sheet. Contact details of the researcher and the supervisor were provided should the respondents have any questions about the research. A covering letter (attached in appendix II) was sent with the information sheet and the questionnaire and this placed the survey in its research context and gave additional information about the aims of the dissertation. The consent sheet was used to confirm consent for the interviews. Researchers should protect the interest of participants (Denscombe, 2003) therefore confidentiality and anonymity were of paramount importance. The responses received were kept confidential and the data has been anonymised in the discussion of the research findings. As the website evaluation applies to all the survey targets have been assigned a letter whether they responded to the questionnaire or not.

3.3 Sampling

In small scale projects of short duration sampling is necessary due to time constraints (Bell, J., 2002). As the majority of academic libraries have special collections there were a very large number of potential subjects to study. A purposive sample was used which entails selecting a population to study on the basis that it is ‘likely to produce the most valuable data’ (Denscombe, 2003:15). It was decided to research libraries from some sort of specific grouping. The twenty four academic libraries who are members of the Consortium of University and Research Libraries in the British Isles (CURL) were selected. The main benefits of this sample were that these were leading academic libraries containing special collections which are well developed, prestigious and of national and international significance. CURL is made up of twenty nine libraries and was formed with the mission to ‘increase the ability of research libraries to share resources for the benefit of the local, national and international research community’ (CURL, 2005). CURL (2005) makes explicit reference to improving access to special collections, and one of its aims is to enable
researchers from anywhere in the world to ‘Have physical access to manuscripts, archives or printed items that have not been digitised and cannot be moved, wherever these are held’.

As one library had a separate department for rare books and manuscripts these departments were sent a questionnaire each. Thus the sample size was 25 special collections departments.

3.4 Methods of Investigation

Four methods of investigation were used – a literature review, an evaluation of special collections websites, questionnaires and interviews.

3.4.1 Literature Review

The literature review was crucial in establishing the main issues to investigate in the dissertation. It informed the formulation of the aim and objectives and the design of the methods of investigation. The review was continually added to as the dissertation progressed due to the fact that respondents highlighted new perspectives and context was required. In addition the literature was used to place the findings in context and to discuss the results. In analysing and discussing the findings Phillips’ (2002) example was followed and where appropriate participant’s responses were grounded in the context of the literature by comparing them with views from it.

Three main methods were used for literature searching – using relevant databases and following up references from bibliographies and searching the internet. Two databases specific to library and information management (LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts) and Library Literature and Information science full text) and one generic social sciences database (Web of Knowledge) were used. A number of useful keywords for searching were identified (e.g. marketing promotion, publicity, public relations, etc.) and combined with the term special collections or rare books or manuscripts (all these terms were used due to the lack of agreement in the literature about what special collections are). New keywords were added as the search progressed such as outreach, a term very common in the US. These databases
were regularly searched in case of new articles being published. The bibliography of each item read was scanned for relevant articles and this enabled the identification of several key articles.

The internet was periodically searched as there is much useful material which is only available online. The Google and Google scholar search engines produced the most helpful results. A number of useful items were identified; the material from the website of ARL was particularly helpful.

### 3.4.2 Websites evaluation

The web is an important promotional method for special collections according to Abraham (2001) and Traister (2003) therefore it merited particular attention. The libraries surveyed therefore had their websites scrutinised in some detail. Criteria for assessing special collections was required and was adapted from the criteria used by Love and Feather (1998) in evaluation of special collections websites. The original criteria are attached in appendix III and the adapted criteria are included in appendix IV. This review is discussed in the chapter on the web as a promotional method, and respondents’ views on the web as a promotional method are incorporated.

### 3.4.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires have a number of advantages, and their geographical reach and ability to reach a large number of people (Denscombe, 2003) was particularly useful for this project. Time and resource limitations made it impossible to undertake detailed interviews with anything but a small number of participants. The questionnaire therefore was a suitable method to gain data from a large number of respondents. After deciding on this method an intensive process of design was undertaken. When designing the questionnaire the researcher followed the recommendation of Gillham (2000) on the first step to developing the questions –the main topic areas were written down with specific questions listed under these headings. The main topic areas were explicitly linked with the objectives and these were informed by key areas of the literature. This ensured that the researcher had a
‘clear vision of exactly what issues are at the heart of the research and what kind of information would enlighten these issues’ (Denscombe, 2003:152). This categorisation also facilitated better interpretation of results and was intended to help the respondents follow the questionnaire easier (Gillham, 2000). Careful consideration was given to the formulation of questions – one must be aware to avoid pitfalls such as lack of clarity and questions which ‘direct’ the respondent to an answer that the researcher wishes for (Gillham, 2000). A mixture of closed and open questions was used, which had different benefits. The closed questions provided pre-coded answers and the open questions gathered data that was more likely to ‘reflect the full richness and complexity of the views held by the respondent’ (Denscombe, 2003:156). The questionnaire was redrafted several times, and advice from the supervisor aided this process. The questionnaire is attached in appendix V.

The questionnaire pilot was a crucial stage in designing the questionnaire. Piloting obtains feedback on how long the questionnaire takes to complete and tests the clarity of questions (Bell, J., 2002). The piloting resulted in the clarification of certain questions and also the shortening of the questionnaire. As Denscombe (2003) states that the length of the questionnaire can be crucial in determining whether it is completed. Earlier versions were too long and complex and may have resulted in a lower response rate.

Once finalised, a copy of this questionnaire was sent to the head librarians of the twenty-five special collections at the twenty-four academic libraries listed in footnote i. All the contact details were acquired from special collection websites. It was decided to send the questionnaires by mail as this would be more noticeable than an email – it is likely that people now receive far more correspondence by email than by post. A stamped addressed envelope was included for return of the questionnaire. Eighteen of the questionnaires were returned, giving a 72 % response rate.

3.4.4 Interviews

At the end of the questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate whether they were willing to be interviewed and twelve indicated they were. Five of the respondents were randomly selected for interviews. These interviews were arranged
by email and the researcher interviewed the interviewees at their place of work, thus
minimising the inconvenience caused to them. The content of the interviews was
determined by three things: the need to find out the information needed to meet
objectives (this same reason was behind the design of the questionnaires), the need to
discuss issues not possible to include in the basic survey and the wish to pursue
issues raised in the questionnaire in further depth. As Denscombe (2003:166) points
out interviews can function well as follow ups to questionnaires:
‘where the questionnaire might have thrown up some interesting lines of enquiry,
researchers can use interviews to pursue these in greater detail and depth’.
Patton (1990:29) states that while questionnaires can be used in qualitative research
they ‘represent the most elementary form of qualitative data’. The interviews
ensured richer and more detailed data was obtained. The interview had advantages
over questionnaires such as flexibility – in an interview there is the chance that the
dialogue will take a new direction which may result in ‘adding depth and breadth to
one’s understanding of the issues involved’ (Gorman and Clayton, 2005: 45). This
did happen in some of the interviews and the researcher was careful to say to the
interviewees that they could take the discussion in any direction they wished. In
view of the researcher’s inexperience in this area the interview was quite structured,
in the format of what Gorman and Clayton (2005) call a ‘standardised open ended
interview’, which meant that the wording and order of the questions was decided in
advance. Although this meant the interview was quite formal there were some
major benefits – it ensured that all important issues were covered (if the wording had
been spontaneous the researcher's lack of experience would have make it likely that
useful questions would have been inadvertently omitted) and that comparison
between interview responses was facilitated (Gorman and Clayton, 2005).

The interview schedule was divided into themed sections similar to the
questionnaire to make it easier to analyse with the headings being: general attitude to
marketing; user group; promotion. A slightly different schedule was used for each
interview and the five different schedules are attached in appendix VI. These
interviews were recorded by dictaphone (permission was asked before the interview
began) to leave the researcher free to concentrate on listening. In some interviews ad
hoc questions were asked to probe interviewees on particular issues. Although
transcription is time consuming it was necessary due to the richness of the data yielded from the interview - all of the respondents were very articulate and had a large number of interesting points to make.

3.5 Techniques used for data analysis

Data analysis was a crucial stage in the project. As Gorman and Clayton (2005:146) state ‘data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data… the purpose of this process is to search for general statements among categories of data’. Data analysis is a step by step process and to facilitate data analysis important preliminary steps had been taken. The first was that the questionnaire and interviews had been designed with the view to making data analysis easier – the data was collected in a way that it was already organised into broad categories, a step which Gorman and Clayton (2005) recommend as an initial step in analysing data. Secondly it was crucial to compile all the data in an easily accessible format. It was thus necessary to type up all the qualitative answers from the questionnaires, and tally the responses for the quantitative answers. Thirdly it was essential to familiarise oneself with the data, to stand back and read through everything, ‘discerning and noting various issues that arise’, mulling on broad impressions and conceiving ideas on ways the data can be appropriately grouped (Finch, 1990:140). The next step was to read through the data again and identify new categories, or subdivide categories (Gorman and Clayton, 2005). In this process the researcher identified new categories such as the idea of special collections as an institutional asset. After these preliminary steps it was necessary to embark on more detailed analysis and basic coding was used – the data was read through and codes were assigned to chunks of data. Codes were developed inductively from the data, and as recommended by Finch (1990:129) the research objective was borne in mind and was ‘a central thread running through the analytic strategy’. Throughout the process the researcher used the strategy recommended by Gorman and Clayton (2005:210) and kept reflexive notes which helped focus attention ‘in new ways, stimulating fresh insights and revelations’. In taking these steps it was ensured that the researcher made sense of the data collected and that the ultimate objective of data analysis was achieved, that is to ‘reduce masses of data to meaningful and manageable portions’ (Gorman and Clayton, 2005:207).
3.6 Reflection on the research

On the whole the methods of investigation were useful in collecting results which achieved the aim and objectives. The response rate to the questionnaire was quite high – 18 out of 25 questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 72%. Although non-respondents were sent an email requesting them to fill in the questionnaire this ‘chasing up’ was unsuccessful. One respondent requested an electronic copy of the questionnaire – it would have been advisable for this option to have been offered in the covering letter as an alternative to filling out the questionnaire by hand. It would perhaps have improved the response rate.

A number of respondents made no response to particular questions in the questionnaire. No pattern was discerned to these non-responses, it may have been that the respondents missed out the question by mistake. However two respondents questioned the concept of marketing indicating that it may have been helpful to include a definition of marketing as a user centred process in the covering letter.

Despite the amount of planning and care taken with designing the questionnaire certain flaws became clear when the responses were received. For example the questions about the web as a promotional method and other methods were different from the questions asked about the four other promotional methods. This was an oversight by the researcher reflecting inexperience in questionnaire design.

As a purposive sample was used the findings cannot be generally applied to all special collections in all academic libraries – the collections studied are the most prestigious and well-developed. However as the findings will be compared to assertions made in the research literature there is the ‘potential to make some general conclusions’ (Gorman and Clayton, 2005:81).
3.7 Timetable

The bulk of the dissertation was undertaken during the three month summer period. It was necessary to draw up a timetable, and set deadlines to ensure that the dissertation deadline was met, and that enough time was spent on each activity. Questionnaires were sent out early in the first week of June as early data collection was necessary to ensure enough time was allocated to the interviews and data analysis. This timetable was adhered to apart from the interview process - interviews were begun a week earlier and finished a week later due to the geographical spread of the collections, and the need to interview participants on dates which were most convenient for them.

Table 1: Timetable for work of dissertation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Month</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire piloted</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Questionnaire completion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Send out questionnaires</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chase up non-respondents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse questionnaire responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify issues for interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify + contact Interviewees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake Interviews</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyse interview data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write up dissertation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit dissertation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.8 Summary

This chapter has given a detailed account of the methodology of the project. It was important to consider ethical issues as the interest of project participants must be protected. A thorough literature review was undertaken which informed which issues were addressed in the questionnaire and interviews, and informed the discussion of the findings. The website evaluation gave a detailed perspective of the use of the website to promote collections. Questionnaires yielded both quantitative and qualitative data, allowed a large number of special collections to be surveyed and had a high response rate. The interviews complemented and supplemented this data, yielding more detailed information on certain subjects and raising new perspectives. Considerable time was spent on data analysis, and basic coding was used to identify patterns in the data. This process had been facilitated by the organisation of the questions and the interviews under topics relating to the objectives. The researcher followed a timetable as internal deadlines were necessary to ensure that the dissertation submission deadline was met.
This chapter begins by discussing the findings on who the user group of the special collections surveyed is and on whether this group is still dominated by traditional users. Following on from this the relevance of special collections to their user group is addressed, dealing with the influence of users on collection development and the relevance of collections to research and teaching interests. The issue of relationship building with one’s user group and its benefits is then discussed.

4.1 User group

Figure 1: User group of special collections

Figure 1 shows that special collections generally have a very wide user group. Significantly academics and researchers are the only groups which all respondents count as part of their user group – as Henderson (1999) points out that they are the key user group. The fact that fifteen respondents count the general public as part of
their user group is an unexpectedly high number considering that little of the literature on special collections mentions the general public as a user group. It could be speculated that the rising interest in cultural heritage highlighted by Feather (2004a) and Liew (2005) may be one explanation for this. Respondent B is particularly interested in attracting members of the public and believed it was very important to promote the fact that her department was publicly accessible. The other user groups mentioned were media (by two respondents), non academic units (one respondent) and special interest groups (four respondents). Respondents A and B mentioned the media as a user group and this was followed up in interviews where more details about this were gained. These users were from sectors such as publishers and television. Use of the collections by media was increasing in both collections – in collection B so much so that a specific policy had been set up for media use. Respondent B suggested that one reason for the growth in this use was the proliferation of history programmes. Respondent A pointed out that that serving this group was very time consuming and he was careful to concentrate on serving the main client groups, which are the students and staff of institution A.

4.1.1 Dominant user group

The idea for this dissertation was conceived by a library manager making the remark that special collections needed to diversify their audience. It was thought that it would be useful to ascertain in the interviews whether researchers and academics were still the largest group of users of special collections. All interviewees apart from respondent E believed that they were, and Respondent B stated that academic use accounted for three-quarters of user statistics. Respondents A and C believed that the dominance of this user group was likely to continue. Respondent A accounted for this by saying that academics and researchers were the most consistent users in that they will always have a need for the material in special collections. However respondents B and D believed this situation was beginning to change. Respondent B had seen a significant rise in users with no academic affiliations and they now accounted for the fifth of users. However she was unsure if this was a permanent change. Respondent D was more definite, arguing that although scholars currently account for a large proportion of visitors, wider developments in the higher
educational sphere will affect the user base. She believed that developments such as life-long learning, continuous learning and diversification of courses and students will ‘have a knock on effect for our user base… people who did not traditionally have a need to use us are now’.

Respondent E had found from a recent survey that undergraduates were actually the largest user group but remarked on how surprising this was, and accounted for this by pointing out that academics at institution E encouraged students to read beyond reading lists. In addition the collection was careful to promote itself as just another part of the library, and was included in induction tours.

4.1.2 Widening access

Interviewees were asked whether they felt that there was a drive to widen the audience of the department, and all five indicated that they felt the need to attract new users. Two respondents discussed the need to attract more undergraduates and this is discussed below in the special collections’ relevance to teaching and research interests section.

Three respondents mention funding pressures as an impetus for widening access. Respondent D focuses on internal funding, arguing that attracting new users is a way of proving the department’s worth: ‘Because today you’ve got to justify everything you do, and with departments closing across universities and libraries you really need to be able to prove you’ve got a right to be there… so attracting new users is one of the ways we try and do that’. Respondents B and C discuss external funding – they highlight the fact that funders such as the Heritage lottery fund (HLF) expect to see wide access to the results of projects they fund. As respondent B points out these groups believed diversifying the audience to be very important but this must be balanced with the demands of other funders such as HEFCE whose target audience is academic. All the different sources of funding are difficult to balance: ‘according to the funding we are balancing all different climates across the board’. Both discuss the need to serve the internal users as very important. Respondent B states that her institution is much more focused on the department’s need to increase its internal audience: ‘the
institution is quite happy to have the quodos of the external profile but its real concern is internal use and there isn’t a huge imperative from the institution itself to diversify the audience’.

Respondent C believe that widening access is a positive development, and is a trend the department needs to go along with but stresses the need to be careful. There must be a balance and the established users must not be disadvantaged: ‘we are here to serve the university so we must avoid widening access so much that we disadvantage the people we’re specifically here to serve’.

4.2 Relevance of special collections to needs of user group
4.2.1 Influence of user group on collection development

A significant amount (fifteen) of respondents’ collection development policy was influenced by their user group. Notably all are driven by the needs of their internal audience. As stated in the literature review a commitment to one’s internal audience is key in ensuring that special collections are relevant to their needs and are thus well used (Chodorow and Claassen, 1994, Byrd, 2001).

Ten respondents are influenced by need to fit in with research and teaching interests. Five respondents mention collaboration with academics as important - respondents B and N have both bought items which have been recommended by academics and respondents E and J have received donations due to the contacts of academics. Respondent F’s department maintained a particularly close relationship with academics: ‘we work in partnership with academic staff and invite their views on developing existing collections and new areas of collection development’.

This idea of having a good relationship with academic staff will be further discussed in the section on relationship building with one’s user group.

This issue was followed up in the interviews and the three interviewees who had mentioned research and teaching interests influencing collection development were asked how they kept up these interests. All three respondents mention the usefulness of academic contacts as they can provide direct insight into the needs of
particular departments and courses, supporting Byrd’s (2001) assertion of the importance of this. Respondent E has made a concerted effort to make contacts and believed that these contacts can be mutually beneficial. Academics can pass on information about special collections to their colleagues, and tell the department about research and teaching interests. With this information the department is aware of what it can to support these interests, and can arrange seminars on particular topic for academics or can buy items to reflect interests. Respondent D has subject librarian assistants working in the department part time who have subject knowledge, know about new appointments, find out which modules are running and know what research interest staff have. She states: ‘that’s really been a godsend … as we have that knowledge base already there’.

Respondent E takes advantage of the system of internal communication at her institution – she believes that it is important to pay close attention to internal publications such as newsletters. She gave the example of the way in which new staff appointments may mean the appearance of a new teaching module in their particular area of interest.

4.2.2 Relevance of special collections to research and teaching interests

In the questionnaire participants were asked whether they thought their collections were relevant to research and teaching interests of the university. Eleven respondents thought that their collections reflected priority research interests and the same amount believed that collections fitted in with teaching interests. The highest category was general relevance, with fifteen respondents. Chodorow and Claassen (1994) and Traister (2003) both emphasise the need for collections to be working and functional and it seemed that the majority of collections surveyed were. In addition four respondents believed that their collections were relevant to the general public for purposes such as local history, this may reflect the widespread interest in cultural heritage mentioned by Feather (2004a) and Liew (2005).

Maintaining a relevance appears to be problematic as four respondents highlighted that there was a difficulty in keeping up with research and teaching interests. Respondent C pointed out that in developing one’s collections it was
important to bear future research and teaching interests in mind. This can be difficult, as expressed by respondent B who discussed in the interview how research interest developed unpredictably: ‘you can’t really focus and channel academic research, it goes where it goes’. Respondent D also highlighted the difficulty of making collections relevant to researchers due to the fact that researchers used the collections for very different reasons. Respondent I raised the problem of researchers to whom the collections are relevant moving on to other universities. It is difficult enough for librarians managing mainstream collections to keep up with research and teaching needs, and seems that it can be even more difficult for managers of special collections, a fact that Chodorow and Claassen (1994) highlight.

Respondents A, C and D believed that it was important to publicise the relevance of the collection to its internal users’ research and teaching interests. This is highly recommended by Schuchard (2002) and Byrd (2001) who believe it is a key way to increase use of collections. Respondent D targeted academics by sending at the start of each academic session emails reminding that the department offers teaching sessions and are invited to make use of this function. Respondent C is aiming to target library representatives, as this has not been done in the collection in the past. She intends to arrange introductory meetings in which she discusses what the department has and what use this can be to these academics. In addition she is considering sending out targeted publicity material which will include information on major subject areas covered by the collections thus allowing people to see if material is suitable to them.

4.2.3 Role of special collections in teaching

The role of special educations in teaching appears to be growing and this is linked to the idea of widening access discussed above. All eighteen respondents believe that there is a role for special collections in teaching for both undergraduates and postgraduates. One could speculate that one reason for this could be that it is a way of increasing use of the collections by internal audiences. As pointed out by respondents A and B, special collections are often seen by management as serving the needs of external audiences too much. This perception is a problem for all
special collections in academic libraries (Feather, 1994). Use of collections by undergraduates and postgraduates could substantially increase the internal audience. Respondents were asked how special collections could be used in teaching. Eighteen thought that they could be of use to student projects and dissertations and seventeen believed that material could support lectures and seminars.

Nine respondents mentioned other ways in which special collections could be used in teaching. Two respondents highlighted that the collections were a core resource. Respondent G stressed that the material was of reading list relevance for students of humanities subjects such as history and literature and occasionally for social science subjects. One collection was used in classes taught by special collections and archives staff in history of the book and bibliography. The number of these types of courses is increasing and archives and special collections staff often teach on them (Bengston, 2001). The other six highlighted the way in which special collections materials can be used to teach research skills. Respondent M believed that ‘information literacy skills can be broadened through use of primary/historical source material’. Certainly many students will not have experience in researching primary materials and learning these skills and using primary material can foster critical thinking (D’Arms and Marcum, 1999).

The issue of the use of special collections in learning and teaching was discussed in the interviews. Respondents A and E would like to see more undergraduates use their collections. Respondent A is very keen to increase undergraduate use – he wants the collections to be relevant to all levels of academic activity. Respondent A believed that campus use is particularly important: ‘it strengthens the importance of special collections if there is engagement with them at all academic levels of the university – teaching learning and research activity’. This reflects Casey and Flannery’s (2003) views that special collections must be linked with the academic mission of the university. Respondent E has similar aims. Although undergraduate use is already high specific steps have been taken to attract the non-users such as integrating material from the collections into teaching, a step respondent A has also taken. He is trying to increase the amount of undergraduate seminars and is also using the web to link material with coursework. This is due to his conviction that special collections can be a useful resource for undergraduates.
and that much of the material can relate to and support many people’s studies. This view is becoming more widespread and Bengston (2001) Falbo (2000) and Feather (1994) amongst other emphasise that special collections can be useful in supporting taught courses not just research.

Respondents A, C and D pointed out that for special collections to be used to any significant extent by undergraduates the involvement of academic staff was crucial. The example respondent D offers as proof is that academic staff in institution B are now offering extra credit to students who cite primary resources in their work so students have no choice but to use the department. She states: ‘that’s the sort of thing that you can’t do on your own, that has to come from the contacts that you’ve made’.

Respondent A pointed out that undergraduates were very unlikely to use special collections without the encouragement of academics. If academics don’t take steps such as involving primary materials in seminars then undergraduates will not use the department. The benefit of special collections librarian’s collaboration with academics increasing student use of collections is often pointed out in the literature (e.g. by Casey and Flannery, 2003 and Schmeising and Hollis, 2002).

4.3 Relationship building with user group

Interviewees were asked how they built a relationship with their users, and were asked for details of both formal and informal methods. Formal methods were described as being tools such as user surveys and informal methods was described as building contacts. All interviewees believed that identifying and serving one’s user groups was important, and respondent A stated that ‘we are constantly trying to engage with our user group’. Respondent D believed that this was particularly important for special collections as this is a department which needs to be more sensitive to user needs than the rest of the library. It seems that the interviewees agreed with Nelson and Frantz’s (1999) statement that special collections need to have a close relationship with their user group.
4.3.1 Formal methods

Formal methods seemed less established than informal methods, perhaps because they are more expensive in terms of resources. Surveys were used by only two respondents, A and B although respondent C believed that she may use one in the future. Respondent A gained feedback from library-wide feedback mechanisms such as suggestion boxes as well as department specific surveys. Respondent B believed that formal methods had disadvantages in that academics did not have enough time to take part in focus groups, and respondents to surveys may be those with an axe to grind so the results are not representative. But she also pointed out the main advantage that such surveys can be proof of what users want. This can be useful in making arguments about project and funding needs, and she uses the example of detailed cataloguing, which a lot of funders are not interested in but users say they need, to support this. Respondent C also believes this and states that user comments would be a ‘good tool’ to make arguments to management about such things as the need for increased opening hours.

4.3.2 Informal methods

As discussed above some of the interviewees were keen to work with academics to ensure that their collections remain relevant to the research and teaching interests of the university. This was further reinforced by the fact that all five interviewees believed that building contacts with academics was of crucial importance.

Collection E had ‘kick-started’ its marketing activities by setting up working groups, in which academics functioned as library reps for special collections. This enabled a good working relationship to be established with academics from a broad range of subject disciplines and successfully raised awareness of the department’s willingness to support the work of academics. Respondent B believes that ‘informal contacts are very important – they are the most powerful contacts you have within the institution’. Supporting this view, Respondent D asserts that the support of academics can help increase usage markedly in that they encourage student use, as discussed above.
Respondents A, C and D all highlight the usefulness of using the library’s already existing contacts and use the knowledge and contacts of subject librarians or subject librarians’ assistants. as Respondent A encourages subject librarians to regard relevant special collections material as core resources for their subjects and to promote it as such.

Respondents A and E discussed the fact that ad hoc communication with users could also be useful. Both respondents stress that their staff have a good relationship with regular users. Respondent A states ‘There is good interaction between staff and reading room customers… suggestions often come that way’. Respondent E points that as special collections are not so pressured in the same way as issue desks with long queues they can actually have the time to develop a relationship. Due to this they can offer advice tailored to the users such as drawing relevant resources to users’ attention. This supports Crowe’s (2002) assertion that special collections staff have the opportunities to develop a stronger relationship than staff in the rest of the library.

4.4 Summary

This chapter dealt with the subject of knowing one’s market. The user group of the special collections surveyed is in general very wide and although still largely dominated by scholars and researchers there are signs in some collections that material is beginning to appeal to a more diverse user group, most commonly undergraduates and the general public. This is due to the way in which certain respondents are taking steps to publicise special collections as relevant to the internal user group. The majority of librarians sought to collect material according to the needs of their user group, and the need to meet the needs of internal users was stressed as being of paramount importance. This is reflected in the fact that most collections were of relevance to institutional interests. Relationship building was seen as very important, and had considerable benefits with informal methods such as building contacts seen to most advantageous.
5 Promotion

This chapter focuses on the way special collections are promoted. From surveying the literature and special collections websites five main methods have been identified: merchandise, exhibitions, leaflets, seminars and websites. The advantages and disadvantages of these first four methods are discussed. Other methods mentioned by respondents will be presented. The use of websites as methods of promotion shall be discussed in the next chapter. Two aspects of the general promotional value of collections are discussed: their role as an institutional asset and the possibility of them being a public attraction.

Figure 2: Methods of promotion used

![Methods of promotion graph]

5.1 Merchandise

Merchandise (mainly cards and postcards) is the least common method, reflecting the fact that it is seldom mentioned in the literature. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that it is a more expensive method than others, all of which can be done quite cheaply. Indeed three of the respondents who used merchandise
indicated that it was more a sideline than a major consideration. However although only six said they used it as a method three other respondents said a qualified no – two were in the process of planning merchandise and one was considering using it, which is perhaps a slight indication that it may become a more popular method.

5.1.1 Advantages

Respondent A saw merchandise as having advantages in that they indirectly increased income for special collections. They are sold via a group of ‘friends of the library’ and make a small profit for this group who in turn assist in funding purchases for special collections. Five respondents believed that the visual appeal of postcards, calendars etc were a very appropriate way to advertise the collections as it could raise the profile of certain significant items and therefore the profile of the collections as a whole. Profit was mentioned by only two respondents, indicating that merchandise is not a significant income stream for many special collections. Respondent E, who was planning to launch postcards, stated that they were never likely to make much money but, in combination with an exhibition they could make a collection more widely known. Interestingly merchandise at collection L was part of a scheme to fundraise for the library as a whole.

5.1.2 Disadvantages

The main disadvantages associated with this method seemed to be practical considerations. Three respondents cited copyright as an important concern and respondent I pointed out that merchandise was an administrative burden. Respondents A and L believed that it was time consuming to manage and respondent S pointed out that start up costs were something of a disadvantage. Respondents L and S however believed that it was a cheap method – the expense may be dependent on certain factors such as size of print-run.
5.2 Exhibitions

This is one of the most popular methods, and there was more consensus of the advantages and disadvantages of this particular method than with merchandising.

5.2.1 Advantages

Over two thirds of respondents (thirteen) believed that exhibitions raised awareness of the collections as they allowed a window into library material to which access was necessarily restricted. They were regarded as useful for both showcasing treasures or prominent material as well as advertising little known collections. Nine respondents highlighted a specific aspect of this, the fact that it allowed the department to reach a wider audience. The viewing of special collections material was not limited to those visiting the departments. As respondent G pointed out it enabled the department to: ‘reach audiences which might never think of a rare book or manuscript’ and respondent S believed it ‘opens up collections in unexpected ways to new and existing user groups’. This advantage is mentioned by Prendergast (2003) who stresses that it is a crucial way for closed collections to be more widely accessible. The advantage of visual appeal was flagged up by eleven respondents, with respondent G stating that ‘visual impact is a great tool’ which can attract more people to using the collections. Auchstetter (1990) believes that these outcomes of exhibitions are what makes them such an effective promotional method. This raised awareness was believed by eleven respondents to have the positive effect of resulting in increased use of collections. Respondent E indicated that exhibitions can also work well with other promotional methods as it can be ‘a focal point for visits, tours, lectures etc’.

Four respondents discussed the possibility of collaboration that exhibitions offered. Respondent L contributed material to wider institutional exhibitions and believed that this helped integrate the collection with the rest of the organisation. Respondents E and Q discussed working with academics, and respondent E
mentioned that academics had been invited to curate exhibitions. Exhibitions are a way of increasing knowledge of an area of the collection for respondents D and Q, an advantage Prendergast also (2003) highlights.

5.2.2 Disadvantages

Exhibitions seemed to be a drain on resources such as staff time and labour for many of the respondents with thirteen stating that this was an issue. As respondent A pointed out it was ‘very expensive in time and other resources’. Practical problems were also seen as a disadvantage by ten respondents, with these problems being the issues of exhibition space, security concerns and preservation. For four respondents preservation was a major concern, with two respondents stating their exhibition space was not suitable for displaying original documents. Respondent C made the point that exhibitions were suitable for only particular kinds of material: ‘Some interesting collections are not visually attractive and so don’t lend themselves to exhibition’.

5.3 Leaflets

5.3.1 Advantages

The main advantages seemed to be that they were portable and that they provided useful information, advantages cited by nine respondents for each category respectively. Because they are portable they have benefits both for visitors to the department, who can take this information away for reference but they also have benefits in enabling information about collections to be distributed on a wide basis, as respondent E points out they can be distributed to other libraries for display. Three respondents highlighted the benefit leaflets can be targeted at particular audiences. Respondent D has produced detailed subject specific guides highlighting resources suitable for particular subjects.

As with exhibitions leaflets were regarded by respondents D and Q as having the advantage of developing professional knowledge. Respondent D stated that ‘Special
collections staff have ownership of specific titles and therefore develop better knowledge of collection for certain subject areas’.

5.3.2 Disadvantages

Practical problems again count as disadvantages. Six respondents mention the problem of maintaining currency – respondent S points out the need to ‘judge carefully the length of the print run’ to avoid waste. In addition five cite cost as a drawback, with respondent A highlighting the need to invest money in making the leaflets as attractive as possible. The issue of making leaflets of a high design standard is mentioned by four other respondents, with respondent O believing that leaflets are ‘best with professional design input’. Respondent I believed that quality control of leaflets was crucial as ‘poorly designed or inaccurate leaflets can give a negative image’.

5.4 Seminars

5.4.1 Advantages

The advantage most commonly mentioned (by thirteen respondents) is that seminars raise awareness of both collections and procedures e.g. they address the correct way to handle books, consulting regimes etc. The second most common advantage, with eleven respondents citing it, is the benefits arising from direct contact with students and staff. It is regarded as a good way to build up a relationship with one’s user group. Respondent L believes that ‘personal contact seems to encourage new users who might not have thought about using the collections’. Five respondents believe that seminars encourage students to use the department’s resources and result in more visits. This confirms Sheridan’s (2002) point that seminars can be a useful way of encouraging students to make use of the resources available in a special collections department. They can alleviate the fact that people are often intimidated and ‘alienated by what is often perceived as an elite and rather exclusive preserve’ (Sheridan, 2002:181). Respondent N believes that a seminar ‘physically gets people into the department and breaks down any
intimidation they may feel from entering a ‘closed department’. In addition, as respondent B points out, it can earn the gratitude of academics. This supports Schuchard’s (2002) assertion that seminars can improve communication between librarians and academics.

Seven respondents believe that seminars are useful in allowing librarians to give subject specific information targeted at specific user groups. Respondent E for instance believes that seminars allow librarians to show students how special collections may be of use to them in their work as it: ‘Provides an opportunity to link this use directly to course content and to engage students interest via choice of material used’. Seminars may be very useful in ensuring that collections are, as Traister (2003) recommends, functional as students are made to understand how the collection can benefit them. The idea of seminars instilling in students an interest in special collections material is echoed by six other respondents. Respondent N believes that personal contact is ‘the most effective way to instil enthusiasm’ and similarly respondent I views seminars as having the potential to inspire students about the department’s holdings. Respondent D expands on the potential of the physical artefact to affect students – students often have no concept of what special collections material is like and when they encounter it and are allowed to be ‘hands on’ they are noticeably impressed by the experience. The noticeable impact of special collections material on students has been emphasised by many, for example Schuchard (2002), Allen (1999) and Traister (2003).

5.4.2 Disadvantages

The most commonly mentioned disadvantage was that this method was time consuming, with thirteen respondents highlighting this as an issue. However respondent F was careful to point out that it was ‘time-intensive but worth it’. Respondents who went into more detail indicated that preparation, giving the seminar and reshelving material used took up considerable time. Another common disadvantage, mentioned by ten respondents is the problem of limited audiences – the number of people is necessarily restricted due to space constraints, security concerns and so on. Other practical problems included the need to minimise disruption to other readers and the difficulty of catering to different learning styles.
5.5 Other methods

The other methods listed by respondents were diverse, and most were only carried out by one respondent. They were: talks to public, talks to interest groups, collaborative projects, online cataloguing, internal tours for staff, improving the website, open evenings, lectures, conferences, publications, e-mails, posters, building contacts (discussed in the previous chapter and including items in the university newsletter. Clearly there are a number of methods of promotion, but the main methods discussed above seem to be the most common. Webpages however emerged as the most common method, and this will be discussed fully in the next chapter.

5.6 Special collections as tourist attractions

Feather’s (2004a) view that special collections could tie in with the growing interest in cultural heritage was pursued in the interviews where respondents were asked if they thought it was possible that their special collections could be a tourist attraction. Only one respondent thought that this was a possibility and this was largely because the department was housed in a central location in a historic building and already received tourist interest. Respondent A was also aware of the significance of location and buildings – he pointed out that the library building the collection was housed in was not attractive, and was not in a central location. The collection was therefore unlikely to be a tourist attraction.

Three respondents believed that their collections would not be suitable for this sort of purpose. Respondent B states that this is unlikely as institution B’s material though important is not physically attractive and to function as a tourist attraction exhibited material has to be visually appealing. Respondent D does not believe that the collections would be high profile enough, as does respondent A.

However there was a feeling that the collections could appeal to an audience outside of academia. All five respondents indicate that public access to their collections is allowed, and that there is some public interest. One respondent states that public
outreach has much potential, and wishes that she had more time to do it. She
discusses the case of a niche collection of gay and lesbian material which needs
someone to market it who has both time and connections:
‘if we went out into the community we could increase our use enormously as a result
but you really need someone who’s got the time and the connections who can really
get into that particular community’.
Respondent D’s collections exhibitions are accessible to the public, and are
sometimes advertised widely e.g. by leaflets in public libraries in the region.
Respondent C is also aware that special collections can have an appeal to the public,
and has had some public exhibitions. She believes that the university would
welcome the idea that their collections had a broad appeal because universities are
very conscious of the need for good public relations.

The respondent who did see the collections becoming a tourist attraction as a
possibility states that in a sense the department could not avoid the issue of access to
the general public attention. Due to this certain members of the public such as local
history groups had been allowed to visit. She believes that this tendency towards
outreach to the public was likely to increase. She states:
‘it’s an obvious venue for public events… we’ll have to face up to that fact and see
how we can work round it while at the same time not disrupting the students working
in the library and jeopardising the main purpose of the building which is to be a
university library’.

5.7 Special collections as institutional asset

Gray (2005) states that special collections have a promotional value for an institution
because of their prestigious nature. Three respondents were aware of this.
Respondent O stated that: ‘promotion of special collections is linked to promotion of
the university – can we clearly separate the two? Probably not’. This issue also arose
during interviews with two respondents. Respondents A and E pointed out that
special collections were one of the few things that marked a university library out as
unique, and this meant they should be well promoted. This view is prevalent in the
literature- (Jones, 2003), Stam (2001) and many others). Jones (2003) believes that
‘Special collections...reflect the unique identity of a particular library, as other units and collections become increasingly homogenous’. Respondent E agreed and argued that their special collections and archives is what makes one library different from another. She believes that special collections have an important function in attracting good quality postgraduates, research students, academics, research funding and can add to a university’s prestige and reputation, a view which concurs with Gray’s (2005) views stated above.

Respondent E believed that it was important to use collections to support the institution’s mission, and discussed how special collections could be used in different ways to do this. For instance they have been used to support the aim of the institution to widen access to and raise applications from non-traditional backgrounds, as library staff have done tours with some of the school groups. VIPs have also been given tours. Taking steps like this ensures that: ‘the institution can see that the collections can be used in many different ways to support its own mission’.

She believes that librarians must be proactive in showing to senior university personnel that special collections can serve many different purposes – they can be a distinct asset to a university and special collections must be active in promoting themselves as such. If collections are open to supporting college initiatives collections may be able to support the institution in different and unexpected ways.

5.8 Summary

Promotion was a concern of all the respondents, with all using at least one method and certain respondents using multiple methods. The website, seminars and exhibitions proved the most popular, with leaflets and merchandise emerging as markedly less widespread. All of the main methods bar merchandise were regarded by some of the respondents as increasing awareness of and thus use of the collections. However they all had the common disadvantages of the time and labour they required. The promotional value of special collections to the institution as a whole was highlighted. They were found to have a broader appeal than their academic value, and some respondents discussed public interest in collections. Their value as a mark
of prestige for an institution was highlighted, and one respondent had made considerable effort to integrate the collection with promotion of the institute as a whole.

Websites were the most popular method, used by all respondents. As special collections websites have become such an important promotional method the next chapter is entirely focused on this matter.
6 Web methods of promotion

This chapter deals with the use of web sites as promotion. These emerged as the most popular method of promotion, reflecting the views held in the literature that it is a revolutionary promotional method for special collections (Abraham, 2001, Traister, 2003). The results of the website evaluation undertaken with criteria adapted from Love and Feather (1998) are discussed and data from the respondents concerning the web as a promotional method will be integrated within this discussion. The evaluation is split into six sections: online finding aids; digitised material; reference services; structural context; departmental information. The detailed result of the review can be found in appendix VII. The chapter will finally discuss collaborative project websites.

6.1 Online Finding Aids

All eighteen respondents believed that information about collections was essential information for a website, reflecting Zanish-Belcher’s (2003) belief that websites were crucial in aiding increasing numbers of users to locate special collections material. It is widely known that most researchers want access to finding aids and descriptions (Abraham, 2001). This is supported by the results of the website evaluation: all of the websites had online finding aids. There are a variety of online finding aids: the main library OPAC, specialised catalogues, hand lists and collection descriptions. Most websites had a combination of finding aids. Respondent A believed that having finding aids online made it easier to promote the web – those with queries could be directed to the webpages and they could use finding aids to locate useful material. As he points out locating items used to be a lot of effort but it is now much easier as people can find what they want simply by searching with appropriate search terms.
**Catalogues**

Online catalogues of special collections material are a crucial addition to a website. As highlighted in the literature review there is great interest in making catalogues of special collections available online (Attar, 2003; Henri, 2003). Online catalogues were a feature of twenty-two of the websites, but in many cases it was stated not all items of the collections were catalogued online and users were referred to printed catalogues which could only be accessed in the department e.g. collection C’s website states ‘Some collections have separate finding aids which may be consulted in the Department, others remain unlisted’. There is still a significant backlog of uncatalogued items in many libraries and a number of items only available on printed or card catalogues (Jones, 2003). This is partly due to the fact that cataloguing of special collection items and retrospective conversion of manual catalogues is more labour intensive and complex and therefore more time-consuming than cataloguing of mainstream library material (Attar, 2003).

Twenty-two department’s items were recorded on the main library catalogue. Specialised catalogues were a feature of nineteen websites. Eighteen websites had items recorded both on the main OPAC and specialised catalogues. Specialised catalogues provided more detailed records than the main OPAC. Three websites had items just on the main catalogue and one had items listed only on specialised catalogues. The majority of websites therefore made it very easy for researchers to locate resources. As pointed out by respondent H items on the OPAC will be searchable on COPAC, the union catalogue of CURL libraries thus meaning that collections are well-publicised.

**Handlists**

Handlists, (inventories detailing the content of individual collections), were available on twelve websites. These are a long-established type of finding aid and are very simple and quick to put up on the web (Abraham, 2001). They were never the sole finding aid on a website, there were always additional finding aids provided.
Collection descriptions

Every website featured collection descriptions although some were more detailed than others. Four websites had a facility for searching collection descriptions. Website O for example had a searchable collection level description database for printed book collections. This was a useful feature as it allowed broad as well as narrow searches e.g. one could search for collection dealing with a particular geographical area or search for a particular author.

Collection descriptions provide a useful overview of a collection and can sometimes make up for the fact that not all material is catalogued. Respondent H stated that in light of the majority of the department’s collections being uncatalogued detailed descriptions of the collections were crucial.

A major benefit of collections descriptions is that they can mean that researchers using a search engine to find items or information about particular authors may find ‘hits’ which take them to a useful collection. It can help researchers from outside the university identify useful resources.

Fourteen websites had collection descriptions listed under subject headings. This can be useful for e.g. students doing a dissertation and needing to know which special collection material is useful for their subject. One respondent had an interesting approach in having a ‘course material’ webpage which lists useful resources under academic subjects. Each of these resources has their own webpage which included material such as digital images of material and introductions to the materials by lecturers. This can be very useful in tying the collections to research and teaching interests, as many in the literature recommend (e.g. Byrd, 2001; Casey and Flannery, 2003).

6.2 Digitised material

Twenty-one websites have digitised material, but the amount of material varies. This number is quite high reflecting that fact that digitisation is becoming more and more important to special collections (Sutton, 2004). Although it is all of
good quality, for four websites it is merely decorative. There are limited amounts of material and it seems to function as a way of making sites look attractive. However the other seventeen websites have major collections of materials with a substantial portions of an item available, and in some cases the entirety of an item is available digitally.

One way of promoting material in the collections is to have an online exhibition, where the important (and usually visually attractive material) featured is placed into context and its significance described (Kalfatovik, 2001). Fourteen websites had online exhibitions, all of which contained impressive amounts of information. They had clearly been carefully designed and considered. Four websites had exhibitions which were virtual versions of current physical exhibitions. Eight had a considerable number of online exhibitions and had a significant amount (four or over) archived. Exhibitions at these collections were regularly changed, whereas the other websites with exhibitions had only one or two exhibitions which did not seem to be changed regularly. All of the exhibitions were very detailed – each item displayed had informative text accompanying it. These exhibitions had different titles such as galleries, book of the month, treasures and some were simply called virtual exhibitions.

Participants were asked what influenced their choice of what items to digitise and there was a broad range of answers. Seven highlighted the fact that visually attractive material was chosen as this was a way of attracting interest in the collections as a whole. Four respondents mentioned book of the month and treasures features – as one respondent pointed out rare, unique and beautiful material is often what brings special collections renown and respect. Respondent L made limited use of digitisation and used a small number of images to make the site attractive and to promote interest, as three other websites did. Eight digitised material that is academically useful. Respondent M states that the digitised material on the department’s website: ‘Supports research and teaching programmes of academic schools in the university’. However respondent N believed that images on website N were not of sufficient quality to be of suitable for research support. Clearly digitisation can function in different ways. The fact that the amount and type of
digitised material available on websites varied markedly indicated that there is some way to go before ‘digitisation becomes a primary and permanent function of special collections’ (Sutton, 2004:241).

Three respondents mention that funding opportunities can dictate what is digitised. This reflects the fact that digitisation is a resource heavy activity and is often dependent on external sources of funding as the department’s budget is not sufficient for major digitisation projects. What is digitised is will depend on what funding bodies see as something should be made more accessible.

Other issues mentioned by respondents were: material that appeals to external users as it is of international significance, material free of copyright concerns and material that is in a suitable condition to be scanned. The fact that appeal to external researchers can be a factor in selecting material for digitisation is interesting. As discussed by Cullen (2001) and Feather (1994) there is a certain tension with external use. However this collection’s parent institution was keen to be seen as leading in research therefore digitised material was another way of achieving this.

6.3 Reference services

Twenty-two websites had an email address advertised for enquiries and five had an electronic enquiry form. Twelve of the respondents thought that contact details and enquiry services were essential information to be included on the website. Two respondents point out that email queries are on the rise, a fact that Lavender (2005) highlights as a common trend.

6.4 Structural Context

A significant number of websites (eighteen) have a link on the library or information webpage, and this publicised the existence of special collections to all library website users. This may be a way of attracting new users. Three special collections departments feature very prominently on the home page. Website A for example provides a link to the ‘Book of the month’.
Twenty-one websites provide links to other web resources. There were a variety of links but there were some popular categories: twenty linked to other institutions such as the British Library, five linked to local institutions and eighteen linked to collaborative projects such as Archives Hub, MASC 25 (Mapping Access to Special Collections in the London Region) or RSLP 19th century pamphlets. Collaborative projects are discussed at length below.

6.5 Departmental Information

Mission and acquisition statements are not a very common feature with only two websites having the former and nine the latter. However access information (e.g. opening hours, admission policies etc.) is included on all websites. Seventeen respondents believed that this was essential information to include on a website. This reflects Love and Feather’s (1998:220) findings that ‘a primary function of many sites is to provide access information for research visits’. Copying information is also common, with this appearing on nineteen websites – this is obviously important information as special collections material is hardly ever loaned to users.

6.6 User and collections information

Only one website features user statistics, and user feedback facilities are provided on only three websites. Respondent B did not have a ‘counter’ on the web page but believed this was desirable as it could be another indication of the profile of the department.

Twenty-three websites contain a general overview of the collections and the department, with eight websites having ‘about us’ sections. These sections are regarded as essential information by two respondents. In the light of these websites being accessible by a potentially huge and diverse audience it could be claimed that these section are useful as many website visitors may be confused as to what special collections are. As Abraham (2001) points out many non-users of special collections find their way unexpectedly to special collections through submitting queries through
search engines and they would find an introductory section useful. These can give a
good introduction to those inexperienced in the area of special collections – it may
also be useful for traditionally under-represented groups like undergraduates.

6.7 Collaborative website projects

As stated above many websites contain links to the websites of collaborative
projects. These projects are aimed at different audiences (the Britain in Print project
is aimed at researchers of all ages and levels including schoolchildren whereas RSLP
19th Century pamphlets seems to be aimed at the general academic researcher).
However they all seem to have a similar aim to improve the visibility of special
collections materials, whether by including online finding aids or actual digitised
material, and making research easier. The proposal document for MASC 25 for
example states that the online database will
‘facilitate more effective research planning, including the faster and more precise
identification of relevant collections and series. MASC25 will also encourage the use
of the full breadth of available material, revealing many collections previously
undisclosed’ (MASC 25, no date).
Many of these collaborative websites involve CURL institutions, and in the case of
RSLP 19th Century pamphlets and Britain in Print CURL actually helps manage the
Projects.

6.7.1 Effects of these projects

Interviewees, all of whose collections had a presence on collaborative
websites, were asked what they thought were the benefits of these projects.
Responses were mixed. Three respondents believed that it had significant
promotional benefits as it raised the collections’ profile and made it easier for
researchers to identify material. Respondent C mentioned the fact that researchers
had come to visit collection C because they had identified useful material via the
RSLP 19th century pamphlets website. Respondent E emphasised the benefits of a
portal where information on many special collections could be accessed via one
interface:
'you can see the benefits to researchers to be able to use a single enquiry service to find out where collections are in their area of interest rather than going through lots of library catalogues'.

Two respondents highlighted the benefits that the scale of these projects offered – these projects managed to create a far higher profile than a single collection possibly could, and publicity materials and initiatives could be a shared effort. Respondent B pointed out that these projects sometimes provided training courses in publicity.

The benefits such projects may have for cataloguing was emphasised by three respondents. As mentioned in the literature review cataloguing backlogs are a major issue for special collections (e.g. Jones, 2003; Russell, 2004). Respondent D believes that the funding that collaborative projects can be imperative in reducing this backlog:

‘most of the funding people are looking for is for cataloguing to have your collections online… we have all got backlogs that we can’t cope with’.

Respondent A believed that the chief value of such projects was to enable cataloguing, which he regards as a type of promotion. As he points out ‘if you haven’t disclosed what you have then no one will ever use you’. He argued that these projects were a way of dealing with the absence of enough money to do everything one would like to do.

However three interviewees pointed out that there were some problems with these projects. Respondents B and E believed that promotion needed to be improved for some projects as they had not been very successful in raising the profile of the website. However respondent E pointed out that promotion was difficult as a lot of academics prefer to stick to search engines such as Google with which they are already familiar. Respondent A cited the time taken to apply for funding from these projects could be quite time consuming, with no guarantee that one would be successful. The need to consider the sustainability and maintenance of these websites was emphasised by respondent E who discussed the potential for projects to become ‘dead sites’ after a few years.
6.8 Summary

The websites surveyed vary considerably in terms of amount and type of content. However all websites had online finding aids and thus would aid researchers in finding material. Respondents generally believed that essential information for a website was basic information such as access details and these were featured on the majority of sites. Most websites however proved to offer a considerable range of information and services. A significant amount had digitised material and this served different purposes such as being of use in academic terms and decorative value. However although many sites had digital material available it was still represented a minute fraction of the collection. The amount of digitised material is likely to increase on all of these websites – it would be interesting to see how digital collections on special collections websites develop. Collaborative projects can increase the use of featured collections and can be important in providing funding for cataloguing.
7 Attitudes to marketing

This chapter discusses respondents’ attitude to marketing, first dealing with general attitudes, then moving onto discussing the existence of formal structures supporting marketing. The issue of whether or not there is pressure from management to market collections is then explored. Finally the value of special collections is discussed.

7.1 General attitude

The general impression gained from the data was that marketing in some shape or form was regarded as important by all the respondents. However one respondent expressed opposition to the concept of marketing, although he had acknowledged the importance of promotion: ‘I do not use this concept: the idea of the commercial hard sell seems completely wrong to me’. As indicated in the literature many librarians are still opposed in principle to the idea of marketing seeing it as an inappropriate for (Brewerton, 2003). However this may be due to the widespread misperception that marketing is a negative and commercial thing to do when really it is about ensuring that whatever one’s service it is relevant to its users and is publicised to them. All respondents indicated that some sort of marketing activity as a necessity. To probe this subject further interviewees were asked why they regarded marketing as important.

A common theme, discussed by four interviewees was the need to raise awareness about collections and increase use. Special collections are arguably the least understood department in academic libraries, a view expressed by respondent F in the questionnaire when she stated the fact that special collections are seen as ‘rarefied’ in her institution. Part of this, as discussed by respondent C, is due to the fact that the closed off nature of special collections prohibits browsing. For two collections marketing was a new development, and their managers had begun intensive marketing campaigns relatively recently. When respondent D began managing the department it was seen as a ‘Cinderella’ department as there was a high level of ignorance about special collections within the university, indeed even
within the library itself. Thus marketing was a necessity as she believed that the collections had not been exploited enough and people needed to be encouraged to use them. Respondent E had been in a similar situation. A catalyst for improving the profile of the department was a move from an outlying location out with the teaching and research hub to a more central location. Respondent E was motivated by this move to seize the opportunity to promote the department’s holdings and collections, as the internal audience were not very aware of special collections due to their previous location.

For three respondents marketing seemed to be almost a moral duty – they held a conviction that these resources are important for both academic and cultural reasons and must be made known. This reflects Schuchard’s (2002) conviction that collections should be in the intellectual mainstream. They can be a key to advancing research (Howarth, 2001) and should be regarded as an integral part of a research library (Huttner, 1999). Respondent C stated that special collections contains much useful material and ‘it’s sad if no one knows it’s there when it could be of benefit to research and teaching... it could be really important for the direction that someone’s research takes’.

As respondent B points out a key problem is a lot of people who would benefit from using archives don’t even know that they need to use them. She believes that ‘you can’t just assume that because you’ve got such wonderful things people will know about it... you are actually sitting on the nation’s heritage and people need to know about it’.

Special collections’ users are most commonly researchers in arts or social science subjects, and respondent E is attempting to attract users from other academic disciplines by use of exhibitions, to show that special collections can be useful for a broad range of subjects. Respondent C also mentions the need to target groups who are not regular users of the collections.

The reasons discussed above for the necessity of marketing are specific to the institutions. However four of the respondents pointed out that there were certain general factors which had led to marketing being a key concern in special collections departments as a whole. The need to justify the department’s existence as a
motivating factor behind the growth of marketing in special collections was discussed by four interviewees. This seems to be a widespread concern for the vast majority of special collections (Traister, 2003). Respondent A believes that marketing helps to lend special collections some validity as he believes that ‘there is an uncertainty as to how these collections fit in with the overall purpose of the university’. In promoting the department as a core resource useful to students and staff he believes it is shown that it is an integral part of the library and the university as a whole. Respondent E also believes that special collections need to be proactive in fitting in with the university’s mission as a whole. Respondent C focused on the issue of funding, arguing that with the pressure about funding in the university environment every university department feels the need ‘to justify their existence and prove their usefulness to their user groups’ and thus the university as a whole.

Two respondents highlighted the need to attract people into visiting the library – with the growth in electronic information there has been a reduction in passing trade and libraries as a whole have to market themselves more to prevent the number of visits dropping.

### 7.2 Supporting Structures

The questionnaire sought to establish whether there were structures which would support marketing activities, focusing on whether or not marketing was a part of the surveyed librarians’ job descriptions, whether there was a marketing plan and whether there was a budget provided for marketing activities. Eleven respondents had marketing as a part of their job description, with six having a marketing plan (and one respondent stated that the library was in the process of designing one) and only two having a budget.

Although the data is not conclusive some speculation on the position of marketing can be explored. Quite a large proportion of respondents have marketing in their job description which indicates that it is felt to be an important duty by library management. However one respondent who did not have marketing as part of her job description had the widest array of promotional methods and a made
concerted effort to market. There were also some other respondents who professed to regard marketing as crucial but did not have it as an official duty. It seems that a librarian’s personal attitude to marketing may be very significant in deciding how far marketing activities shall be explored. However relatively few respondents had a marketing strategy or plan, although three respondents who did not have one were in the process of designing one. The fact that some respondents are in the process of designing a strategy indicates that it may become more common. It would definitely be a useful way of maximising the potential of marketing.

Only two respondents had a marketing budget. The lack of resources available for marketing activities was mentioned by twelve respondents at various points in the questionnaire, and for some marketing was their sole responsibility. While some marketing methods can be done inexpensively (e.g. a good website has wide reach, and has no reproduction costs as leaflets do (Abraham, 2001)) some are more costly.

7.3 Is there pressure to market?

Traister (2003) and Brewerton (2004) suggest that in a sense many special collections librarians have no choice but to undertake marketing as library managers are keen to see their collections well publicised. Ten respondents felt that there was pressure. Notably all of the respondents who said ‘no’ qualified their answers in ways that indicated marketing was a significant concern in their department: three respondents believed that there was an expectation to market rather than a pressure and four expressed that they were very keen to promote their collections. Three of these respondents indicated that their collections were already well publicised, and that this had won support from management. Respondent D had taken steps of her own volition to make a ‘previously neglected library department’ more widely used and advertised. She states ‘I have started various marketing campaigns… the success of which has won senior management approval’. So even though these respondents feel no pressure all of them seem to have a strong commitment to marketing.
The respondents who did believe that there was a pressure gave various different reasons to explain this. Respondents F and I believed that marketing is necessary to justify their department’s existence, a fact that Traister (2003) highlights. Respondent F believed that the purpose of the special collections department was not properly understood and was perceived to be ‘rarefied’ and because of this ‘there is pressure to be more user friendly and pro-active in gaining support for the department’. Traister (2003) points out that this perception of special collections as elite and forbidding is widespread and that marketing is key in changing this. Respondent I cited the expense of the user facilities in terms of cost and space – to justify this full usage must be made of special collections, a point which Brewerton (2003) raises.

Six respondents cited the academic importance of the collections, and the need for them to be recognised and utilised as a core research resource placed pressure on them to market. Respondent M expressed this particularly strongly: ‘Special collections need to be viewed as a research flagship, not a historical relic’. This reflects Chodorow and Claassen’s (1994) view that special collections must be regarded as working parts of the library rather than showpieces. Respondent H had a similar view, believing that special collections could play an important part in the university’s ‘hunt for prestige’ and support its vision to be a research led-university.

One respondent believed that there was pressure to market because of the ‘current perception that special collections are underused by an internal audience’. This reflects the views towards external use in the literature. Managers are keen to see a resource funded by the university well used by and relevant to it (Cullen, 2001).

7.4 Intrinsically valuable or earning their keep?

Normore (2003) asserts that the value of special collections material resides in how much it is used. This issue was regarded as important by the researcher as it was an issue touched on by some respondents in the questionnaire. Respondent B for example stated that there would be no point in having special collections if no one
used them. This issue was explored in the interviews where respondents were asked if they felt collections were still intrinsically valuable or had to earn their keep.

There was some recognition that collections had to earn their keep to a certain extent. It emerged that providing access to and encouraging use of special collections has come to be more and more important. Respondent B stated that: ‘In the last ten years there has been much more emphasis on how many people are using you’. However this concern with usage had not resulted in a hard nosed ‘use it or lose it’ attitude, but it had an impact on how the concept of value was perceived. Four of the five interviewees thought that special collections were still thought to have an intrinsic value but they also thought that there was element of collections having to earn their shelf space. Respondent B believed that there was a ‘bit of a tension’ between these two considerations, and Respondents A, C and D had similar views with respondent D believing it was ‘a bit of both’. However it did seem that the emphasis was more on the fact that special collections were still regarded as important in their own right – as respondent C pointed out the very fact that material was in the special collections department, with its features of preservation and controlled access, indicated that the collections were valuable.

Three respondents highlighted the fact there were different types of value, a point raised by Matthews (1998) who states that collection items can have both publicity, monetary and scholarly value. Respondent C made the point that some very rare and fragile items such as medieval manuscripts may not be the most used items but they are valuable because of its unique quality. In her view there different ways a collection can be useful:

‘how does something earn its keep?… as an academic item for academic research or because it’s unique and rare and therefore of monetary worth’.

The concept of collections as having an academic purpose and value was emphasised by respondent A and D. Respondent A stressed that he was eager to promote the collections as a core resource and wished to move away from special collections being either viewed by management as a ‘jewel in the crown’ of the library, filled with unique and beautiful items or as something supplemental to the library which was:
'an icing on the cake…an awkward slightly untenable addendum which if things get tough we’ll just do without’.

He pointed out that the bulk of the material in the collection is not that attractive or as valuable as medieval manuscripts but is core primary material and must be seen as a vital resource of the library and the university. Byrd (2001) advocates this approach, arguing that it can make special collections central rather than marginal to the library mission. Respondent D stated:

‘some of the items in the collection aren’t unique but are heavily used and have a value to us because they support teaching and research…they have academic value’.

Respondent E did not believe that in her institution special collections to be regarded as having to earn their keep. She stated:

‘I think there is an understanding that in terms of sheer numbers through the gates…special collections are never going to be as busy as teaching collections, that is not their purpose’.

However how the collections were used and by used was an important concern. Research usage of the collections was important as it fitted in with a main objective of the institution in aiding its research agenda and ‘senior officers are very aware of those parts of the library that can support research objectives’.

A logical conclusion of the special collections must earn their keep philosophy is that material which is not used is disposed of e.g. by selling and respondents were asked about the possibility of this. Four of the interviewees indicated that that this was highly unlikely. Respondents A, C, D and E believed that while this was a problem for other institutions it was not a significant problem for theirs. Respondent E believed that this may be because of the characteristics of CURL libraries:

‘within the CURL libraries that is less likely to happen as those institutions are so dedicated to pursuing their research-led mission’.

However it may be a problem for newer universities as their status as research institutions may not be well established.
Respondents A, C and D stated that they would rather be very careful about what they accepted or purchased than get rid of material which was not used. Respondent D stressed that this was necessary because ‘shelving space was a premium’. While the consideration of material having to earn its keep is not a dominant ideology for respondent C she states that: ‘it does affect when we consider what to take in…we would try and relate material to areas of teaching or research’.

Respondent A similarly states that criteria for accepting material should be ‘rigorous’ but that once material is accepted it should be kept. He also cites the investment in terms of staff and money that has gone into acquiring, preserving and making items in special collections accessible as a reason to keep material.

Furthermore the potential negative effects arising from selling collections was highlighted by respondents A and E. Both pointed out that it may make people less likely to donate collections as they may be doubtful of whether a collection was a safe place to donate to as there was the danger of the donation being sold or disposed. Respondent E cited the example of an institution which had sold special collection items and had suffered from the resulting bad publicity – this showed how harmful such actions could be: ‘it would just not be worth the short term financial gain you might get… these institutions had to work hard to rebuild their reputation as a safe place for important collections’.

Respondent A felt that trust was an issue, and that people donated material in good faith therefore it should be kept. This obligation to safeguard collections is mentioned by Thorin and Schreyer (1999) who believe that ‘we are custodians as well as curators. Once we add something to our collections we have accepted responsibility for its safekeeping’.

7.6 Summary

In general all respondents seemed to view marketing as a significant concern. It was viewed as important in encouraging use of collections and justifying the department’s existence. The data on supporting structures was inconclusive but did indicate that managers felt that marketing was a significant duty for a special
collections librarian. In regard to pressure from management to market many respondents did feel a pressure and those who did not still regarded marketing as important. Special collections were revealed to still be regarded as intrinsically valuable, but the different types of value material had was emphasised. However the ‘earn their keep philosophy’ did have an impact on collecting policy – the decision on whether or not to accept material was considered very carefully.
8 Consequences of marketing

This chapter discussed the consequences of marketing. While preceding chapters have mentioned the effects of relationship building, justifying one’s existence and promotional activities this chapter concentrates on the specific effects of marketing: raising the profile of and increasing visits to the collections. First the question of how well collections are publicised is explored, turning then to how marketing has affected the number of visits, and whether it has affected the profile of the collections both externally and internally. The possibility that negative effects such as the exacerbation of existing pressures on special collections and possible increased deterioration of collection items may result are also discussed.

8.1. Are collections well publicised?

A measure of whether marketing activities are successful is whether or not collections are well publicised. Ten respondents believe that they were. It was interesting that four respondents said a qualified yes by stating that there was room for improvement and believe that they needed to do more marketing. As respondent C stated there is much potential for marketing but simply not the resources to do it.

8.2 Effect on number of visits

Fifteen respondents believe that marketing has increased the number of visits to the collections, and gave details to support this. Thirteen of these respondents cited specific promotional methods as successfully attracting new users. Many of these answers overlap with the advantages of promotional methods earlier discussed. Of these thirteen responses six mention the web, five mention seminars and two mention exhibitions as increasing visits. Respondent Q believes that promotion in general has been responsible for attracting new types of users, especially undergraduates and lifelong learners. This issue of marketing attracting new users arose during the interviews. Four interviewees believed that marketing had diversified their user group and that it was important to attract new users.
In regards to websites all six believe the online information about collections and catalogues attracts new users. Respondent A believes that this is the main reason for increased visits. Three others highlighted the fact that collaborative websites such as the RSLP 19th century pamphlets project had brought in users, with respondent B highlighting the fact that these websites had a very wide reach. Seminars were also successful in attracting new internal users, and respondent G highlighted the fact that it allowed the department ‘to build a rapport and a user community’. Often those who attend introductory seminars return (Respondent C and E). Exhibitions were viewed by two respondents as a useful in increasing use of particular collections, they functioned to lead people into the department.

8.3 Effect on profile of special collections externally

The majority of respondents indicated that external users accounted for a significant amount of users, with respondent J stating that at least one third of yearly use came from ‘the worldwide scholarly community’. This supports Matthew’s (1998) claim that special collections have a significant amount of external users. One respondent’s department targeted external users with a visiting fellowship programme which had the aim of promoting scholarly use of collections. This has ‘raised the international profile of our collections, especially in North America’ and increased research use of collections by external users. Fellowships are particularly common in the US and are regarded as very important ways of increasing use by external researchers (Byrd, 2001).

Unsurprisingly a large number of respondents (fourteen) believed the web to be a tool in attracting external audiences and ten laid emphasis on the fact that online finding aids and information about collections was key in publicising holdings, as respondent C stated ‘webpage information has enabled a number of outside users to identify collections of interest to them’.
Three respondents cited appearances of collections material in the media as attracting new users – this included appearances on television programmes, articles in newspapers and images on the front of books. This media attention increased enquiries for two institutions.

8.4 Effect on profile of special collections within the university

Fifteen respondents believe that marketing has raised their department’s profile within the university. Bengston (2001) believes that this is the most desirable effect of marketing. The answers demonstrate that there is a widespread awareness in these libraries that building contacts is a key way of raising the collections profile (as already discussed in chapter four). Twelve of the respondents believe making internal contacts to be crucial. Respondent D for example highlights the fact that success breeds success – the more academic staff who are made aware of how special collections can support research and teaching the more use will be generated, particularly because academics cascade this awareness down to students: ‘More academic staff are requesting posters, booklets and teaching sessions’. Promotional methods are again mentioned as important in raising profile, by 8 respondents.

Three respondents mention that marketing activities has ensured their department’s profile has been raised with administrative personnel in the University. Respondent E believed that ‘Senior officers, press office, alumni office and fund-raising office are all aware of what we can do to support them in their work’. Respondent B stated that marketing had had the unexpected effect of increasing the use of the collections by the institution’s administration who had been made aware that the collection held much historical material and was the ‘institution’s memory’. She believes this was a positive development as the administrators ‘hold the purse strings’. Respondent Q points out that a raised profile with administrators and management can lead to special collections being perceived as having a greater importance within the university. As Traister (2003) and Casey and Flannery (2003) point out administrators can sometimes be dismissive of the value of special collections and promotion is key in impressing on them that special collections are worth supporting and maintaining.
Respondents offered examples of other effects marketing had had. Respondent M stated that this area was being considered as an option for income generation. This is an intriguing idea – respondent A mentioned that special collections items could earn money, for example by selling the rights to an image to the Bridgeman Art library, and earning money from items being used in television programmes. This represented useful income streams. Respondent A was keen to increase the amount of rights selling to the Bridgeman art library – this was a relatively straightforward process. He stated that dealing with customers from television could be more time consuming and made less money. Respondent B believed that marketing had assisted in funding applications, reflecting what she said about certain funders wanted to see acquisitions or digital projects funded by them well marketed and with a diverse audience.

However respondent I mentioned that it had negative effects in that it diminished the time available for cataloguing and this leads onto the next section.

8.5 Possible negative effects

The questionnaire sought to find if marketing had negative as well as positive effects, and enquired about two main negative effects – one that it could divert resources from core functions, and two that in increasing use of collections it could have a detrimental effect on preservation.

8.5.1 Exacerbate lack of resources

The time marketing took up seemed to be a problem for some, and respondents were asked how much time they spent on marketing. Significantly only one respondent said that it took up only a little time. For most respondents (eleven) the time marketing took up varied. As respondent C pointed out in the interview special collections librarians must balance many other demands on their time – sometimes one may have to prepare and deliver a seminar and other times one may have to do other duties. Five respondents believe that it takes up a significant
amount (these respondents seem to be the most eager to market and have the most developed programmes). Only one respondent said that marketing takes up a lot of time and is the major part of the job.

In the questionnaire respondents were asked if they believed that marketing diverted time from core functions of special collections departments such as cataloguing and nine believed that it did. Cataloguing was thought the best example to use as the problem of cataloguing backlogs and amount of unprocessed material is frequently mentioned in the literature.

It was interesting that five respondents queried the question, with six asserting that marketing was itself a core function (three of who believed it did divert resources from other activities, three of whom did not). Respondent G for instance states ‘Explaining the importance of the collections is a core activity’. As discussed above recent job adverts indicate that it is becoming to be more accepted as an integral part of managing special collections, and this data indicates that it is coming to be regarded, as Traister (2003), suggests as a new core function by some.

Three respondents highlighted the fact that there is a tension between increasing use by promotion of collections and the need for increasing staff resources to service this increased use. Respondent L expresses the problem particularly strongly: ‘Unless there are adequate staff resources and effective cataloguing, increasing use and awareness of the collections can have a negative impact if you’re being expected to do more and more on existing resources’.

Respondent L emphasises the drain marketing makes on time available for the general running of special collections and points out that even though marketing can very often be full time work seldom are additional staff available to enable the department to cope.

Four respondents pointed out that cataloguing could be seen as a marketing activity in itself. Certainly many of the collaborative projects have centred on retrospective cataloguing of resources. As respondent A pointed out if material is on an online catalogue that will enable more people to easily identify items useful to
them and will thus lead to increased use of material. Respondent O believed that it was important to strike the right balance between cataloguing and promotion. Cataloguing is a time-consuming activity (and the cataloguing of special collections material is a particularly lengthy process). She states that items can usefully still be promoted, even if they are not fully catalogued:

‘People need to know that something is in existence and if it is achieved then it is at least accessible in some form, even if it is not fully catalogued’.

Respondent H also believed in the value of making people aware of uncatalogued material and that it was important to publish online broad overviews of collections as much material is not yet catalogued.

8.5.2 Effect on preservation

The fact that there is a tension between preservation of, access to and use of materials is often stated in the literature (Feather, 2004b, Lavender, 1997). Respondents were asked if they believed there was a tension between preservation and access and the majority (eleven) believed that there was. As respondent G pointed out in increasing use one inevitably increases the likelihood of damage to materials and stated that ‘You can see the effects in the case of the most popular items’. However even though this tension was recognised nine respondents believed that it was still important to encourage use of collections, agreeing with Stam’s (2001) point that ‘we have to accept that use has a certain price in decay’. Respondent K believes that, though there is a tension, use justifies the department’s existence so increasing user numbers is very desirable.

Respondent B did not believe there was a tension because as she pointed out there is no point in having collections if they are not used as it is their purpose to be used. Respondent M argues that high use of collections is a preservation strategy in its own right and can ensure that the special collections department has a long term future.

These tensions are not regarded as irreconcilable by respondents. Interestingly four respondents believed that increased use can actually aid preservation – they point out that if a collection is well used it is this regarded as
important and had high ‘institutional visibility’ (Respondent E). The need to preserve it is thus also regarded as important. Respondent Q points out that it can attract funding: ‘more resources are available for preservation because of more awareness of importance’.

Furthermore six respondents indicated that a number of steps can be taken to balance and counteract these tensions. These steps can be grouped in two categories: protective measures and the provision of surrogates. This reflects Sheridan’s (2002) idea that the tension between use and access can be resolved by taking steps such as those discussed below. Respondent A believed that it was the main challenge for managers of special collections to balance these tensions.

Advice from conservation experts was rated highly, and two respondents had in-house conservators to care for collections and another respondent mentioned the need to take advice from conservators. Respondent E pointed out that good storage and consultation arrangements could minimise damage, and the need for the latter was mentioned by three other respondents. Respondent C emphasised the need to instruct students properly in the handling of fragile items and for students to have adequate supervision.

The use of surrogates is mentioned by seven respondents as a way of minimising use of the original physical item therefore allowing access at the same time as reducing wear and tear. Increasing access while preserving items for future use is regarded as a major benefit of digitisation (Library of Congress, 2003). Respondent A states the need to ‘judiciously introduce high quality surrogates where and when necessary and to reduce access to originals’. Microfilming is mentioned by two respondents and print facsimiles by one but digitisation, with five respondents recommending it, is the most common method.
8.6 Summary

In conclusion marketing appears to have successfully increased the level of use and profile of the majority of the collections surveyed. It also has negative effects, most notably the strain it places on resources –managing a special collection is something of a balancing act. However, it is still considered crucial by many. The tension between preservation and access is to an extent inevitable but a significant amount of respondents emphasise the need to encourage access to collections. This tension can be balanced by taking protective measures such as creating digital surrogates.
9 Conclusions

The aim of this project was to investigate the marketing of special collections in CURL. It was intended to further the knowledge about the way in which special collections are marketed in the major research libraries of Britain and Ireland, and the high response rate has ensured that the results are representative to a certain extent.

The literature indicated that marketing was an important concern in special collections and this was confirmed by the findings of the research. All respondents seemed to regard marketing as a significant concern and all participated in some sort of marketing activity. However the fact that the appropriacy of marketing is still questioned (albeit only by two respondents) indicated that there is still a certain antagonism to the idea of the concept of marketing in academic libraries.

There were many similarities between the ways different collections marketed themselves there but there were also many differences. Certain managers had a noticeably more proactive attitude towards marketing and had a more developed programme than others. The collections which were most successfully marketed were those who had a proactive manager, a good relationship with their user group and used a wide array of promotional methods.

The majority of collections surveyed were mindful of their user group and emphasis was laid on meeting the needs of the internal market. This was demonstrated by the fact that collecting development policies were influenced by the needs of the internal user group. In addition most collections were regarded as relevant to the teaching and research interests of the university. It seems that special collections are no longer ‘treasure houses’ or marginalised as they have been viewed in the past. They are functional, working resources which are an integral part of the library. They are widely regarded as having a role in teaching and can benefit the work of undergraduate and postgraduate students. This seems a trend likely to continue, and there is evidence that academics respond positively to special collections librarians wishing to increase educational use of collections. There seems
to be a trend of audience diversification and although the core users are still researchers and scholars some collections’ managers are expecting this to change. There is a wider trend to making cultural heritage more successful and this is having an impact on special collections. A good relationship with one’s user group is regarded as critically important

All respondents used at least one method of promotion, and some used several. The most popular were exhibitions, seminars and web sites. These had the common advantages of raising awareness and use of the collections and widening the audience. Promotion can be very time consuming but the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Because special collections are necessarily a separate part of the library and can seem daunting promotion is key in opening up the collections. Interestingly, special collections can have a promotional value for, and reflect well, on parent institutions. Websites are particularly useful and it is likely that they will continue to be developed. If the websites evaluation were taken again in five years time the results would probably be very different. Collaborative website projects such as RSLP 19th century pamphlets can be key to raising awareness and therefore use of collections and can facilitate academic research. There is little written about them but this research revealed that in general they are regarded as a positive development.

Respondent’s attitudes to marketing seemed mostly positive, and all seemed to regard it as a necessary function of their jobs. It was part of the job description for many, indicating that it was seen as a key responsibility and indeed in some cases a core function of the department. However the fact that many collections lacked marketing plans and marketing budgets indicated that supporting structures had not yet ‘caught up’ with this new drive towards marketing. A plan and a budget would perhaps result in more successful marketing. Special collections are still perceived to have a traditional value but there is a certain element of collections having to earn their keep. They are valuable in a number of ways such as academically, financially and promotionally. Selling them is regarded as counterproductive as special collections librarians are ‘custodians as well as curators’.
Marketing was found to have both positive and negative effects. Marketing did have noticeable effects – many respondents believed that this helped to raise the profile of, increase use of and justify the existence of special collections. Special collections still have an ‘image’ problem in many libraries and marketing (particularly the promotional method of seminars) can be a way of combating this. Although the tension between access and use is in a sense inevitable it can be balanced. Access to and use of collections is of paramount importance as this is the chief reasons for their existence. Protective measures, particularly digitisation can be useful in encouraging access at the same time as protecting the originals. Digitisation of special collections items will continue to increase as it meets the challenge of maintaining access at the same time as preserving materials for future use.

9.1 The future of special collections and marketing

Marketing seems likely to continue to grow in importance in special collections, bearing in mind the continuing emphasis on justifying the value of academic libraries. Recent job adverts indicate that skills in, and a proactive attitude towards marketing is regarded as an important attribute in a special collections librarian. The results from this study indicate that special collections librarians are meeting this challenge. Commentators such as Schuchard (2001) and Russell (2004) are convinced that special collections are an important asset for a university and must work hard to retain their importance. Russell (2004:294) argues that there is a strong future for special collections as they are becoming more central to the missions of universities:

‘long considered somewhat peripheral, special collections have moved into the mainstream, gaining recognition as integral parts of research library collections’.

Skilful marketing has undoubtedly played a part in this, and this must continue to be the case. Special collections must be well used to survive, and their relevance to their users must be maintained and exploited. They are an essential part of an academic library and can be useful to a university’s mission in a variety of ways.
9.2 Areas for further study

This dissertation was a very broad overview of a complex and fascinating subject. Each of the findings chapter could have been a dissertation in itself. There are clearly many areas which require more detailed research. One area that could be examined in far more detail is collaborative projects such as Britain in Print. There is some indication that they are likely to increase in number and it would be interesting to do a detailed study on what their purpose is, what their benefits are and how time consuming they were for special collections librarians. There is little literature dealing with this development and it would repay further exploration. Another area worthy of further study would be a companion project focusing on marketing of special collections in new universities. This study has focused on some of the most prestigious and largest special collections in academic libraries. It would be interesting to see if similar results were obtained from a survey of special collections in new universities.
Bibliography


Bernstein, A. (1998). *Asset or liability? An examination of the management and development of special music collections is academic, public and special libraries, with particular reference to the Sir Thomas Beecham music library at the University of Sheffield*. MA Dissertation: University of Sheffield.


Phillips, R. (2002). *An investigation into the place of special collections in new university libraries: an assessment of the value that such collections add to the library and the institution as a whole*. MA Dissertation: University of Sheffield.


Appendix I – Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research project, the results of which shall form part of my dissertation. The dissertation is being undertaken as part of the Librarianship MA at the University of Sheffield.

Purpose of the project

This project is investigating the marketing of special collections in academic libraries in CURL (The Consortium of University and Research Libraries in the British Isles). I have observed that there is a trend towards widening access to and promoting special collections. The literature on this subject has a marked US bias and this project is attempting to ascertain how this trend is expressed in UK and Irish special collections. My definition of special collections is wide and encompasses a broad range of material from rare books to manuscripts to collections of modern ephemera such as political leaflets.

This project was begun in March and will continue until the beginning of September when the completed dissertation will be submitted.

I have elected to study members of CURL as they are leading research libraries which have the most prestigious special collections in the academic library sector, of international and national significance.

If you take part a summary of the projects findings can be sent to you when the project is completed in September. If you wish you may also receive a copy of the dissertation. As marketing has become a prominent concept in academic libraries the findings on current marketing practice in special collections may be of some use to you.

Confidentiality

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Any information from you which is disseminated will have your name and the name of your institution removed so that you cannot be recognised from it.

As mentioned above the results of this research shall be published in an MA dissertation. Dissertations are commonly deposited in the University of Sheffield library although access can be restricted in certain circumstances.

Who has reviewed the project?

This project has been reviewed by the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee.
Contacts for further information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Dissertation Supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan Smith</td>
<td>Professor Sheila Corrall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Walkley Street</td>
<td>Department of Information Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkley</td>
<td>University of Sheffield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>Regent Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6 3RF</td>
<td>211 Portobello Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sheffield</td>
</tr>
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<td>S1 4DP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Email: lip04shs@shef.ac.uk  
Email: s.m.corrall@sheffield.ac.uk
Appendix II – Covering letter

Susan Smith
35 Walkley Street
Walkley
Sheffield
S6 3RF

Date

Dear____,

I am writing to seek your views on the marketing of special collections. Much of the literature concerning the marketing of special collections is from an American perspective and I am seeking to redress this balance by researching how special collections are marketed in the UK and Ireland. This research forms part of the dissertation I am undertaking as part of my MA librarianship course at the University of Sheffield.

I have enclosed a short questionnaire on this subject which should take about 15 minutes to complete and I have included a stamped addressed envelope for the return of the completed questionnaire. I have also attached an information sheet which gives a thorough introduction to the aims and objectives of the project and addresses issues of confidentiality and anonymity. If possible I would like to receive the completed questionnaire by the 1st of July.

I would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete the questionnaire. I hope to hear from you soon,

Yours sincerely,

Susan Smith
### Table 2. Criteria for evaluating special collections Web sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Sub-dimension</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding aids/ catalogues</td>
<td>Available/</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Are online finding aids available on or via this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>linked</td>
<td></td>
<td>WWW site?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type</td>
<td></td>
<td>Are the finding aids online hand lists, OPAC records or both?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertext/Text</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
<td>Are online handlists presented as text files, or do they have hypertext links built into them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Are images of items from the collections available?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Low/high</td>
<td>Are the images of low resolution, or high resolution for scholarly study?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>Approximately how many images are available?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online exhibitions</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td></td>
<td>Is there an online exhibition?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching and reference</td>
<td>Search and retrieval</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Does the site provide users with a search and retrieval interface to its collections?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reference service</td>
<td>interface</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Browsable index(es)</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Does the site enable users to scroll through indexes to collections and/or findings aids?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail queries</td>
<td>Y/N/main</td>
<td></td>
<td>Is an e-mail address provided for special collections queries?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural context</td>
<td>Position within institutional site no.</td>
<td></td>
<td>How many links must be followed from the main site before the special collections page is located?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ease of locating special collections</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 5, how easy is it to find the special collections? (e.g. are they under a logical heading?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Links to external</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Are hypertext links provided to other institutions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional information</td>
<td>Mission statement</td>
<td>Y/Main/N/a</td>
<td>Does the site provide a mission statement for the special collections section, the main library only, or neither?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquisition</td>
<td>Y/Main/N/a</td>
<td>Does the site provide an acquisitions policy for the special collections section, the main library only, or neither?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Does the site provide access information for the special collections section?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copying</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Does the site provide copying information for the special collections section?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User and collections</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Does the site provide statistics of use for the special collections page?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>User feedback</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Does the site provide a form to submit feedback?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On collections</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Does the site provide general information about the collections?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix IV: Evaluation criteria adapted from Love and Feather (1998)

Finding aids on webpage:

1 Are there finding aids on the website?

2 Are items from special collections listed on the main catalogue?

3 Are there specialised catalogues?

4 Are there Handlists?

5 Are there Collection descriptions?

6 Are the collection descriptions searchable?

7 Are they grouped under subject headings?

Digitised material:

8 Is digitised material of the collections available?

9 Is it of good quality

10 How many items are available digitally?

1 Is there an online exhibition?

Reference services:

12 Is there an email contact address?

13 Is there an electronic enquiry form?

Structural context:

14 Is a link to special collections featured on the homepage of the library/information service homepage?
15 Is it easy to find?

16 Does it have external links?

**Institutional information:**

17 Does the site provide a mission statement?

18 Does the site provide an acquisitions policy?

19 Does the site provide access information?

20 Does the site provide copying information?

**User and collections information:**

21 Does the site provide statistics of use?

22 Does the site provide a form to submit feedback?

23 Does the site provide a general overview of collections e.g. say what its particular strengths are?
Appendix V - Marketing of Special Collections Questionnaire

Name:
Job Title:
Name of department:
Institution:

User Group

1) Who do you see as your user group? Please tick each category which applies

- Academics
- Researchers
- Postgraduates – taught
- Postgraduates – research
- Undergraduates
- Visiting Academics
- Visiting researchers
- General Public
- Other

If other please give details
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

2) Does your user group influence collection development? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes please give details
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

3) In what ways do you think the collections are relevant to the current research and teaching interests of the university? Please tick each category that applies

- Reflect priority research interests
- Of general relevance
- Other
- Reflect teaching interests

If other please give details
____________________________________________________________________

P.T.O
4) Do you feel there is a role for special collections in the teaching of postgraduate and undergraduate students?

Postgraduates Yes☐ No☐  Undergraduates Yes☐ No☐

5) If you do think there is a role how do you think they are/can be used?
Please tick any categories which apply

Student projects/ dissertations ☐ To support lectures and seminars ☐
Other ☐

If other please give details_______________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

6) Do you have a specific area for collection users to work in? Yes☐ No☐

7) Approximately how many user spaces do you have? ___

Promotion

8) Do you use any of the following methods of promotion? If so please state what you regard as their advantages and disadvantages:

8a) Merchandise (e.g. postcards). Yes☐ No ☐
Advantages:________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Disadvantages:________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

8b) Exhibitions Yes☐ No ☐
Advantages:________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Disadvantages:________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
8c) Leaflets  Yes □  No □
Advantages:
________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Disadvantages:________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

8d) Seminars  Yes □  No □
Advantages:
________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Disadvantages:________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

8e) If you use other methods please give details.
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

9) Do you regard your website as a promotional tool?  Yes □  No □

10) What do you believe to be essential information to include on a website for a special collections department?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

11) Do you have digitised material on your website?  Yes □  No □
If yes what factors influence your decision on what items to digitise?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

P.T.O
Attitudes to marketing

12) Is marketing an official part of your job description? Yes ☐ No ☐

13) Do you have a marketing plan or strategy?

14) Do you have a marketing budget? Yes ☐ No ☐

15) How much of your time is taken up by promotional activities?

- None ☐
- A little ☐
- Varies ☐
- A significant amount ☐
- A lot – major part of job ☐
- Other ☐

16) Do you feel there is pressure on you from library management to ensure that special collections are well publicised?

Yes ☐ No ☐
Please give reasons for answer.
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Consequences of marketing

17) Do you believe your collections to be well publicised? Yes ☐ No ☐

18) If you have undertaken marketing activities do you feel that they have had a noticeable effect in any of the following ways:

18a) Increased visits to the collections? Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes please give details
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

18b) Raised the profile of collections externally? Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes please give details.
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

P.T.O
18c) Raised the profile of collections within the university? Yes □  No □
If yes please give details.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

18d) If there have been other effects please give details

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

19) If you have undertaken marketing activities do you feel that they divert time from core functions of special collections such as cataloguing?
Yes □  No □  Don’t know □
If yes please give details

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

20) Do you believe that there is a tension between promotion, which has the goal of increasing use of collections and preservation which increased use may have a negative impact on? Yes □  No □
Please give reasons for answer

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

End of Questionnaire

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your responses are essential to my study and your help is greatly appreciated. Please return the completed questionnaire in the envelope provided.

Could you please confirm the following by signing where indicated:
I have read the information sheet and agree to participate in this research. Signature: ____________

If you wish a summary of the results or a copy of the completed dissertation shall be sent to you (after the 1st of September). Please indicate choice below.

P.T.O
I would/would not like a summary of results.

I would/would not like a copy of the completed dissertation.

I would also like to undertake interviews to gain more detailed information – please indicate whether you would be willing to be interviewed.

I am/am not willing to be interviewed.

If you are willing to be interviewed please indicate how you would like to be contacted:

By email: please write your email address here: ______________
By telephone: please write your number here: ______________
Appendix VI – Interview schedules

Interview Questions – Interviewee A

General attitude

1) When do you think marketing began to be important in your department and why do you think it is so important?

1a) Is marketing likely to continue to grow in importance?

User group

2) You have quite a wide user group - do you think the traditional user group of scholars and researchers are still the dominant users?

2a) Possible probe: Do you think the make up of your user group is likely to change in the future?

3) Would you say there is an imperative to widen access to the collections - Do you feel there is a need for or movement towards attracting non-traditional users such as undergraduates?

4) What do you feel is more important – attracting new users or serving existing users?

5) Do you think it is important to build a good working relationship with your user group and consult them on such things as acquisitions? Do you consult them formally, for example through user surveys? And informally, for example building contacts?

5a) Possible probe: What benefits do you think this has?

6) I was interested to see that you list the media as one of your users – could you give me some more information on for what purposes this group uses the collections?

6a) Is use by this user group likely to increase?

Promotion

7a) There have been many collaborative online projects such as RSLP 19th century pamphlets, which seek to open up access to special collections. What do you think are their main benefits?

7b) Do you think the amount of projects is likely to continue to increase?

Attitudes

8a) Do you think special collections are still regarded as intrinsically valuable or has their value become more dependent on how much they are used?
8b) Will there ever be a danger that what is not used will be disposed or sold?

Future

9) Is it possible your collections could ever be a tourist attraction or could you have a permanent public exhibition say like the historical collections in Trinity College Dublin?
Interview questions – Interviewee B

General attitude

1) When do you think marketing began to be important in your department and why do you think it is so important?

1a) Is marketing likely to continue to grow in importance?

User group

2) You have quite a wide user group - do you think the traditional user group of scholars and researchers are still the dominant users?

2a) Possible probe; Do you think the make up of your user group is likely to change in the future?

3) Would you say there is an imperative to widen access to the collections - Do you feel there is a need for or movement towards attracting non-traditional users?

4) What do you feel is more important – attracting new users or serving existing users?

5) Do you think it is important to build a good working relationship with your user group and consult them on such things as acquisitions? Do you consult them formally, for example through user surveys? And informally, for example building contacts?

5b) Possible probe: What benefits do you think this has?

6) In your questionnaire response you mention that there is a perception that special collections are underused by an internal audience, and that they are the hardest audience to reach – why do you think this is?

Promotion

7) There have been many collaborative online projects such as MASC 25, which seek to open up access to special collections. What do you think are their main benefits?

7b) Do you think the amount of projects is likely to continue to increase?

Attitudes

9a) Do you think special collections are still regarded as intrinsically valuable or has their value become more dependent on how much they are used?

9b) Will there ever be a danger that what is not used will be disposed or sold?
Future

10) Is it possible your collections could ever be a tourist attraction say like the historical collections in Trinity College Dublin?
Interview questions – Interviewee C

General attitude

1) When do you think marketing began to be important in special collections and why do you think it is important?

1a) Is marketing likely to continue to grow in importance?

User group

2) You have quite a wide user group - do you think the traditional user group of scholars and researchers are still the dominant users?

2a) Possible probe: Do you think the make up of your user group is likely to change in the future?

3) Would you say there is an imperative to widen access to the collections - Do you feel there is a need for or movement towards attracting non-traditional users?

4) What do you feel is more important – attracting new users or serving existing users?

5) Do you think it is important to build a good working relationship with your user group and consult them on such things as acquisitions? Do you consult them formally, for example through user surveys? And informally, for example building contacts?

5a) Possible probe: What benefits does this have?

6) In your questionnaire response you say that collection development is linked to the main research and teaching interests of the university – how do you keep abreast of these interests?

Promotion

7a) There have been many collaborative projects such as RSLP 19th century pamphlets, Britain in print and so on. What do you think are their main benefits?

b) Do you think the amount of projects is likely to continue to increase?

Attitudes

8) Do you think special collections are still regarded as intrinsically valuable or has their value become more dependent on how much they are used?

8a) Possible probe: Do they have to earn their keep?

8b) Will there ever be a danger that what is not used will be disposed or sold?
9) Is it possible your collections could ever be a tourist attraction say like the historical collections in Trinity College Dublin?
Interview questions – Interviewee D

General attitude

1) When and why do you think marketing began to be important in special collections?

1a) Do you think marketing is likely to grow in importance?

User group

2) You have quite a wide user group - do you think the traditional user group of scholars and researchers are still the dominant users?

2a) Possible probe: Do you think the make up of your user group is likely to change in the future?

3) Would you say there is an imperative to widen access to the collections - Do you feel there is a need for or movement towards attracting non-traditional users?

4) What do you feel is more important – attracting new users or serving existing users?

5) Do you think it is important to build a good working relationship with your user group and consult them on such things as acquisitions? Do you consult them formally, for example through user surveys? And informally, for example building contacts?

5a) What benefits does this have?

6) In your questionnaire response you say that collection development is linked to the research and teaching interests of the university – how do you keep abreast of these interests?

Promotion

7a) There have been many collaborative projects such as RSLP 19th century pamphlets, Britain in print and so on. What do think their main benefits are?

7b) Do you think the amount of projects is likely to continue to increase?

Attitudes

8a) Do you think special collections are still regarded as intrinsically valuable or has their value become more dependent on how much they are used?

8b) Will there ever be a danger that what is not used will be disposed or sold?
Future

9) Is it possible your collections could ever be a tourist attraction say like the historical collections in Trinity College Dublin?
General attitude

1) When do you think marketing began to be important in special collections and why do you think it is important?

1a) Is marketing likely to continue to grow in importance?

User group

2) You have quite a wide user group - do you think the traditional user group of scholars and researchers are still the dominant users?

2a) Possible probe: Do you think the make up of your user group is likely to change in the future?

3) Would you say there is an imperative to widen access to the collections - Do you feel there is a need for or movement towards attracting non-traditional users such as undergraduates?

4) What do you feel is more important – attracting new users or serving existing users?

5) Do you think it is important to build a good working relationship with your user group and consult them on such things as acquisitions? Do you consult them formally, for example through user surveys? And informally, for example building contacts?

5a) Possible probe: What benefits does this have?

6) In your questionnaire response you say that collection development can be affected by trends in the research and teaching interests of the university – how do you keep abreast of these interests?

Promotion

7) In your questionnaire you state that you are considering producing cards – would these be for sale or free? What do you think their benefits would be?

8a) There have been many collaborative projects such as RSLP 19th century pamphlets, Britain in print and so on. What do you think are their main benefits?

8b) Do you think the amount of projects is likely to continue to increase?

Attitudes

9a) Do you think special collections are still regarded as intrinsically valuable or has their value become more dependent on how much they are used? Possible probe: Do they have to earn their keep?
9b) Will there ever be a danger that what is not used will be disposed or sold?

Future

10) Is it possible your collections could ever be a tourist attraction say like the historical collections in Trinity College Dublin?
### Table 1: Website evaluation: Collections A - E

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Sub-headings</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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